

2806691

Registered provider: Bright Path Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned and managed by a private provider. It offers care for up to 2 children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

At the time of this inspection, 2 children were living in the home. The inspector spoke with both children.

The manager registered with Ofsted in April 2026.

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 May 2026

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/or the care and experiences of children and young people are poor and they are not making progress.

Date of last inspection: 14 May 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
14/05/2025	Full	Good

Summary of findings

This inspection identified significant shortfalls in safeguarding practice, as well as in leadership and management of the home. As a result, children have been exposed to significant risk of harm. Furthermore, children's safety and welfare are not consistently prioritised. Consequently, the home has been judged to be inadequate.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

Significant shortfalls in safeguarding practice and leadership and management mean that children have not received adequate care and support.

One child has moved into the home since the last inspection. The previous registered manager failed to carry out a thorough risk assessment to determine whether the home was suitable for the child. For example, detailed information about the child's background was not obtained. This limits the ability to accurately assess risk and consider the potential impact on other children living in the home.

The communal areas of the home are well maintained and decorated to a good standard. Children are supported and encouraged to personalise their bedrooms to reflect their preferences. However, not all bedrooms are maintained to an acceptable standard. In one child's bedroom, there was crockery containing leftover food and a cigarette butt in a tin next to the bed. Not all staff were aware that the child smoked, despite previous concerns about the child smoking in their bedroom.

Children have made some progress while living in the home. One child is preparing to move to semi-independence, and staff support is helping to make this a positive experience. Additionally, one child's social worker praised the staff team for the support provided in relation to the child's education, which has led to improved engagement.

Children say that they are happy living in the home and feel supported by staff. However, due to a high turnover of staff, children have not had opportunities to develop and maintain established relationships.

Children are supported to engage in activities of their choice, and staff participate in these activities alongside them. Children's views, wishes and feelings are considered and, where appropriate, acted on. This helps children understand that their views are valued.

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

Safeguarding practice in the home does not adequately promote children's safety and welfare.

Leaders and managers have not ensured that staff undergo all necessary pre-employment checks before allowing them to work in the home. This failure to carry out safer recruitment checks in line with the legislative requirements increases the risk of unsuitable adults caring for children.

Children's safety plans do not include up-to-date information about emerging risks and do not provide clear strategies for staff to follow to protect children from harm. For example, risk assessments do not address the risks associated with one child's access to knives. Additionally, guidance for staff on when to contact the police if children go missing is unclear, which does not support an effective safeguarding response.

Leaders and managers have failed to ensure that a staff member with a relevant first-aid qualification is always on shift, as required. This shortfall has the potential to place children at risk in the event of a medical emergency.

Leaders, managers and staff do not demonstrate a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in safeguarding children, nor do they take effective action when concerns arise. For example, records show that a child was able to enter the office, access a locked box and take the home's car keys, which were then used to drive the provider's vehicle away from the home. Despite opportunities to intervene, staff did not take action. Consequently, the child and members of the public were placed at significant risk of harm.

On another occasion, when the registered manager and staff observed cigarettes in a child's bedroom and noted the room was filled with smoke, they did not immediately remove the cigarettes to reduce the evident fire risk.

The use of bedroom door alarms, intended to alert staff when children may need support, has not been risk assessed. Consequently, leaders and managers cannot demonstrate that their use is reasonable and proportionate.

Although staff speak to children about the risks associated with their behaviour, opportunities to carry out direct work with children have been missed, particularly in relation to vehicle theft and the influence of peers involved in offending behaviour. As a result, children are not helped to fully understand the potential consequences of such behaviour.

Responses to children going missing are not consistently effective. Staff do not always take proactive steps to search for children, even when they have information about their whereabouts. For example, staff were given details of where a child was staying but did not attend until the following day, leaving the child out overnight without adult supervision. On this occasion, leaders and managers identified the shortfall in practice and addressed it with the staff involved.

Room searches are carried out to safeguard children; however, they are not consistently reviewed and evaluated by leaders and managers, which limits oversight and opportunities to identify learning.

Allegations relating to staff conduct and practice are responded to appropriately, and action is taken when investigation outcomes raise concerns about a staff member's suitability to work with children. However, there was a significant delay in notifying the local authority designated officer and Ofsted following an allegation about a staff member's conduct in the home. This limits opportunities for effective independent oversight and scrutiny.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

The leadership and management of the home are not effective. Action has not been taken to meet the requirements from the previous inspection.

Leaders and managers are not managing and leading the home in a manner that is consistent with the aims outlined in the home's statement of purpose. Staffing instability has led to several new staff members being appointed since the last inspection, including a new registered manager and responsible individual. This instability has contributed to the shortfalls identified.

Leaders and managers have not provided staff with sufficient training to support children's needs. As a result, staff lack the knowledge and skills to keep children safe. For example, some staff members have not received physical intervention training. Therefore, they have not been able to use this strategy to protect children when incidents occur. Additionally, mandatory training, such as first aid and fire safety, has not been prioritised. Consequently, staff who have worked in the home for several months have not completed the training.

Systems to support staff are ineffective. There is not always a senior staff member or manager in the home to guide and support less-experienced staff. Furthermore, records show that some staff members do not always use the on-call service. Instead, they rely on guidance from the placing authority's emergency duty team during periods of crisis. On one occasion, when staff attempted to seek support through the on-call service, leaders and managers were unavailable.

Staff commend the registered manager for her guidance and support following a period of instability after the previous registered manager and responsible individual left the home. Staff say that they feel supported and receive regular supervision. However, records show that there are gaps in staff receiving supervision. Furthermore, not all supervision records are signed and dated. Failure to provide supervision regularly reduces opportunities for staff to have dedicated time to reflect on their practice and any development needed.

Record management is poor. Information in incident records is inconsistent and unclear, and some supervision records and children's plans are not signed and dated. Additionally, the home's statement of purpose contains information relating to the provider's other home. This does not demonstrate that there is effective management oversight in the home.

Systems to monitor the quality of care that children receive are not effective. For example, leaders and managers have not identified that some staffing arrangements are unsafe for children. Additionally, following significant incidents, leaders and managers have failed to review risk assessments, including the fire risk assessment, to ensure that the home environment remains safe and appropriate for children.

Insufficient staffing in the home has compromised children's safety and welfare. Inexperienced staff work in the home without a senior staff member or manager present. As a result, during a significant incident, where the child drove the provider's car, staff were unable to take effective action to stop this incident escalating and keep the child safe.

Team meetings regularly take place. They are child focused and used by leaders and managers to share practice expectations and establish an agreed working pattern in the home.

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 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)(b)) Specifically, leaders, managers and staff must ensure that when children are acting in a manner that compromises their safety and wellbeing, they use risk-assessed safeguarding strategies, including physical intervention, to protect them from harm. Leaders, managers and staff must ensure that each child has a safety plan that reflects their current risks and provides staff with clear strategies on how to mitigate them.	28 June 2026

When children are smoking in the home, leaders, managers and staff must take action to prevent this and reduce the associated risks. This includes, where necessary, carrying out room searches and immediately removing items such as cigarettes, matches and lighters. In addition, the home's risk assessment must be reviewed to ensure that mitigation of this risk is clear. Leaders and managers must ensure that relevant external safeguarding professionals, such as the local authority designated officer, are notified immediately when there is an allegation or concern about staff conduct that affects children's safety and welfare.	
*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; 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; 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)(d)(e)(h)) Leaders and managers must ensure that staff receive regular supervision in accordance with the home's statement of purpose.	28 June 2026

Leaders and managers must ensure that there is always a senior staff member on shift who has the relevant skills and experience. Leaders and managers must ensure that all staff have completed the provider's mandatory training and any needs-led training before caring for children in the home. Leaders and managers must ensure that effective monitoring systems are in place to identify gaps in staff training and supervision. Leaders and managers must ensure that safeguarding incidents are thoroughly evaluated and that action is taken to support and develop staff if shortfalls in practice are identified. Leaders and managers must ensure records relating to bedroom searches are reviewed and evaluated.	
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and 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. (Regulation 14 (1)(a) (2)(a))	12 August 2026
The registered person must ensure that— at all times, at least one person on duty at the home has a suitable first aid qualification. (Regulation 31 (2)(a))	12 August 2026
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— a child is involved in or subject to, or is suspected of being involved in or subject to, sexual exploitation; there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there;	12 August 2026

there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(a)(c)(e)) Specifically, leaders and managers must ensure that the regulator is notified immediately when allegations are made in relation to staff conduct and practice.	
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; 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) (3)(a)(b)(c)(d)) Specifically, leaders and managers must ensure that employment references are obtained in line with legislative requirements as part of the safer recruitment process.	12 August 2026
In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— meet each child's behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child's relevant plans; help each child to develop socially aware behaviour. (Regulation 11 (2)(a)(i)(ii))	12 August 2026

Specifically, leaders, managers and staff must ensure that children are encouraged to engage in meaningful discussions and direct work in relation to their identified risks.	
The registered person must— keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it Subject to paragraph (6), the registered person must ensure that the home is at all times conducted in a manner which is consistent with its statement of purpose. (Regulation 16 (3)(a) (5)) Specifically, leaders and managers must ensure that children receive care as outlined in the home’s statement of purpose. Leaders and managers must ensure that the information contained in the statement of purpose relates to the home.	12 August 2026
The registered person may only use devices for the monitoring or surveillance of children if— the monitoring or surveillance is no more intrusive than necessary, having regard to the child’s need for privacy. (Regulation 24 (1)(d)) Specifically, leaders and managers must ensure that each child has a risk assessment that clearly outlines the rationale for the use of door alarms. Furthermore, they must ensure that the risk assessment is regularly reviewed to evidence proportionality.	12 August 2026
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. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)(c)) Leaders and managers must ensure that placing authority documentation is signed and dated.	12 August 2026

Furthermore, leaders and managers must ensure that records relating to supervision are signed and dated by both the supervisor and the supervisee.	
After consultation with the fire and rescue authority, the registered person must— make arrangements for persons working at the home to receive suitable training in fire prevention. (Regulation 25 (1)(c))	12 August 2026

*These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that all areas of the home are well maintained. Children's bedrooms should be kept clean and tidy. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

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: 2806691

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Bright Path Care Limited

Registered provider address: 17 Victoria Road East, Thornton-Cleveleys, Lancashire
FY5 5HT

Responsible individual: Katie Brinkworth

Registered manager: Elizabeth Vetcher

Inspector

Chibuzo Otache, 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