

SC068032

Registered provider: Branas Isaf (Holdings) Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home provides care for up to seven children who are male, aged from 10 to 18 years and who may have a history of sexually harmful behaviours.

The provider offers a therapeutic service and operates a school off site. The inspector only inspected the social care provision.

The manager registered with Ofsted in October 2022. She is suitably experienced and qualified.

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 February 2023

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 10 August 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
10/08/2021	Full	Good
11/03/2020	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
16/09/2019	Full	Good
14/03/2019	Interim	Improved effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Five children currently live in the home. Since the last inspection, five children have moved to the home and six children have left. All moves from the home have been planned, with many moving on to independent or semi-independent accommodation.

Children living at the home make exceptional progress. Staff have developed highly individualised plans, which gives children structure and routine. This structure and routine helps children to learn about expectations and appropriate boundaries. As a result, children develop a greater awareness of themselves, an understanding of expectations and a sense of personal responsibility, and gain independence.

Staff actively promote the importance of education and having a good work ethic. There is a focus on the importance of children being in education or employment to aid resilience when they move on to the next stages of their lives. Staff also encourage children to take on part-time and voluntary work alongside their studies. As a result, all children are in education and/or employment. This has helped children develop confidence and self-esteem. Children are aspirational about their future.

Staff are not critical of children. They accept that children will make mistakes and poor judgements and push boundaries. Staff recognise that by using positive relationships they can get children back on track without being punitive or blaming the child. This helps to build trust. Staff implement boundaries, which help children feel respected and valued.

Children are supported and encouraged to explore their past experiences through therapy and direct work with the home's therapist and staff. There is good multidisciplinary working. This means children can come to terms with their past trauma and develop skills to keep themselves safe in the future.

Children are not prevented from participating in activities because of their history. Staff are creative and think outside the box so that children can have experiences the same as any other child, such as joining clubs, where appropriate meeting friends and family, and going shopping, to the cinema and trampoline parks and having days out. Staff also make sure that occasions are celebrated, such as playing enjoyable games at Christmas and staff organising a murder mystery event for New Year. This supports children's social skills, allows them to make and maintain friendships and enjoy activities that are important to them.

Staff have developed programmes of independence which children work through. These programmes identify areas that children need support with and how staff can help them. Sometimes, children struggle but staff do not give up. They think

creatively and find new ways to help children achieve. Consequently, children achieve high levels of independence before they move on to the next stages of their lives.

Children's health is prioritised. Staff listen to children about how they want to be supported with their health. For example, one child wanted to stop taking their medication. Staff supported them to visit the GP and advocated for the child. As a result, the medication was reduced and finally stopped. Since then, the child's overall health has improved.

The home has undergone redecoration, in which children have had an opportunity to express their views. The main areas of the home are well presented. Children's rooms are clean and tidy with everything children need. The home feels much more homely and welcoming. Children say that they like the changes and that it now feels like a home.

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

Children living at the home have experienced trauma and many exhibit behaviours that pose a risk to themselves or others. As a result, staff have developed robust risk assessments and behaviour plans based on good research of managing such complex children in a supportive and non-judgemental way. This approach to safe risk-taking through learning means children become increasingly safe with restrictions being lifted when safe to do so.

A multidisciplinary approach supports children to understand their past and the risk-taking behaviours they have presented. As children progress and show levels of understanding, they are given more freedoms, for example being allowed time away from the home without staff, and access to mobile phones and the internet. On occasions, children do make poor decisions and put themselves at risk. Staff do not criticise but talk this through with the child and put in place additional learning before allowing the freedoms to continue. As a result, children learn about risks, how to avoid putting themselves in risky situations, and consequences.

Children living at the home may have additional restrictions placed on them by the court. In these situations, staff make sure that the child keeps to those restrictions, understands why those restrictions are in place and do not overly restrict children if there is not the need to do so. For example, children who cannot be left unaccompanied with other children are supported by staff in education. This means that they can still attend full-time education and do not miss out on opportunities.

On occasions, children go missing. Staff are proactive in searching and trying to find children. Staff follow the home's missing-from-care protocols. When there are concerns about children when they are away from the home, staff report to other professionals appropriately. This means that children and others are kept safe from harm.

When allegations and concerns are raised, staff record and report to the relevant agencies appropriately. Managers make sure that these concerns are fully investigated. However, on one occasion, the manager failed to let a child's placing authority know about a concern or discuss with the child the action that had been taken. Only when the inspector highlighted this did managers take action to report and discuss with the child. This omission did not give the child or the placing authority the opportunity to give their views at the time of the incident.

Robust systems are in place to make sure that staff recruited to the home are suitable. The responsible individual double checks all the information to satisfy themselves that staff are suitable to care for the children at the home. This provides an additional layer of safety to protect children from those who would want to take advantage of their vulnerability.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

Since the last inspection, there has been a change of manager at the home. This change has been positive and not had an adverse effect on children.

Leaders and managers have high expectations of themselves and their staff team. All are aspirational for children, not seeing children's past behaviours and experiences as a barrier. Managers are committed to giving children a wide variety of social and learning opportunities. This enables children to develop their own resilience and skills for the future. As a result, children leave the home with many of the skills they will need to face the next stage of their lives. Children leave positive about their futures, remain in education or have gained employment. Many keep in touch with the home long after they have left, wanting to share their successes with those who helped them on their journey.

Managers ensure that children's plans are individualised. They clearly show the child's journey along with details of how staff help children take those next steps. Plans are regularly reviewed as part of a multidisciplinary approach which also includes the child. Children are involved in deciding how they need support, what staff can do to help them succeed and when struggling what staff can do to support them. This means that children feel part of their plan and are invested in that plan.

Managers are proactive in challenging placing authorities when they feel that decisions being made are not in the best interests of children. For example, one placing authority wanted to move a child back to their home area mid-year. The child was doing exceptionally well on their course, being top of the class. Any move would have meant starting again. Because of the tenacity of the manager, plans have been put on hold so that the child can complete a programme of independence and complete their course.

Managers do not give up on children. When children are struggling and behaving in a way to test boundaries, managers work harder to try and support the child. Managers have not served notice on a child and when children have moved on it has

been in a planned way. Consequently, children leave on a positive note, with staff supporting the move from the home.

Staff are positive about the home and the support given by managers. Staff receive comprehensive inductions, regular supervision and appraisals. For staff appraisals, managers gain views from children. Their views are used in the appraisal as feedback and areas for staff to improve on.

Staff receive a variety of training online, face-to-face and individual learning. The home's therapist provides more bespoke training that is tailored to the needs of the children. However, the managers' training matrix could be improved so that it clearly shows the breadth of training staff have undertaken and when.

Managers have undertaken research that informs their practice, for example looking at the impact of physical intervention and how to reduce the need for it. Managers discussed with staff to see how this could be put into practice. As a result, there has not been a physical intervention since July 2022. Managers also researched the importance of children completing their education. Education is actively promoted by the home and has meant that children have remained in education, taking exams and gaining qualifications.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that children are encouraged to share any concerns about their care or other matters as soon as they arise. Children must be able to take up issues or make a complaint with support and without any fear that this will result in any adverse consequences. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.13)
- The registered person should ensure that they have a full and detailed plan which is regularly updated to include any new training and qualifications completed by staff while working at the home, including the home's manager. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.8)

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: SC068032

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Branas Isaf (Holdings) Ltd

Registered provider address: 5th Floor, Metropolitan House, 3 Darkes Lane,
Potters Bar, Hertfordshire EN6 1AG

Responsible individual: Kathleen Jones

Registered manager: Emily Weeks

Inspector

Debbie Bond, Social Care Inspector

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