

2798556

Registered provider: Brighter Stays Limited

Assurance inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is operated by a private company and provides care for up to two children who may have experience of trauma and social and emotional difficulties. Two children were living at the home at the time of the inspection.

The manager of the home registered with Ofsted on 3 January 2025.

Inspection date: 12 August 2025

Date of last inspection: 1 April 2025

Judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Information about this inspection

At this inspection, the inspector evaluated:

- the care of children
- the safety of children
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers.

The inspector has looked closely at the experiences and progress of children, using the social care common inspection framework. This assurance 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'.

Findings from the inspection

We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance inspection.

At the time of the inspection, two children were living at the home. The children have lived at the home since January 2025. One child spoke with the inspector.

One child said that they like living at this home and have no complaints about their care.

Staff have helped children to meet their health needs. One child has made significant progress. For the first time, the child has engaged with their annual health assessment. A professional said that staff treat the child with 'compassion' regarding their difficulties and that staff offer 'safe boundaries and incentives for the child to engage'. Staff are helping the child to work towards a health referral which will help them to better understand their needs. For another child, referrals have been made for assessment of their individual health needs.

Staff support children to make educational progress. One child really enjoys school and has achieved excellent attendance. Professionals have worked together to adapt an educational package to better suit the child's individual needs. One child has tutoring at the home. Staff have helped them to move towards more meaningful engagement. There are plans for the child to attend college in September 2025. This is progress for the child, who had not been in education for years.

Staff understand the children and have good relationships with them. The manager and staff are empathic towards children and understand their previous trauma.

Children have incentive plans that help them to think about their choices. Despite some challenges, this is a positive way to help children achieve goals and make progress.

Children enjoy a variety of activities. One child enjoys swimming and days out. The staff support another child to attend a music studio weekly. One child enjoys having friends to the home and cooking for everyone.

Children are supported to maintain links with important people in their lives. The staff arranged and supported one child to spend time away in a caravan with their family.

Staff understand risks to children. They have individual plans that help them to understand the potential harm children may experience, and the strategies to respond to risks. Plans are regularly updated. There are risks that are not included in the child's risk assessment, which limits the effectiveness of the child's plan.

Children do not go missing from home. When they have time in the community, they remain in touch with the staff.

The children are supported to reflect on their behaviour. Incidents of physical intervention are rare. There has been one incident since the last inspection. Following this, the child made an allegation against staff that was properly investigated, with learning identified for staff. On another occasion, a child was guided away from a conflict. This is not recorded clearly and implies that a physical restraint was used. This recording could be improved.

At times, the staff are challenged by behavioural incidents. This is usually in response to rules, boundaries and substance misuse. There are expectations in place; however, this is an ongoing challenge. Staff support children with conversations, exploring root causes and removing illegal substances. However, the manager believes more searches are happening than are recorded. The child has started to have conversations about possible support. They have agreed to attend a drug awareness programme that the staff will encourage. Several incidents are poorly documented, and records of these require improvement.

The manager has made improvements since the last inspection. She has introduced a clear system for recruitment and new staff have had all appropriate checks in line with regulations.

Staff attend the organisation's mandatory training and additional training. There is evidence of upskilling sessions with staff as part of their ongoing development. The manager acknowledges that the development of staff skills and confidence is ongoing and that further training is required. Although staff have had training in therapeutic approaches, embedding this into practice remains an area for development. Staff have not had training in substance misuse.

Management oversight and recording have improved overall. There is evidence of staff and child debriefs after incidents that lead to actions. Children's voices are captured in records. However, further work is required to address inconsistencies in monitoring the quality and timeliness of record keeping. A new deputy manager and the manager have plans to introduce new monitoring systems.

There have been several complaints by neighbours that leaders and managers have taken action to address. Staff continue to recognise how important it is for the children to have a sense of belonging in their community. These relationships have an impact on their stability. Efforts to resolve issues are ongoing.

There have been some investigations into staff practice. There has been appropriate external oversight and action taken in response to these.

The registered manager is in the final stages of her relevant level 5 qualification and has started a senior leadership qualification. The manager has met two of the requirements that were raised at the last inspection.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
01/04/2025	Full	Requires improvement to be good

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 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— use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(h))	1 September 2025

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful, accurate, up-to-date, objective and clear recording. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)
- The registered person should ensure that records of restraint enable the registered person and staff to review the use of control, discipline and restraint to identify effective practice and respond promptly where any issues or trends of concern emerge. The review should provide the opportunity for amending practice to ensure it meets the needs of each child. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 49, paragraph 9.59)
- The registered person should ensure that they continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. In particular, ensure that the child's risk assessment is kept up to date. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5)
- The registered person should ensure that staff can access appropriate facilities and resources to support their training needs. In particular, ensure that all staff

have substance misuse training. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.11)

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 2798556

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Brighter Stays Limited

Registered provider address: Bradshaw Johnson Chartered Accountants, 11 Bancroft, Hitchin SG5 1JQ

Responsible individual:

Registered manager: Elizabeth Chisanga

Inspector

Carrie Twinn, Social Care Inspector

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