

2734815

Registered provider: Brookfield Care (NW) Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

A private provider operates this home. It is registered to provide care for up to five children who may experience social and emotional difficulties and have special educational needs and/or learning disabilities.

There were three children living at the home at the time of this inspection.

Since the last inspection, one child has moved out of the home and one child has moved in. The inspector was able to speak to all children about their experiences of living in the home.

The manager registered with Ofsted in July 2023.

Inspection dates: 24 and 25 September 2025

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 10 September 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
10/09/2024	full	outstanding
15/11/2023	full	outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children receive an exceptionally high standard of care from a stable and consistent team of staff who know them well. Staff are committed to the care and support they provide to the children and work through any challenges with them. Children live in this home for a long time, which provides them with extended periods of stability, enabling them to continue making progress in all areas of their lives.

There are excellent transition plans in place for children moving into the home. The manager carefully considers the needs of children moving into the home, assessing their needs alongside the needs of the children already living in the home and the skills and experience of the staff team. The manager ensures that they speak to the children's network, parents and carers and meets with children before they move into the home. Activities and meetings are arranged to enable children to get to know staff and peers before moving into the home. This helps children to feel valued and welcomed, while allowing them to build familiarity with the home and staff prior to moving in.

The manager and staff strongly advocate for children, helping them express their views and wishes regarding their care. This has resulted in the manager and staff supporting a child with a planned move back home. The manager worked with other professionals and parents to provide a structured transition, and staff provided outreach support following the move. This provided the child with a level of stability from trusted adults and their parents, with additional support, during a time of adjustment. The child's parent said, 'I genuinely have the utmost respect for everyone, for all staff who have helped and supported [name of child] and myself.'

The manager and staff promote children's education. All children are supported with their individual educational needs and are making significant progress. One child has enrolled on their chosen college course and is engaging well following a long period of disengagement in education before residing at the home. Another child is on track to achieve good grades in their GCSEs. When children are experiencing difficulties in education, the manager collaborates with social workers and virtual schools to ensure that children receive the necessary resources, interventions and encouragement to achieve their full potential and improve their educational experiences. However, not all children have their most recent education, health and care plan on file.

The senior staff have devised an in-house independence package, which helps children learn and develop key skills and knowledge in preparation for independent living. This supports children with building key aspects of their independence skills in areas such as day-to-day cleaning, self-care, laundry, travelling independently, cooking, budgeting, changing a light bulb and knowing where to turn off the gas, electricity and water. The staff are supporting children to work through their independence plans.

The manager and staff understand the importance of family for children and support them to build and maintain family connections. The staff ensure that parents are updated weekly and are included in discussions surrounding children's care. This ensures that parents feel included in their children's care and that children are supported by those important to them. Professionals state that they are impressed with the staff's working relationships with family.

Staff encourage children to engage in positive experiences and activities specific to their individual interests. Staff have identified local groups for children to attend. Children engage in a wide range of activities, including movie nights, quiz nights, nature walks, horse riding, football, drama, visiting theme parks, museums and coffee shops, and children have had holidays abroad. This supports children to nurture their talents and grow in confidence. Staff understand the importance of children's friendships in their hometowns and ensure that visits to friends are regularly supported.

Staff complete scrapbooks with children, capturing memories of their time at the home, children enjoy looking through their scrapbooks. Staff also complete positivity books for children with notes of encouragement and positivity each day. This reminds children of their day-to-day achievements and promotes a sense of accomplishment, value and appreciation.

Staff create a warm, homely environment that feels like a family home. Children are relaxed and comfortable in their home. The home is well maintained and furnished, with children's art and poems proudly displayed. The kitchen has recently been renovated, creating a spacious kitchen-dining area where children and staff gather to discuss their day. However, the glass panel in the kitchen door is not safety glass, but there are plans in place for this to be replaced.

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

Children are supported to develop extremely positive, caring and trusting relationships with staff. This provides children with a strong sense of safety and security.

Children identify staff as trusted adults and approach them with their concerns. Staff respond to children's concerns warmly and sensitively. The trust that staff have built with children helps staff to address sensitive subjects with them. For example, staff discuss issues such as friendships, relationships, self-harm and sexuality with children. Children feel empowered to develop their own sense of identity and express their views. This enables them to build a sense of self-worth.

Staff use a therapeutic approach to their caregiving, which is reflected in their detailed documentation of conversations and their strong understanding of each child's individual needs. Children say that staff have helped them to develop their independence skills, regulate their emotions and improve their mental health.

Children are supported to attend regular therapy sessions with the home's psychotherapist. The psychotherapist completes targeted work with children on subjects

such as sexuality, respectful relationships and being safe online. The home's psychotherapist also attends team meetings to reflect on staff practice. This helps to ensure that staff have a good understanding of the effects of child trauma and the impact of each child's past experiences. This equips staff with the skills and guidance to support children in understanding their care experiences in a safe and constructive manner.

The manager ensures that the training provided to staff is specific to the children's needs. As a result, staff have an exceptional understanding of children's risks and how to best respond when they are in crisis. Professionals say that staff are experienced and respond to children with a calm and patient approach.

Although there have been some changes in the staff team in the last year, staff practice remains consistent. Communication between staff is clear. Therefore, there are consistent boundaries in the home. This helps children to feel secure.

Children know how to make a complaint. Children's complaints are taken seriously, and leaders and managers thoroughly investigate concerns raised. They discuss complaints with children and gather their views about the action that should be taken to improve practice at the home. Leaders and managers also discuss the outcomes of complaints with children and provide them with a written response. Children say they are happy with the outcome of their complaints.

Allegations regarding staff conduct and practice are thoroughly investigated. Children's social workers are notified of any allegations to ensure that children have the right support during the investigation process. Referrals are made to appropriate professionals to allow for independent oversight, and appropriate action is taken to address the concerns raised and prevent reoccurrences. Outcomes of investigations are shared with children. This reassures children that they are being listened to.

There has been a high number of missing-from-home episodes since the last inspection. Some of these episodes have been for prolonged periods of time. Staff know the individual missing-from-home protocols for the children and follow them. Staff search for children and maintain contact with them and their known associates. Staff maintain open communication with the relevant professionals and work with them to facilitate the return home of children as quickly as possible. Staff are curious when gathering information to help to locate children. Children are welcomed home when they return, and staff ensure that they are safe and well. The collaborative working with others has led to a safe address being identified for one child to have overnight stays, which has resulted in a significant reduction in missing episodes and a positive transition back to their parents' care.

Incidents of self-harm and low mood for children are managed well. Staff understand and follow detailed protocols to support children with these issues. Staff know when to escalate concerns, seek additional support, monitor children's mood and provide emotional support. Children are provided with a self-harm soothing box, which contains sensory items to help distract them when they feel they may want to harm themselves.

Staff reflect on incidents with children and sensitively discuss their feelings and alternative coping mechanisms.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

An experienced and committed management team leads the home. The manager and seniors are highly motivated and ambitious in their vision for children. They have high expectations of staff and are committed to improving outcomes for children.

The manager has an exceptional understanding of his team's strengths and areas of development. Team development is heavily promoted. Each staff member has a personal workforce plan in place. Plans highlight strengths and areas for improvement, with clear actions for training and career development.

Staff receive high-quality, regular supervision from the manager and seniors. Supervisions have a strong focus on outcomes for children. They are reflective and detailed with clear actions set. Staff feel fully supported to develop in their role, and they enjoy working at the home.

Team meetings take place monthly and are well attended. Team meetings are used to discuss current issues for the children, reflect on practice and ensure that all staff are aware of and working in line with children's risk assessments. The home's psychotherapist and seniors reflect on research and training in team meetings. This ensures that therapeutic care is embedded into practice. It also empowers staff to use what they have learned from their discussions with children to identify what works best for them. The seniors also use quizzes to develop staff knowledge and understanding of children's needs, policies and procedures.

Leaders and managers follow safer recruitment checks and undertake additional checks and assurances when necessary. They explore any concerns about new staff and their potential impact on practice. This information is included in staff's personal workforce plans to ensure that they have the appropriate development opportunities and guidance.

The home is currently registered to provide care for up to five children. However, plans are in place to reduce the number of children as the home has not been used at full occupancy.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that windows and doors are compliant with relevant health and safety legislation. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that children's education, health care plans are requested and on file in the home. Staff in children's homes play a key role in supporting children in line with their education plans and must ensure that they are following recommendations from education and health professionals. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 26, paragraph 5.3)

Information about this inspection

The inspector has 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: 2734815

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Brookfield Care (NW) Ltd

Responsible individual: Michelle Kershaw

Registered manager: Marc Killen

Inspector

Renée Sims, Social Care Inspector

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