

2618755

Registered provider: Young Birch Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

A private company own this home. It is registered for up to three children aged eight to 17 with social and/or emotional needs.

There has been no registered manager since 17 May 2021. A new manager is in post but has yet to apply to Ofsted to be registered.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

Inspection dates: 3 to 4 August 2021

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **inadequate**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **inadequate**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **inadequate**

There are serious and/or widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded and the care and experiences of children and young people are poor and they are not making progress.

Date of last inspection: not applicable

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: not applicable

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

This is the first inspection of the home since it was registered on 7 April 2021. During this time, the home has had three different managers. At the time of this inspection, the current manager has only been in post for four weeks. The lack of a permanent and experienced registered manager has had a significant impact on the quality of care provided to the children. As a result of this inspection, a notice of suspension and three compliance notices have been issued.

Planning for children is poorly considered. At the time of the inspection, two children were living in the home. One child moved into the home during a period in which the home was without a manager. The responsible individual had oversight of the children moving in. Despite this, he did not ensure that, prior to the children's placements and once the children had moved in, that the required statutory documentation and relevant information for the children was obtained. This poor planning resulted in children moving into the home despite staff not having the skills and experience to meet their needs.

Lack of information regarding children's histories and circumstances leads to children suffering harm. For example, one child who was new to the home was taken by staff to have unsupervised time with a family member. Staff were not aware that there were concerns about this family member and that they posed a risk to the child. The child was subsequently assaulted by the family member.

Managers do not take effective action to safeguard and promote the needs of children. For example, an independent reviewing officer shared concerns with the current manager that the location of the home was a risk factor for one child due to their friendships in that area. The manager and responsible individual did not take timely action to escalate their concerns with the placing local authority. A decision was subsequently made for the child to move out of the home. However, at the time of the inspection, the timescales for the child to move out had passed, and the child continued to live at the home despite known safeguarding concerns.

A chaotic and disorganised approach to care planning means that staff do not understand how best to support children. For example, health plans, care plans and risk assessments are of poor quality and are not up to date. This means that staff are not provided with clear guidance on how to help children. This contributes to staff providing children with an inconsistent quality of care.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: inadequate

Staff do not adequately safeguard children. One child is assessed as being at risk of sexual exploitation. Following an incident in which the child suffered significant harm, staff failed to take action to protect her. Specifically, staff have continued to facilitate the transport of the child to the area in which she was harmed. This is despite continued warning signs that the child is likely to be at high risk of further harm.

The child regularly leaves the home without authorisation. However, when the child tells staff where she is going, staff do not complete adequate safe and well checks or encourage her to return home. Managers and staff have not taken action to protect this child.

Despite the responsible individual and manager's acknowledgement of the safeguarding concerns related to this child, they have not adequately escalated their concerns to the local authority. The absence of strong leadership contributes to the poor safeguarding practices in the home.

Staff do not fully understand their roles and responsibilities in safeguarding children. One staff member told the inspector that she was unaware that she could challenge the decisions made by other professionals and did not have the confidence to do this. Furthermore, some staff could not confidently explain how they would respond to incidents of children going missing or being at risk of exploitation. This demonstrates that staff lack the required skills and knowledge to safeguard children.

The inexperienced staff team is not provided with clear guidance on how to keep children safe. For example, risk assessments do not reflect known risks or the strategies that are required to manage these. Furthermore, managers do not ensure that staff follow the agreed risk management plans. For example, staff do not follow the agreed schedule for one child to have unsupervised time in the community. This increases the potential risk of harm for this child.

Staff do not receive training to increase their skills to meet the needs of children living in the home. Staff have not received training in child sexual exploitation, child criminal exploitation, mental health or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. Staff lack the requisite skills to safeguard children.

The manager has not completed training in the home's chosen model of behaviour management and physical intervention. This has contributed to the manager's poor oversight and evaluations of such intervention. For example, children and staff do not receive debriefs following physical intervention incidents. This is a missed opportunity to review staff practice and improve the strategies in place to manage children's behaviours.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

The lack of a permanent and experienced registered manager and the poor leadership by the responsible individual have had a detrimental impact on the welfare and safety of children.

The home's current manager has been in post for four weeks. Although they are an experienced manager, they have no previous experience of working with children living in residential care. The manager lacks an understanding of her roles and responsibilities. This has contributed to her inability to take proactive steps to identify and address the shortfalls in the care being provided to children.

Despite the manager's lack of previous experience of working in a children's home, she has not received an induction to her new role. In addition, she has yet to complete all required training. The responsible individual has not provided the manager with adequate support and guidance. As a result, the manager is struggling in her role and is unable to provide effective guidance and oversight for staff.

Staff do not receive regular supervision support in line with the home's supervision policy. This is another missed opportunity to review staff practice and help staff to learn and develop. When the manager has identified poor staff practice this has not been acted on.

The independent person's audits of the home have not provided an accurate or representative assessment of the care being provided to children. This has been an additional factor in managers' failure to identify and address shortfalls.

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
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff— if the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority's or a relevant person's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 5(c)) This specifically relates to the provider escalating concerns to local authorities about the care planning arrangements for children.	12 September 2021
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. (Regulation 10 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(ii))	12 September 2021

This specifically relates to the provider ensuring that they understand the health needs of children and that there is a plan in place to meet those needs.	
*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; 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; 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)(v)(vi)(b)) This specifically relates to the provider ensuring that the registered manager and staff have an understanding of their roles and responsibilities relating to the safeguarding arrangements for children.	12 September 2021
*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.	12 September 2021

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 staff work as a team where appropriate; ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child; 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)(b)(c)(d)(f)(h)) This specifically relates to the provider ensuring that staff receive adequate training that is effective for them to carry out their roles and responsibilities in caring for children.	
*The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children’s home; and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the 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 arrangements are in place to— ensure the effective induction of each child into the home;	12 September 2021

manage and review the placement of each child in the home. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(i)(ii)) This specifically relates to the provider ensuring that children only move into the home in accordance with the home's admission policy, and that sufficient consideration is given to the needs of the children and the ability of staff to meet those needs.	
The registered person must— ensure that each employee completes an appropriate induction. The registered person must ensure that all employees— receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience, (Regulation 33 (1)(a) (4)(b)) This specifically relates to the provider ensuring that the manager receives an appropriate induction to the home and that staff receive regular supervision.	12 September 2021
The registered person must ensure that— within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes— a description of the measure and its duration; details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person")— has spoken to the user about the measure; and has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record	12 September 2021

confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(iv)(v)(vii)(b)(i)(ii)(c)) This specifically relates to the provider ensuring that an appropriately trained individual oversees the use of physical interventions and that all children and staff receive debriefs following the use of any interventions.	
The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which— include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child; are kept up to date; and are signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)(c)) This specifically relates to the provider ensuring that they have all statutory documentation for children and that the needs of the children are reflected in the home's care planning documents.	12 September 2021
The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month. The independent person must produce a report about a visit ("the independent person's report") which sets out, in particular, the independent person's opinion as to whether— children are effectively safeguarded; and the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being. The independent person's report may recommend actions that the registered person may take in relation to the home and timescales within which the registered person must consider whether or not to take those actions. (Regulation 44 (1) (4)(a)(b) (5)) This specifically relates to the provider ensuring that the independent visitor shares their feedback of the outcome of all visits to the manager and responsible individual.	12 September 2021

* These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that unauthorised absence records accurately detail the time and date of when the child went missing and when they then returned to the home. Furthermore, ensure that all significant incident records accurately reflect the action taken by staff and what they have done to minimise the incident. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

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: 2618755

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Young Birch Limited

Registered provider address: 4 Station Avenue, Tile Hill, Coventry CV4 9HS

Responsible individual: Mark Kudarenko

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Sam Dulay-Kainth, Social Care Inspector

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