

2527654

Registered provider: Above and Beyond Residential Care Limited

Interim inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home provides care for up to two children who experience social or emotional difficulties or learning disabilities.

Inspection dates: 19 and 24 January 2022

Date of last inspection: 17 August 2021

Judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

This inspection

The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection

This home was judged requires improvement to be good at the last full inspection.

At this interim inspection, Ofsted judged that it has declined in effectiveness.

The children's safety when out in the community is a significant concern. Both children have been seriously threatened by local gangs. On at least three occasions, the children have alleged that they were threatened with weapons, including a knife and a machete. A child told staff that he felt it necessary to carry a knife because he felt threatened by people in the community.

The children were frequently away from the home for most of the day and staff were not always certain of their whereabouts. The safety plans to protect children in the community largely depended on the children answering staff's telephone calls and self-reporting that they were safe.

During this inspection, the manager took action and strengthened the safety plans. Although this increased the children's safety, shortfalls in safeguarding practice were identified at the last inspection. This raises concerns about the manager's and staff's ability to sustain improvements and keep children safe.

Most staff have undertaken training on substance misuse, gangs and county lines. However, they do not always transfer their learning into practice. For example, when a child told staff that they had taken an unknown substance and felt unwell, staff did not seek medical assistance. Additionally, the manager was unable to provide assurances that staff had checked on children when they suspected that they were under the influence of a substance.

Staff have not been able to encourage children to engage with specialist services to help them understand risk and their vulnerabilities. Although staff have undertaken some positive direct work with children around county lines and knife crime, this was not evident across all areas of identified risk. For example, staff do not continuously undertake meaningful direct work with children around substance misuse and gangs, despite the ongoing concerns.

Collaborative working with all relevant agencies is variable. Children's social workers have not been informed of all incidents and concerns. Furthermore, Ofsted has not been informed of all serious incidents as required.

Children's physical and emotional health are not being promoted consistently. The manager has struggled to register a child with a dentist due to a lack of availability in the local area. This was not identified as a potential risk in the manager's impact

assessment for this child. Access to health services in the local area should be considered prior to children moving into the home.

At times, children refuse to attend health appointments, which means there is no up-to-date assessment of all health needs. There was little evidence of staff proactively encouraging, preparing and supporting children to attend health appointments.

A child has not received the level of therapeutic support from the company therapist as set out in the child's care plan. Consequently, the child is not receiving the emotional support that they need.

The home's care plans lack information about the children's health needs and how they should be met. Furthermore, the plans do not reflect the barriers to supporting children's health needs or strategies for overcoming them.

Children's educational progress is variable. When children make progress, such as improved school attendance, this is not sustained. The children are not offered structured educational activities when they refuse to attend school.

The children talk to staff and share their views and feelings confidently. However, the manager does not always provide feedback to them about the action she has taken or the decisions and outcomes. This does not assure children that they are being listened to.

Most of the staff do not have the relevant residential childcare qualification. However, this is not accurately reflected in the home's statement of purpose. Additionally, details of the therapist's supervision arrangements are still not provided in this document. This was raised as a recommendation at the last inspection.

The staff receive regular professional supervision. This provides them with the opportunity to discuss and reflect on their practice and set targets for ongoing learning and development. However, some supervision notes do not adequately detail the discussions held or the targets agreed. This hinders scrutiny of the quality of the supervision and support being provided to staff.

The manager's monitoring systems are insufficient. As a result, her oversight of the home is weak.

The manager's quality of care review report has not been sent to Ofsted as required. This has compromised the regulator's monitoring of the home.

Poor-quality leadership and management has resulted in a failure to address many of the issues raised at the last inspection. Six of the eight requirements raised at the last inspection have been restated. Consequently, the necessary improvements and continuous development of the home have not been achieved.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
17/08/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good
05/02/2020	Full	Requires improvement to be good

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards'. The registered person(s) must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The children's views, wishes and feelings standard is that children receive care from staff who take their views, wishes and feelings into account in relation to matters affecting the children's care and welfare and their lives. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff— help each child to understand how the child's views, wishes and feelings have been taken into account and give the child reasons for decisions in relation to the child. (Regulation 7 (1)(c) (2)(a)(iii)) This relates to ensuring that the children are informed of the outcomes of their complaints and the decisions made about their care. This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	27 February 2022
The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— help each child to understand the importance and value of education, learning, training and employment; promote opportunities for each child to learn informally; help a child who is excluded from school, or who is of compulsory school age but not attending school, to access educational and training support throughout the period of	27 February 2022

exclusion or non-attendance and to return to school as soon as possible; help each child to attend education or training in accordance with the expectations in the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(iv)(v)(viii)(x)) This relates to ensuring that staff encourage children to attend school and engage with their education through regular and meaningful direct work. When children refuse to attend school or engage in home tuition, staff should provide them with structured educational activities.	
*The health and well-being standard is that— the health and well-being needs of children are met; children receive advice, services and support in relation to their health and well-being; and children are helped to lead healthy lifestyles. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff help each child to— achieve the health and well-being outcomes that are recorded in the child's relevant plans; take part in activities, and attend any appointments, for the purpose of meeting the child's health and well-being needs; and that each child is registered as a patient with a general medical practitioner and a registered dental practitioner; and that each child has access to such dental, medical, nursing, psychiatric and psychological advice, treatment and other services as the child may require. (Regulation 10 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(iii)(b)(c)) This relates to ensuring that the home's care plans thoroughly detail the children's health needs and how staff intend to meet them. Each child must have access to a dentist. Therapy should be provided in line with the children's care plans. Children should be supported to overcome any barriers that prevent them from attending health appointments. The children's healthy eating plans should be monitored.	27 February 2022

This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	
*The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child’s relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; help each child to understand how to keep safe; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child’s welfare; and that the home’s day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(b)) This relates to ensuring that staff thoroughly assess if children are safe in the community. Robust strategies should be in place when they are not. Staff should ensure that children are safe when they suspect that they have misused substances. Staff should do regular and meaningful direct work with children about risk, such as gangs. Children’s risk assessments should be regularly updated to reflect new concerns and serious incidents. This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	27 February 2022

*The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose; understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(f)(h)) This relates to weaknesses in the manager's monitoring and evaluation of serious incidents, children's progress and the quality of the home's records. This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	27 February 2022
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home's statement of purpose; that each child's relevant plans are followed; that, subject to regulation 22 (contact and access to communications), contact between each child and the child's	27 February 2022

parents, relatives and friends, is promoted in accordance with the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 14 (1)(a) (2)(a)(c)(d)) This relates to ensuring that rigorous impact assessments are undertaken before children move into the home, that children's care plans are kept up to date and that the registered person obtains the local authority's plans for promoting the children's contact with friends and family. This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	
The registered person must compile in relation to the children's home a statement ("the statement of purpose") which covers the matters listed in Schedule 1. (Regulation 16 (1)) This relates to ensuring that the information provided in the statement of purpose accurately reflects the staff's qualifications and includes details of the company therapist's supervision arrangements.	27 February 2022
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if — an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(b)) This relates to not informing Ofsted or the children's social workers of all serious concerns in relation to the children.	24 January 2022
The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ("a quality of care review") at least once every 6 months. The registered person must— supply to HMCI a copy of the quality of care review report within 28 days of the date on which the quality of care review is completed. (Regulation 45 (1) (4)(a)) This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	27 February 2022

* These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that staff's supervision records, including for the manager, are detailed and reflect the objectives set for professional development. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.3)

Information about this inspection

This inspection focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people, using the 'Social care common inspection framework'. This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, and to consider how well it complies with the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards'.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 2527654

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Above and Beyond Residential Care Limited

Registered provider address: Suite 14 Foundry House, Waterside Lane, Widnes
WA8 8GT

Responsible individual: Nicola Reilly

Registered manager: Rachel Hughes

Inspectors

Marina Tully, Social Care Inspector
Rose Maddocks, Social Care Inspector

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