

SC068032

Registered provider: Branas Isaf (holdings) Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home provides care and accommodation 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 manager registered with Ofsted in April 2021. She is suitably experienced and qualified.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

Inspection dates: 10 to 11 August 2021

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 11 March 2020

Overall judgement at last inspection: sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
11/03/2020	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
16/09/2019	Full	Good
14/03/2019	Interim	Improved effectiveness
31/07/2018	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

On the day of this inspection, six children were living at the home. Most children have moved to this home from other homes within the organisation as part of a continuum of care. One child who recently moved to the home has struggled to settle. This has not affected the other children who are settled and progressing well.

Staff have developed personalised plans for children which reflect their individual needs. However, for one child these plans lack detail. This child's plans do not reflect how autism spectrum disorder affects him and how staff support him as a child with autism spectrum disorder. As a result, staff may give inconsistent care.

Children at the home make good progress from their starting points. Children receive focused therapy from an in-house therapist. Staff support the therapist's work with follow-on key-work sessions. Children have gone from being withdrawn, having low self-esteem and having poor school attendance to being much more confident in who they are and more accepting and understanding of their past experiences. Their attendance at school has also improved and, as a result, they have attained qualifications. Some children have also gained and maintained part-time employment.

Children are able to develop the skills and knowledge needed for the next stages of their lives. Staff help children through a focused next steps plan which is designed to develop children's independence. Staff continue caring about children even after they have left the home. Children can call the home for advice or a chat, and staff listen and celebrate the children's achievements. Staff also continue to send birthday and Christmas cards. This gives children a real sense of belonging and they know that the staff genuinely do care about them.

A strength of this home is staff's creativity in providing activities for children. Many children have not had many positive childhood experiences. Staff organise parties, such as for Halloween when the house was decorated and everyone dressed up. At New Year, staff planned a murder mystery event; again, everyone dressed up and took part. Staff also do pamper evenings, play board games, bake, make arts and crafts or just sit and watch films with the children. This gives children the opportunity to feel part of a family and enjoy family-time experiences.

Children are helped by staff to express their views in a variety of forums. This includes community meetings, key-work sessions, complaints, making formal requests and day-to-day discussions and requests. Consequently, children feel listened to and valued.

Staff encourage children to be themselves in the knowledge that others living and working at the home will not be judgemental. For example, children who are exploring their gender identity have opportunities to talk about how they feel and

dress as they want. Children are encouraged to join groups that will help them understand and make decisions about their identity.

Some children live a long way from their families. Where it is appropriate to do so, staff help children to keep in touch through the use of technology as well as visiting and writing letters. For some children, this keeping in touch helps with the healing process and to build relationships in a supportive and safe way.

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

Children at the home are often subject to orders which restrict their access to the internet, mobile phones and some sections of the community. Staff have developed rigorous risk assessments so that the children can still enjoy many freedoms which enable them to become more independent.

Staff help children to access therapy and continue this work through key-work sessions and other learning opportunities, which helps children to become increasingly safe.

Children do, on occasions, go missing. Staff have developed good missing protocols and have links with the local police. Staff follow these protocols and spend significant amounts of time searching for and trying to locate the children. For example, when a child left the home, staff followed and intercepted them at the local train station. Staff were then able to encourage the child to return to the home.

Staff receive regular training to develop their knowledge and skills. However, not all staff have received training about online safety. This could result in staff not identifying when children are exposed to risks online.

Staff have developed behaviour management strategies which help to reduce the need for staff to use physical intervention to manage children's behaviours. On the occasions it has been needed, this has been appropriately used and proportionate. Consequently, physical intervention is only used when needed and as a last resort.

The home is well maintained. However on the day of the inspection, the inspector found some doors propped open. In the event of a fire this would have meant a fire could easily spread to other areas of the home. The manager did rectify this on the day of the inspection and maintenance quickly visited the home to fit approved door openers which would close in the event of a fire.

Managers respond appropriately to concerns; for example, when a lack of oversight by staff meant a child was able to leave the home without staff's knowledge, the manager investigated and took action against those staff. Managers also put in place additional guidance for staff to make sure this does not happen again.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is managed by an experienced, child-focused practitioner. She sets high standards for herself and her team. As a result, children say they like living at the home and feel that it has made a difference for them. One child said they did not know where they would be if it was not for this home.

The registered manager has been instrumental in making changes to the home. She has reviewed the home's systems and identified areas of improvements. She has given staff clear guidance about the expectations of them. This has resulted in greater commitment and creativity from the staff, which in turn has led to improvements in the care and support given to children.

Over the past year, there have been some changes in staffing at the home with some staff leaving and new staff coming to work at the home. New staff have received a comprehensive induction and, for those who are not yet qualified, they are put on the training programme following the completion of their probation period. However, due to a number of staff who were qualified leaving the home, this has meant a larger proportion of staff working at the home are now unqualified. Most are undertaking the qualification and there is always a qualified staff member on duty each day. This shortfall has not had an impact on the quality of care that children receive.

Staff receive regular reflective supervision. For new staff this is more frequent. As a result, all staff are given an opportunity to discuss concerns and reflect on their practice to improve the experience of the children.

Managers make sure that new staff recruited to the home are recruited following safer recruitment procedures.

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, 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 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; and 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 staff— provide personalised care that meets each child's needs, as recorded in the child's relevant plans, taking account of the child's background. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(iv)) This specifically relates to the home's care and support plans having sufficient detail to help staff understand how to consistently meet the needs of each child.	10 September 2021
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 the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(d)) This specifically relates to managers making sure fire doors are not propped open and that they only use devices suitable for that purpose.	11 August 2021

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— ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)) This specifically relates to staff having training in online safety and to ensure that all staff complete the required level 3 qualification in the specified timescales.	30 September 2021
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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) Limited

Registered provider address: Branas Isaf (holdings) Limited, Metropolitan House, 3 Darkes Lane, Potters Bar EN6 1AG

Responsible individual: Kathleen Jones

Registered manager: Laura Hughes

Inspector

Debbie Bond, Social Care Inspector

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