

2739386

Registered provider: Brighter Horizon Homes Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is a privately owned children's home that is registered to care for up to three children with learning disabilities. There were two children living at the home at the time of the inspection.

The post for a registered manager is currently vacant. An application is in progress.

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 March 2026

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

requires improvement to be good

How well children and young people are helped and protected

requires improvement to be good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers

requires improvement to be good

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: 3 December 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
03/12/2024	Full	Good
19/03/2024	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

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

Both children have settled into the home and are developing positive relationships with the current staff. External professionals working with one of the children provided positive feedback on the team's ability to meet needs and maintain safety. However, the previous staff member's harmful actions affected the children's sense of security around all staff.

Not all staff fully understand the complexity of the children's needs. This gap affects the consistency of care and the children's ability to make sense of their routines and boundaries.

Children's voices are central to practice within the home. This is evident in personalised bedrooms and a wide range of activities aligned with their interests, including karaoke, baking, beauty treatments, and day trips. Staff appropriately support children to understand when certain wishes cannot be met. However, some staff struggle to interpret the children's communication accurately.

The children's identities, including religious needs, are recognised and celebrated. Relationships with family and friends are encouraged and supported. At times, however, staff have permitted extended unauthorised family time. While this did not place the child at risk, it created avoidable inconsistency with the care plan and unnecessary tension with the family.

Staff have high aspirations for the children living at the home. However, some of the set targets are unrealistic and exceed the children's developmental understanding or capabilities. This places unnecessary pressure on both staff and children. It can escalate behaviours and alter perceptions of children's real progress.

The manager and deputy manager have recently identified the need for additional training to improve staff's knowledge and confidence. Plans are in place to commission a specialist consultant in learning disabilities and neurodevelopmental needs to support staff in understanding and responding to the children's presentations more effectively. The managers are in the process of reviewing children's plans to ensure that they set goals that are ambitious, but realistic and grounded in children's individual needs.

The children have made measurable progress in their routines, personal care, social interactions, and ability to identify their emotions. Staff implement a bespoke reward system that promotes independence at a pace aligned with each child's needs. Restrictions within the home are proportionate, for example hazardous items such as detergents and sharp utensils are secured but made available when children are appropriately supervised during tasks like cooking or laundry.

Both children attend school, and staff actively support their educational progress through structured activities at home and in the community. Education professionals report that children are making good progress toward their academic targets since moving into the home.

Staff are meeting the children's health needs, and managers advocate strongly for access to specialist services when required, such as child adolescent mental health service.

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

The staff currently working in the home can safeguard the children, and the children report feeling safe. However, this has not been consistent since the last inspection.

Risk assessments and behaviour support plans are up to date and provide clear guidance to staff on managing children's behaviours. Despite this, staff vary in their understanding of the children's ability to recognise and respond to risk. Some staff demonstrate good insight into the children's cognitive functioning, while others show limited understanding of their neurodevelopmental needs. This inconsistency results in variable support and responses to children's behaviours when risks arise.

On two occasions, staff attempted to manage behaviour using threats and physical harm. These incidents were reported to the local authority designated officer and to Ofsted, as required. The provider eventually took appropriate action to safeguard the children. However, management oversight was limited and, at times, delayed. As a result, children were not fully protected immediately, one child, was left feeling unsafe and worried.

Other allegations of physical harm made against staff were not consistently reported to the local authority designated officer or Ofsted. This meant there was no independent scrutiny of the provider's safeguarding practice. The previous home manager completed internal investigations, and outcomes were recorded. However, there is little evidence of how conclusions were reached or whether children were supported to understand the findings.

Restraint is used only as a last resort to safeguard children and others. Staff are trained in the home's preferred de-escalation techniques, and further training is planned to strengthen their ability to remain calm and use child-centred approaches. However, records do not always clearly describe the steps taken to avoid restraint, or the rationale for the specific behaviour response used. Children's records are written in an adult focused way.

Until recently, discussions with children about significant events (including serious incidents, physical interventions and allegations) were routinely held at the weekend. This practice formed part of the home's culture. As a result, children were not

supported promptly after important events, and in some cases the discussions become no longer meaningful to them. The rationale for this approach, and its impact on children's individual needs and ability to process information, was neither considered nor recorded. The timing of these conversations was also not always well thought through, for example taking place before bedtime or immediately after family time. Some records show a lack of child-centred practice when helping children reflect on incidents.

The responsible individual, new home manager and deputy manager recognise these shortfalls and are committed to improving children's experiences. The new management team has begun to implement a clear and well-considered plan to strengthen staff safeguarding awareness and their ability to keep children safe in line with individual needs. This is a positive step towards providing a more consistent and safer home environment.

Missing from home incidents are rare at this home. They are managed promptly, with effective multi agency collaboration involving social workers and the police when required. The new home manager and deputy manager demonstrate a good understanding of the reasons behind children's behaviours and consider creative approaches to reducing risk, such as planning supervised visits to locations a child seeks out when going missing from home.

Staff and managers understand the risks associated with social media and online activity, including exploitation. Safety measures and parental controls are in place in line with children's individual needs. Children are supported to understand why restrictions are necessary and how to access online activities safely, such as listening to music.

Staff's direct work with children on conflict management has contributed to improved relationships between the children. The children now often choose to take part in activities together. This represents significant progress for both children from their starting points.

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

The home is currently led by an experienced manager who has been in post since February 2026 and is in the process of registering with Ofsted. Although still developing her understanding of the children's needs and the staff team's professional development requirements, she is providing emerging stability.

Since the last inspection, the home has experienced several changes in management. Differing leadership styles, and an unstable workforce created inconsistency in the care children received and contributed to uncertainty for both staff and children.

While previous managers demonstrated a safeguarding led ethos, their leadership lacked the clarity and direction needed to embed this effectively in day to day practice.

Staff did not consistently feel heard or supported, and some reported that the impact of the role on their personal well-being was not recognised. These factors reduced staff's capacity to prioritise and respond safely to the children's complex needs and behaviours.

Allegations were not always addressed promptly, which at times undermined children's sense of safety. Weaknesses in management oversight, including limited analysis of incidents and insufficient recording of professional decision making, making it unclear whether children were consistently kept safe.

Current staff are relatively new but are permanently employed, providing much needed continuity for the children. Staff report feeling valued and supported by the current manager and describe being able to discuss their development needs openly.

The home manager is supported by a newly appointed deputy manager. Both leaders have a clear understanding of the home's strengths and areas for improvement. They hold high but realistic aspirations for the children and work effectively with external professionals to secure positive outcomes.

The current management team promotes reflective practice, non-judgemental learning from incidents, and a child centred approach. Staff demonstrate commitment and a strong sense of responsibility, though some lack the knowledge to support children in more complex situations.

Despite being in post for a short period, the manager and deputy have worked relentlessly with the responsible individual and senior leaders to address identified shortfalls. The manager has developed a clear plan to strengthen staff knowledge and skills in safeguarding and meeting children's complex needs. Staff welcome the forthcoming training, increased support, and opportunities for reflective supervision.

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, The 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 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 keep the behaviour management policy under review and, where appropriate, revise it. 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 name of the child; details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of the measure; the date, time and location of the use of the measure; 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 name of the person who used the measure ("the user"), and of any other person present when the measure was used; the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and	1 September 2026

a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result 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 confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. Paragraph (3) does not apply in relation to restraint that is planned or provided for as a matter of routine in the child's EHC plan or statement of special educational needs. (Regulation 35 (1)(a) (b) (2) (3)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(b)(i)(ii)(c)(4))	
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; 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. (Regulation 32 (1)(2)(a)(b)(3)(a)(b)(c))	1 September 2026
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there;	30 March 2026

a child protection enquiry involving a child —

is instigated; or

concludes (in which case, the notification must include the outcome of the child protection enquiry); or

there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious.
(Regulation 40 (c)(d)(i)(ii)(e))

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that the staff record information on individual children in a way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third party information. Information about the child should always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. ('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: 2739386

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Brighter Horizon Homes Ltd

Registered provider address: International House, 109-111 Fulham Palace Road,
London W6 8JA

Responsible individual: Keith Riley

Registered manager: Amy Ide

Inspector

Claudia Poienar, Social Care Inspector

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