

2592228

Registered provider: BTTLR Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

A private company owns and operates this home. It is registered to provide care for up to two children with emotional, social and behavioural difficulties. At the time of this inspection, one child was living at the home.

There is no registered manager.

Inspection dates: 3 and 4 May 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: 24 February 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
24/02/2022	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
21/07/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

Children's experiences in this home have been variable. One child who previously lived at the home made very little progress. Staff lacked the skills to engage with her and this impaired her progress. The child currently living at the home has already experienced a great deal of change. The registered manager and several staff have left. She is experiencing a great deal of instability of staffing at a time when she needs stability in the adults caring for her.

The child is not yet comfortable with some of the new staff. This affects her daily life. She rarely goes out on activities with staff she does not know well. She spends long periods in her room when there are new staff on duty and this also impacts on her routines, for example, at mealtimes.

The new staff are kind and respectful. However, new relationships with the child need to be embedded so that she can feel comfortable. Some new staff do not yet have the experience, skills or confidence to fully engage the child.

Some of the child's health needs have not been met. When she has needed specific support and therapy to help her emotionally, there has been drift. She has missed important health appointments in relation to her mental health. Care planning is not specific in relation to her dietary needs and poor sleep patterns. The care planning for the child has not been specific and so good-quality care is not yet being delivered in every area.

The child engages well at school and staff there are helping her make progress. She is following her interests and talents. However, when she does not feel able to attend school, the home's staff do not always work with school staff or let them know the reason for non-attendance. The approach to education from the acting manager and staff is not sufficiently aspirational for the child.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

The child feels safe in her home. Involved professionals, staff and the acting manager all agree that she is safe and secure. The child receives some very good support in relation to her safety from the acting manager. She engages well in one-to-one discussions about how to protect herself. She has started to develop some strategies to enable her to feel safer. She does not receive the same high-quality support from the other staff members. For example, one-to-one work with the child is rare and the quality requires improvement.

A statutory requirement was made at the last inspection in relation to a safeguarding matter. Leaders had started an investigation, but this was not robust

and the recording is of poor quality. This requirement remains unmet and action is needed to rectify this.

New staff undergo the required pre-employment checks before they work at the home. This reduces the risk of unsuitable people working with children. The same attention to detail is not given to staff who come through an employment agency. For example, one agency worker had an insufficient reference history. Also, agency staff have not had interviews to check their suitability, skills or experience.

The current staffing levels provide one-to-one staffing for the child. Staff always know where the child is and monitor her whereabouts. This helps to ensure her safety.

Staff often work with the child alone. However, the lone-working risk assessment does not contain a sufficient assessment of how this risk will be minimised. This is particularly important because of an incident when a member of staff was assaulted by a child who previously lived at the home. The staff member asked their on-call manager for help and this was not responded to quickly enough. This left the staff and child at risk of harm.

Staff training has improved. Staff undertake the mandatory training required. For example, they complete training in how to safeguard children against abuse, how to administer first aid, and the safe handling and administration of medicines. Staff complete training in behaviour management, including the preferred approach to physical intervention. Training ensures that staff have the required knowledge and skills to keep children safe.

The home has remained a settled place to live for children. There have been no physical interventions or complaints. Additionally, there have been no significant incidents or episodes of children going missing from the home. This demonstrates that the child has been safe.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

Multiple changes in staffing have been a longstanding issue and continue to be a cause for concern. The staff team is in a transitional phase as new staff are recruited. There is still not yet a workforce development plan that sets out how the staffing difficulties will be overcome going forward.

None of the staff hold the required qualification for residential care staff. Additionally, none of the day staff have prior experience of working in a children's home. The acting manager is working to ensure the child is supported by trained and experienced staff.

There have been four managers in this home in the last 15 months. Only one of these managers has been registered. The acting manager is also due to leave. The

responsible individual has plans in place to recruit another suitable manager. So far, the recruitment drive has not been successful.

The responsible individual is also the acting manager of another home in the organisation. This reduces his availability to support the home. The fragile management situation is compounded by the fact that the current manager is leaving and many of the staff are inexperienced and unqualified.

The current acting manager has made clear strides towards improving the home in a very short time. She is modelling good practice. Her commitment is evident. She is a good leader and has a very good understanding of the operational running of the home. She understands the shortfalls well. She has picked up where staff's performance is not good enough and has started to address this. She has also been a good advocate for the child. She understands and supports her very well.

A previous statutory requirement in relation to placement matching is met. Action has been taken to prevent poor placement decisions being made in the future. Also, the statement of purpose is improved. However, some deficits in the statement remain. For example, it states the aim is to 'create work in a therapeutic environment' and says it 'has the resources to deal with children at risk of child sexual exploitation'. This is inaccurate. The child has not always received the support she needs in these areas.

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 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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)) This is in relation to risk assessments when staff are working alone with children.	29 May 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; ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(d)) This is in relation to sufficiency and quality of staff and to ensuring that care is delivered in line with the home's statement of purpose.	29 May 2022
The registered person must prepare and implement a policy which—	29 May 2022

is intended to safeguard children accommodated in the children's home from abuse or neglect; and sets out the procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse or neglect. The procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse or neglect must, in particular— provide for records to be kept of an allegation of abuse or neglect, and the action taken in response. (Regulation 34 (2)(d)) This is in relation to records of a child protection matter raised at the interim inspection in February 2022.	
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; understand the child's health and well-being needs and the options that are available in relation to the child's health and well-being, in a way that is appropriate to the child's age and understanding; take part in activities, and attend any appointments, for the purpose of meeting the child's health and well-being needs; and understand and develop skills to promote the child's well-being. (Regulation 10 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)) This is in relation to care planning about the child's emotional and physical health needs. Also, to the child missing important health appointments, and to supporting her with her mental health.	29 May 2022

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that there is a workforce plan which can fulfil the workforce-related requirements of regulation 16, schedule 1 (paragraphs 19 and 20). The plan should detail the necessary management and staffing structure (including any staff commissioned to provide health and education). ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.8)
- The registered person should ensure that good employment practice is followed. They must ensure that recruitment, supervision and performance management of staff safeguards children and minimises potential risks to them. This is in relation to the recruitment of staff from an agency who are on temporary contracts. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)
- The registered person should ensure that the children's home staff should act as effective advocates for or on behalf of a child who may be experiencing difficulties with education or training matters, including, but not limited to, attainment, admissions, attendance or behaviour, as a good parent would do. This is in relation to working with education settings and informing the school of the reasons for the child's non-attendance. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 28, paragraph 5.12)

Information about this 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: 2592228

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: BTTLR Limited

Registered provider address: 4 Shirley Road, Old Stone Factory, Rushden,
Northamptonshire NN10 6BY

Responsible individual: Florin Morar

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Caroline Brailsford, Social Care Inspector

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