

2803005

Registered provider: Bear Care 1 Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned by a private organisation. It provides care for up to 4 children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

At the time of this inspection, 2 children were living in the home.

The previous manager left in April 2026, and a new manager has been appointed. They have not yet applied to register with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 15 and 16 June 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: 23 July 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
23/07/2025	Full	Good

Summary of findings

Several shortfalls have affected the care of children. Staff have not always been able to meet children's needs, and staff practice has sometimes not been child focused. There has been lack of appropriate management oversight of incidents, and recording has been of poor quality.

There have been significant changes in the leadership team since the last inspection. The previous manager has left, and a new manager has been appointed. Leaders and managers are aware of the shortfalls identified at this inspection. They have recently made positive changes and have clear plans to address the shortfalls in the service.

Inspection judgements

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

Since the last inspection, 3 children have moved out of the home, and one child has moved in. The inspector saw and spoke with both children living at the home at the time of this inspection.

Staff do not consistently support children to have positive experiences of moving into and out of the home. Planning before children move in has not been effective, and staff have not been able to meet children's needs. Consequently, notice has been issued for both children to move out of the home. This does not support children's sense of stability and wellbeing. Staff took one child, who recently moved out, to visit their new home. They were able to meet staff and choose their new bedroom before moving in. This provided the child with a positive experience.

There are imminent plans to renovate the home, and repairs to address recent damage are taking place. Children have contributed to the planned redecoration and design of their bedrooms. However, the house is not yet well maintained and does not provide a homely environment. Some areas of the home are outdated and require attention, and some furniture is worn and broken. This does not help children to feel pride in where they live.

Children engage in education with the support of a tutor. Staff have helped them make progress with their engagement and development. One professional said that there have been recent improvements in communication with staff regarding children's educational progress. They now receive updates. However, children rarely engage in opportunities to support their learning and development of new skills outside of formal tutoring arrangements.

Staff have not fully considered children's diverse needs. Children have not received a variety of meals that reflect and support their cultural backgrounds. The new manager

has identified this as an area for development and has incorporated children's choices into meal planning.

Staff have not planned and facilitated a range of engaging activities for children. As a result, children have had limited opportunities to participate in meaningful experiences and develop positive relationships with staff. The new manager has identified this as an area for development and has introduced activity planning, which they anticipate will support children in accessing new experiences.

Staff do not consistently maintain high-quality records. Children's records do not always provide sufficient detail about incidents that have occurred. In addition, the language used is not consistently child focused and, on occasion, may be perceived as blaming or lacking a nurturing approach. The manager has reinforced the importance of accurate, high-quality recording with the staff team.

Feedback shared by one professional highlighted that a child has made progress since moving into the home. Staff have supported the child to develop a better understanding of the risks they face, which has helped them to recognise how to keep themselves safe.

Staff support children to spend positive time with their families, helping them to maintain and strengthen these relationships.

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

Staff lack the skills and ability to consistently meet the needs of children and manage difficult situations. Several incidents have occurred, and staff have been unable to de-escalate these. As a result, the police have been called. This does not support children to develop skills to manage their emotions effectively in the company of trusted adults. It also increases the possibility of children being criminalised. When serious incidents have occurred, information has not always been shared clearly and quickly with external agencies. Subsequently opportunity for evidence gathering has potentially been missed or delayed.

Staff do not always recognise when the use of physical restraint is necessary or proportionate, and actions taken by leaders and managers have not always been consistent. On one occasion, a child was restrained in order to retrieve an e-cigarette. The manager at the time did not identify and respond to this poor practice. The new leadership team identified the shortfall in practice and acted to address concerns with the team. Since the new leadership team has taken over, allegations against staff have been managed appropriately, and immediate actions have been taken where there have been potential risks to children arising from staff practice.

Staff have lacked confidence when it has been necessary to use physical intervention. In response, leaders and managers have ensured that staff attend physical intervention training. The new manager has demonstrated effective practice, including the use of de-escalation techniques, to support the staff team. For one child, this approach helped to

reduce the escalation of a heightened incident. The new leadership team has revised behaviour management plans, providing staff with clearer guidance on how to support children effectively during moments of heightened emotions.

Staff and children are not always provided with opportunities to discuss their experiences following incidents. Debriefs have not been carried out consistently, and management oversight is not always recorded. As a result, it is unclear whether managers have always ensured that incidents have been well managed or that staff and children have received the necessary support and opportunity to express their views.

Staff do not always follow procedures in place to help keep children safe. On one occasion, when a child went missing in the local area, staff did not follow the manager's advice to continue searching and instead returned to the home. This delayed efforts to locate the child promptly. The manager has revised behaviour management plans, providing staff with clearer guidance on the actions they should take in response to specific incidents.

Staff do not consistently support children to understand the risks they face. The quality and consistency of direct work with children are variable, resulting in missed opportunities to support children's ability to keep themselves safe. The new manager has implemented structured plans to improve the quality of direct work carried out with children.

The manager has taken appropriate action in response to the potential emergence of a closed culture in the home.

The leadership team has implemented a structured fire procedure to reduce risk in the event of a fire. This helps to ensure that staff and children are aware of processes to follow.

Staff have supported one child to develop their understanding of the risks they face. This has helped the child to keep themselves safe.

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

Since the last full inspection, there have been significant changes in the leadership team. The previous manager left the home in April 2026. A new manager has since been appointed; however, they have not yet applied to register with Ofsted.

The new manager has identified and shared with the responsible individual several shortfalls relating to the quality of care provided to children and previous management oversight. In response, several team meetings and training sessions have been held to address these shortfalls. Senior leaders have developed a clear plan of action. However, these changes have only recently been introduced; therefore, some actions have not yet been fully implemented and others are yet to be embedded.

Communication with partner professionals has been inconsistent. Some professionals reported positive experiences of communication. These professionals highlighted some positive experiences for children, with improvements identified. However, one professional raised significant concern about the care of a child and the lack of clear information-sharing when incidents occur. This does not help leaders and managers build effective working relationships with the wider network and has the potential to undermine multidisciplinary working to support children. On occasion, the provider has not notified Ofsted of serious incidents. This has created gaps in the consistent monitoring of the home.

Staff have not been consistently supported to develop their knowledge and experience in line with children's needs. Some members of staff have not received up-to-date attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) training despite caring for children with ADHD. Staff have not received training on keeping children safe on social media, despite there being a current risk for one child in this area. Consequently, staff's ability to be professionally curious when managing incidents is limited.

Two members of staff are outside the required time frame for achieving a relevant qualification. Leaders have not monitored this effectively. For other members of staff who have sourced their qualifications independently, evidence of their progress has not been provided. Consequently, this has prevented the manager from having clear oversight of their progress.

Leaders and managers undertake appropriate safer recruitment processes and maintain clear oversight of staff recruitment documentation. This helps to ensure that staff are safe to work with children.

The manager is supportive of her staff team. There has been regular oversight, and staff have been offered support during challenging experiences.

The new manager has carried out a critical review of the service, which clearly identifies shortfalls and the actions required to address them. However, this plan is in its early stages, and the identified actions have yet to be implemented and embedded.

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 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; and are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies; 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)(vii) (b)) In particular, ensure that: external agencies are notified promptly and provided with clear information regarding safeguarding incidents that have occurred;	26 August 2026

staff follow the policies and procedures in place to keep children safe. This includes adhering to missing-from-home protocols and behaviour management plans; staff support children to understand the risks they face and develop skills needed to keep themselves safe.	
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— 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 have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of 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)(c)(f)(h)) In particular, ensure that: consistent oversight of records and the care provided to children is maintained, with any shortfalls in staff practice addressed; Ofsted is notified of serious incidents in a timely manner; monitoring systems are implemented effectively to identify shortfalls and drive improvements in the quality of care; staff have the appropriate experience, qualifications and skills to meet children's needs;	26 August 2026

staff are monitored and supported to achieve the relevant qualification within the required time frame.	
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; manage and review the placement of each child in the home; and plan for, and help, each child to prepare to leave the home or to move into adult care in a way that is consistent with arrangements agreed with the child’s placing authority; that each child’s relevant plans are followed. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(i)(ii)(iii)(c)) In particular, ensure that: staff support children to move into and out of the home in a planned manner; suitable assessments of children’s needs are carried out, taking into consideration the ability of the staff team to meet those needs and the impact of children living together.	26 August 2026
The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children’s home’s overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children;	1 July 2026

use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential.

In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—

ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to—

meet the needs of each child; and

enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home;
(Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(i)(ii))

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure the home's records for each child represent a significant contribution to their life history. Staff should ensure that the language used in children's records is child focused and captures the full detail of events that have occurred. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.5)
- The registered person should seek to establish a diverse staff team with a range of interests, skills and experiences, taking into consideration the individual needs of children. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 52, paragraph 10.6)

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: 2803005

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Bear Care 1 Limited

Registered provider address: Suite 22, The Ongar Business Centre, The Gables,
Ongar, Essex CM5 0FE

Responsible individual: Seonaidh O'Neill

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Sophie Levy, Social Care Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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

© Crown copyright 2026