

2815492

Registered provider: Three Bridges Care Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is privately operated. It provides care for up to 4 children who may experience social and emotional difficulties and/or mental disorders.

The home registered with Ofsted in December 2024. There is no registered manager. An acting manager has been in post since February 2026 and has submitted their application to register with Ofsted.

At the time of this inspection, 3 children were living in the home, and all children were spoken with.

Inspection dates: 1 and 2 April 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: 28 April 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
28/04/2025	Full	Good

Summary of findings

Some children make progress in this home, but their experiences are mixed. Some children enjoy spending time with staff. However, the high turnover of staff has had a negative effect on the children's experiences.

Staff responses to safeguarding concerns are not always effective and staff are not always proactive in addressing issues. Some staff have lacked confidence in responding to some children's behaviours and have contacted the police, and this has not been helpful for children. Staff work with multi-agency partners and children's family members when they go missing from home.

The leadership of the team has been poor at times. Some staff have felt unsupported and this has had a negative effect on morale. Staffing instability has continued to cause disruption to the team and the children. A new manager has very recently been appointed. They are settling into their role and prioritising the needs of the children by focusing on creating stability in the team.

Inspection judgements

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

Children have mixed experiences. Children say that they like some things about living at the home, such as fun activities, and one child said that there is nothing much they would change. However, since the last inspection, there has been a significant turnover of staff and children have moved out. This has been unsettling for all children. Some children said that sometimes they do not feel valued and cared for because staff continually leave them.

Children's progress varies. Two children have left the home because leaders concluded that their needs, or the needs of other children living in the home, could no longer be safely met. Managers undertook some work to understand children's behaviour, identify risks and work with partner agencies. However, this work was not effective in sustaining children's care at the home. Some behaviour management practice and strategies to help children live together safely have not always been effective which has contributed to children needing to move out. Children make progress in other areas, such as attendance and engagement at school, specific independence skills and communication. When children do not attend school, staff advocate for alternative learning arrangements to be made.

Children have preferred members of staff who they can go to if they have worries. This has helped some children to share important information with staff about their safety and wellbeing. However, children's concerns are not always shared quickly enough with the relevant people. This can leave children feeling frustrated, increasing their concerns, such as keeping in touch with family members.

When children move out, staff work with the new carers to help children move to their new home. Staff stay in touch with children after they leave to help maintain relationships and reduce the effect that moving on can have.

Staff arrange activities for the children, such as trips to theme parks and days at the beach. They help children to keep active through boxing at the gym and nurturing creative skills by doing arts and crafts at home. Children say that they enjoy spending time with some of the staff. These enjoyable experiences help children to build positive memories.

The home is well decorated, comfortable, homely and welcoming. Children's bedrooms are well presented and personalised. Children's photographs and artwork on display enrich the homely environment. The manager is working on ways to bring the bin storage in the back yard up to the same general standards as the inside of the home.

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

Staff responses to safeguarding concerns are inconsistent. Staff are not always proactive in trying to address issues. For example, one child vapes in the home and there is not sufficient challenge to this. There are concerns about where the child is obtaining the vapes from without the funds to do so, but there is no clear plan in place to address this.

Police have been called in response to some incidents involving children, increasing the risk children may be criminalised. Although analysis has taken place to try and develop different strategies with children to reduce the number of calls to the police, this has not yet been successful. In one serious example, the reasons why police were called by staff were not clearly understood or recorded. This limits leaders' ability to fully evaluate whether staff responses were proportionate and whether children could have been supported differently.

Managers usually respond appropriately when children make allegations or raise concerns about staff practice. In the majority of instances, managers act promptly, work with multi-agency partners, investigate concerns and take relevant action to safeguard children. However, in one significant exception, leaders did not ensure that the matter was investigated effectively or with sufficient rigour and independence. This limited assurances that the child's worries had been fully explored.

Practice following a restraint incident is variable. Children are usually given the opportunity to talk afterwards at a time when they feel able to do so. Not all incidents have management oversight. Some of the details in records about incidents are unclear, including whether staff have been spoken with. This means that important information about the event may be overlooked.

Missing-from-home incidents and associated risks for some children are increasing. However, staff know what to do when children go missing from home and take action to try to keep children safe. Staff work with multi-agency partners and family members to look for children. Records of missing episodes are detailed, with consistent management oversight, and show that staff are consistent in their responses to missing-from-home incidents.

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

The leadership of the team has been poor at times. Some staff have felt unsupported and this has had a negative effect on morale. The new manager is settling into their role and is prioritising the needs of the children by focusing on creating stability in the team.

Some of the core staff are skilled and experienced and can meet the needs of the children well. However, since the last inspection, significant numbers of staff have left. While some leavers have been managed appropriately through the disciplinary process, the majority of these changes have meant children have experienced some disruption in relationships with workers. Some newer staff have not yet completed the mandatory and bespoke training needed to equip them with the knowledge and skills needed to consistently meet all the children's needs.

The new manager has a vision for the future and has plans to make significant changes in the home, focusing on developing a supportive culture where staff feel valued. Staff speak positively about the new manager and say that they feel well supported and that things are moving in the right direction. Staff say that the new manager is more present and available and that there is better management oversight.

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person 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 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— 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's workforce provides continuity of care to 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; demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on— feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received; 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)(b)(c)(e)(f)(g)(ii)(h))	31 May 2026

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— 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; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(ii)(iii)(vi))	31 May 2026
The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults. 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; strive to gain each child's respect and trust; understand how children's previous experiences and present emotions can be communicated through behaviour and have the competence and skills to interpret these and develop positive relationships with children; de-escalate confrontations with or between children, or potentially violent behaviour by children. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(viii)(ix)(xi))	31 May 2026
The children's views, wishes and feelings standard is that children receive care from staff who—	31 May 2026

take their views, wishes and feelings into account in relation to matters affecting the children's care and welfare and their lives. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff— ascertain and consider each child's views, wishes and feelings, and balance these against what they judge to be in the child's best interests when making decisions about the child's care and welfare. (Regulation 7 (1)(c) (2)(a)(i))	
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 date, time and location of the use of the measure; a description of the measure and its duration; 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. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(iii)(iv)(b)(i)(ii)(c))	

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that they agree with their local police force, procedures and guidance on police involvement with the home to reduce unnecessary police involvement in managing behaviour and criminalisation of behaviours. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 47, paragraph 9.40)
- The registered person should ensure that they review recording systems and children's plans to ensure they are helpful to supporting staff to fulfil their

responsibilities in meeting the needs of children. ('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'.

Childrens home details

Unique reference number: 2815492

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Three Bridges Care Ltd

Registered provider address: 12 Salisbury Road, Durham DH1 5QT

Responsible individual: Gaynor Harrison

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Amy Groom, Social Care Inspector

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