

SC372611

Registered provider: Bryn Melyn Care Limited

Interim inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This service is owned by a private company. The home is registered to provide care for two children irrespective of gender, aged 10 to 17 years, with social or emotional difficulties.

The registered manager's post is vacant. A manager is in post, but they are not registered with Ofsted and an application to register has not been received.

Due to COVID19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

Inspection date: 18 January 2022

Date of last inspection: 16 November 2021

Judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

This inspection

The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection

The inspection was undertaken following concerns raised with Ofsted about the quality of care provided to children, and to review whether the requirements and recommendations raised at the last inspection had been met. During this inspection, the recommendation made about life story work was not considered, and therefore it remains a recommendation. At the time of this inspection, one child was living at the home.

This home was judged requires improvement to be good at the last full inspection. At this inspection, the home was judged declined in effectiveness. This was due to significant concerns regarding staff's safeguarding practice and the leadership and management of the home. As a result, compliance notices were issued in relation to the protection of children standard (regulation 12) and the leadership and management standard (regulation 13).

Insufficient staffing levels have had a negative impact on the children's experience at the home. Despite the manager's attempts to ensure that only core staff work with the children, the children have worked with a number of staff members with whom they are less familiar. As a result, children have not been provided with consistent care givers.

For one child, the poor staffing levels contributed to the manager's decision to serve immediate notice on them. This was a stable placement for the child, and they had progressed since moving into the home. This did not provide the child with a positive ending.

Staff have failed to respond appropriately to allegations on a number of occasions. They do not follow safeguarding procedures. For example, when an allegation was made by a child about a staff member, there was a delay in this being reported. On another occasion, the manager did not respond to an allegation in a timely manner. There were delays in this investigation taking place and the information being shared with necessary professionals. This demonstrates that some staff do not have the necessary understanding and skills to respond to safeguarding concerns.

The manager has not ensured that all allegations are investigated. When a child made an allegation that raised concerns about staff practice, this was not responded to effectively. Subsequently, this allegation remains outstanding as no significant action has taken place to investigate this. The manager did not proactively seek the views of a child after an allegation was made. This was a missed opportunity to challenge staff practice, and does not provide children with confidence that they are listened to and kept safe by the adults who care for them.

Risks to children have not consistently been responded to. For example, a staff member was caring for a child despite there being concerns that this may be having a negative impact on the child. On another occasion, staff failed to ensure that a mobile phone was safely secured, resulting in a child being able to obtain this on two occasions. This poor practice compromises the well-being of children.

The manager has not ensured that the agency staff who work in the home are carefully recruited. A process is in place to oversee the recruitment of agency staff going forward, but this is yet to be implemented. Therefore, children are not currently cared for by appropriately vetted staff.

The manager has not ensured that records are consistently maintained. For example, staff supervision records are not detailed and the actions relating to the key discussion points are not included. Team meetings do not fully reflect the discussions held and there is a lack of actions recorded. This hinders the manager's oversight of important issues and does not help the manager to make improvements to the care provided to the children.

The manager has failed to notify Ofsted of serious incidents in a timely manner. This compromises the oversight of the regulator.

Statutory records for the children are not consistently obtained. The delegated authority for one child is missing from their records and the manager failed to recognise this. This poor oversight could have a negative impact on the decision-making for children.

The home has made improvements to the conditions of children's bedrooms since the last inspection. This provides a positive environment for children.

Due to the concerns regarding inadequate staffing levels at the home, the registered persons have requested a variation to reduce the number of children the home can care for to one. This has been agreed to by Ofsted.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
16/11/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good
04/06/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good
03/10/2018	Full	Good
01/12/2017	Interim	Declined in effectiveness

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
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff— if the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority's or a relevant person's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 5 (c)) In particular, the manager is to ensure that a completed delegated authority is in place for all children.	6 March 2022
The children's views, wishes and feelings standard is that children receive care from staff who— 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 the views of each relevant person are taken into account, so far as reasonably practicable, before making a decision about the care or welfare of a child. (Regulation 7 (1)(c) (2)(e)) In particular, the manager is to ensure that debriefs with children take place and follow-up actions are completed. In addition, when a child makes an allegation, the manager must ensure that the child is spoken to within the required timeframe.	6 March 2022
*The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.	6 March 2022

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, the manager is to ensure that staff have an understanding of safeguarding policies and have the skills and knowledge to respond to these. The manager is to ensure that staff have an understanding of risks and take necessary steps to minimise them. In addition, the manager is to ensure that staff take appropriate action when there are concerns about the child’s welfare.	
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	6 March 2022

necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)) In particular, the manager is to ensure that staff are able to consider risks to children and implement strategies to reduce risks.	
*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— 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. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(f)(g)(ii)) In particular, the manager is to ensure that all allegations are followed up in line with procedures. The manager is to ensure that the experiences of children at the home are understood, and children are listened to effectively when allegations are made. In addition, the manager must ensure that they oversee the care provided to children and respond to concerns raised to develop the quality of care provided to children.	6 March 2022
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; ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child;	6 March 2022

ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child. (Regulation 13 (2)(c)(d)(e)) In particular, the manager is to ensure that staff have the skills to meet the needs of children and that the staff team provides consistent care to children. In addition, the manager is to ensure that there are sufficient staff numbers at the home to meet the needs of children.	
The registered provider must appoint a person to manage the children's home if— there is no registered manager in respect of the home. (Regulation 27 (a)) In particular, the manager is to submit an application to Ofsted to apply to become a registered manager.	6 March 2022
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. (Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a)) In particular, the manager is to ensure that agency staff have undergone all the required checks.	6 March 2022
Schedule 4 sets out the other information that the registered person must keep in relation to a children's home. The registered person must— maintain in the home the records in Schedule 4; ensure that the records are kept up to date. (Regulation 37 (1)(2)(a)(b)) In particular, the manager is to ensure that records about the child contain the required information. This includes physical intervention records, supervision records, team meeting minutes and incident reports. The manager must also ensure that a copy of the staff duty roster of persons working at the home, and a record of the actual rosters worked, is maintained.	6 March 2022

The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there. (Regulation 40 (4)(c)) In particular, the manager is to notify Ofsted about any serious incidents within required timeframes.	6 March 2022
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* These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that staff understand the importance for children to have an understanding of who they are and where they come from, and that staff play a full role in helping children to understand their life story. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 16, paragraph 3.14)

Information about this inspection

This inspection focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full 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: SC372611

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Bryn Melyn Care Limited

Registered provider address: Atria, Spa Road, Bolton BL1 4AG

Responsible individual: Laura Duckers

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Melanie Griffin, Social Care Inspector

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