

2675665

Registered provider: Bear Care Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

A private company owns this home, which provides care for three children. The provider states in their statement of purpose that they provide care for children who may have social and emotional difficulties.

There is a registered manager in post, and she has been registered with Ofsted since July 2022.

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 September 2022

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 previously inspected

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
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Not previously inspected.		
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Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

This is the home's first full inspection. There was one child living at the home at the time of the inspection.

There are serious shortfalls in safeguarding practice, care planning, and the leadership and management of the home. These weaknesses have a significant impact on the child's safety, welfare, experiences and progress.

The child has recently moved into the home in a planned way. However, there were inconsistencies found on documents regarding the date the child moved into the home. Furthermore, leaders and managers fail to provide the staff with guidance and a multi-agency approach to the child's care. There are no local authority documents such as a care plan, placement plan or review on file. As a result, it is not clear what the agreed plan was for the child. This poor care planning is undermining the child's progress.

There is a lack of sufficient qualified and skilled staff to understand the child's individual needs. This has affected the staff's ability to manage the complex needs of the children. Therefore, the child is not receiving well-planned care that promotes their safety and well-being. Furthermore, the child has recently experienced some difficulties when starting a new school placement. As a result, the school was unable to meet her needs and a new education placement has not yet been identified. This does not promote a child's educational opportunities.

The child enjoys going out on activities and has recently been to the zoo, which is a positive aspect for the child. However, due to disagreements between leaders and managers over company finances, the staff are not able to offer a wide variety of activities. As a result, the child has limited opportunities to develop social skills and enjoy positive experiences.

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

Safeguarding practice in this home does not promote the welfare of the child sufficiently.

Managers are failing to provide staff with sufficient and clear information that enables them to manage the child's risks and vulnerabilities safely and effectively. Risk management plans lack detail and are not signed and dated by staff working in the home. Additionally, there is no missing from care action plan in place. Consequently, a failure to have meaningful and up-to-date information in the child's plans means that staff have had insufficient written guidance on how to meet the needs of the child.

Physical intervention practice has been used in the home. However, staff have not received training from the organisation on how to safely restrain a child. This is unsafe practice for all involved. Furthermore, records lack sufficient detail about the reason for the measure and the appropriateness of the actions taken. This is a significant safety concern.

The manager has not consistently evaluated the appropriateness or effectiveness of all restrictive physical intervention measures used. Furthermore, when the manager had used restrictive practice, she signed off her own documents with no independent oversight. As managers are not monitoring and evaluating care practices, staff continue to use ineffective behaviour management strategies, and the child is not consistently learning to reflect on and improve their behaviour.

Safer recruitment practices are poor and do not show that staff have been suitably vetted and assessed before working with the child in the home. For example, some staff have not got the relevant and appropriate references on file and employment gaps have not been fully explored. This is a significant safeguarding concern, as this practice does not prevent unsafe adults caring for the child.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

Ofsted had received several whistle-blowing complaints about the operation of the home, the finances of the company and safeguarding concerns in respect of the child living in the home. Inspectors were informed that the responsible individual had left with immediate effect. Ofsted took the decision to complete a full inspection of the home.

The manager is a suitably experienced and qualified manager. She has been in post since the home opened in July 2022. However, conflict between the manager, staff and directors was evident at the time of the inspection with regards agreements about safe working practices and financial resources. Consequently, the manager resigned her position with immediate effect during the inspection. Therefore, there is no longer any registered person working at the home to monitor care practice and support the child and staff team.

There is insufficient staff working in the home to provide care for the child in line with her needs. Staff working in the home have often been working long hours to ensure the child is looked after by staff who are familiar to her. However, this is not sustainable and significant gaps were identified on the rota for the coming days. This compromises the child's welfare and does not ensure the child is living in a stable environment.

Leaders and managers have not provided staff with sufficient training to support the child with complex needs. As a result, the manager and staff lack the knowledge and skills to keep the child safe. Staff have not had sufficient training in self-injurious behaviours. They have also not received training in managing ligatures or allegations, despite these being known risks for the child. This is not safe practice.

Furthermore, the current directors do not have the skills or knowledge to provide staff with informed advice about managing risks and keeping children safe.

There is a lack of management oversight in the home. The manager has recently been undertaking shifts in the home and therefore has not had sufficient management time. Consequently, not all records in the home are dated and signed by the manager and staff.

External monitoring is poor. There has been no independent person suitably employed to undertake the monthly monitoring of the home. As a result, there are no monitoring visits or reports completed to support the manager in her daily oversight of the home.

An emergency suspension notice was issued on the provider during the inspection. Consequently, there are now no children living in the home. Ofsted will monitor the suspension.

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; 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; 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)(b)) This relates to staff not being suitably trained in safeguarding, physical intervention, and ligature training. Additionally, the home is not adequately staffed to meet the needs of the child.	4 November 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;	4 November 2022

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 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; ensure that the home’s workforce provides continuity of care to 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)(e)(f)(h)) In particular, the manager must ensure that there are sufficient numbers of staff working in the home and that they have all been suitably trained. Additionally, the manager must ensure that there is effective management oversight on all records in the home, including restraints and recruitment.	
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	4 November 2022

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; that each child's relevant plans are followed; that the child's placing authority is contacted, and a review of that child's relevant plans is requested, if— the registered person considers that the child is at risk of harm or has concerns that the care provided for the child is inadequate to meet the child's needs. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(i)(c)(e)(i)) This relates directly to the home not having in place the child's local authority documentation and insufficient arrangements in place to meet the needs of the child.	
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The registered person may only— employ an individual to work at the children's home; or if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home, if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). The requirements are that— the individual is of integrity and good character; the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform; the individual is mentally and physically fit for the purposes of the work that the individual is to perform; and full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3)(a)(b)(c)(d))	4 November 2022

This relates to poor safer recruitment practice, as records do not show that staff have been suitably vetted and assessed before working with the child in the home.	
The registered person must prepare and implement a policy ("the behaviour management policy") which sets out— how appropriate behaviour is to be promoted in the children's home; and the measures of control, discipline and restraint which may be used in relation to children in the home. 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— the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and 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 confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (1)(a)(b) (3)(a)(vii)(b)(i)(ii)(c)) This relates directly to staff who are not trained in restraint practices. Additionally, there is a lack management oversight and evaluation on restraint records, and insufficient detail about the reason for the measure and the appropriateness of the actions taken.	4 November 2022
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.	4 November 2022

(Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)(c)) This relates to records in the home that are not consistently read, understood and signed by all staff. Not all records are consistently signed and dated by the author. Furthermore, to ensure that the dates of admission are correctly entered into the home's register.	
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 must provide a copy of the independent person's report to— HMCI; upon request, the local authority for the area in which the home is located; the placing authorities of children; the registered provider and, if applicable, the registered manager; and the responsible individual (if one is nominated). (Regulation 44 (1) (4)(a)(b) (7)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)) This relates directly to ensuring that there is an appropriate independent visitor employed to complete external monitoring of the home.	4 November 2022

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: 2675665

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Bear Care Services Limited

Registered provider address: Suite 2a, Blackthorn House, Skull House Lane,
Appley Bridge, Wigan WN6 9DB

Registered manager: Lisa Taylor

Inspectors

Judith Birchall, Social Care Inspector
Mandy Williams, Social Care Inspector
Kelly McCurdy, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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