

SC372630

Registered provider: Bryn Melyn Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned by a private company and is registered to provide care for four children. The home consists of two two-bedded houses. Both houses are detached and share the same garden.

The registered manager's post is currently vacant.

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 May 2022

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 widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded and the care and experiences of children and young people are poor and they are not making progress.

Date of last inspection: 23 August 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
23/08/2021	Full	Good
12/06/2019	Full	Good
15/01/2019	Full	Good
05/12/2017	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

This inspection identified serious failings in respect of the safeguarding of children and the leadership and management of the home. As a result, compliance notices under regulations 12 and 13 were issued.

The home has experienced a period of significant instability with several staff leaving the home in recent months. This lack of staff continuity has had a detrimental impact on the quality of children's care.

Two children were living in the home at the time of the inspection. Their day-to-day experiences are poor as their care needs are not consistently met. The repeated changes to the staff working in the home mean that children struggle to make and maintain positive relationships with staff.

Staff told the inspector that they are not successful in engaging with one of the children. As a result, he often refuses their offers of support. This means that staff are unable to build a rapport with the child to explore his emotional well-being and provide him with nurturing or proactive care. Some staff appear to be resigned to not being able to engage the child effectively in his day-to-day.

Neither child attends full time education. Staff's efforts to address this issue have been largely unsuccessful. In addition, staff do not support children to complete education tasks when they are not in school. Furthermore, both children experience poor structure and routine. For example, children frequently do not wake up and leave their bedrooms until the early afternoon. As a result, staff fail to support children's education and learning adequately, and this may affect their future life chances.

One child has long-standing emotional health needs. However, there have been significant delays in organising a specialist assessment. The manager has not fully escalated her concerns about this delay. These shortfalls mean that the child's health needs remain unmet. Staff have only recently begun working in partnership with a specialist mental health service and are completing daily assessments of the child.

Despite the widespread shortfalls, some children are showing indicators of recent progress. For example, a child has commenced direct therapy and has started to attend school periodically. The child has aspirations about future employment opportunities and is preparing for job interviews. The inspector observed positive interactions between both children and the staff on shift during the inspection. In addition, staff understand the importance of children spending time with family and friends who matter most to them. Staff have worked hard to advocate on behalf of children so that they can increase this time.

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

Staff do not follow guidance to keep children safe. This has resulted in children going missing from home, self-harming and misusing substances. On one occasion, a child went missing from the home without staff knowledge. On another occasion, poor staff supervision meant that the child was able to go missing from the home and the child was later found by police and was heavily intoxicated.

Poor planning and risk management result in children being exposed to risk. For example, staff took a child on an activity despite knowing that the location posed a risk of the child going missing. During the activity, the child did abscond and went to see family members in the area. On another occasion, the child was left alone despite being significantly distressed. The child subsequently absconded without staff knowledge. This ineffective and poorly planned practice exposes children to unnecessary harm.

Behaviour management plans and protocols to manage risk do not exist or are confusing and out of date. As a result, staff practice is ill informed and inconsistent. For example, the frequency and quality of children's welfare checks are dependent on what member of staff is on shift. Recently, staff did not intervene in a timely manner to remove a sharp item from a child's bedroom. The child subsequently used this item to self-harm. During the inspection, managers took action to address these shortfalls. For example, they created and updated a range of protocols and risk assessments.

Staff use unnecessary restrictive practices to manage children's behaviours. For example, staff lock internal and external doors to restrict children's movements. This institutional practice means that children cannot freely access all areas of their home.

Despite these significant shortfalls, staff respond well when children go missing. For example, they complete extensive searches and work well with the police and families to locate children and return them safely.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

There are not enough staff to meet the needs of the children. Despite the known vulnerabilities and risks posed by the two children, there are only two staff on duty at a time. The physical layout of the home means that the staff are often separated and therefore not readily available to assist each other.

Both children have poor sleep patterns and are routinely awake and unsettled at night-time. Despite this, there is no provision for a waking night member of staff. As staff are unable to sleep through the night, their resilience and the effectiveness of their practice the following day are compromised. In addition, the insufficient staff resources at night severely restrict staff's ability to search for a child if they go missing or need assistance.

Staff told the inspector that they feel exhausted and that this impedes their ability to provide children with good-quality supervision and care. It is acknowledged that the provider took some steps to increase staff capacity during the inspection. In addition, the decision was made by the provider to serve notice on one child's placement.

The provider's clinical service is not yet fully embedded. This means that staff do not have consistent opportunities to reflect on their practice to ensure that it is in line with the therapeutic ethos set out in the home's statement of purpose. As a result, staff are not fully supported to provide children with therapeutically informed care. This lack of joined-up working affects children's day-to-day experiences and means that their progress is impeded.

The registered manager has some monitoring systems in place. However, the effectiveness of these systems is compromised by the need for the manager to work shifts which reduces her capacity to undertake her own management tasks.

The leadership team, in response to this inspection, has taken some steps to make immediate improvements. Leaders are realistic about the need for further improvement and show a willingness and ability to achieve this.

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— seek to involve each child's placing authority effectively in the child's care, in accordance with the child's relevant plans; seek to secure the input and services required to meet each child's needs; 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 (a)(b)(c)) This relates to ensuring that managers fully escalate their concerns when there are delays in children's care planning.	11 July 2022
The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— help each child to achieve the child's education and training targets, as recorded in the child's relevant plans; support each child's learning and development, including helping the child to develop independent study skills and, where appropriate, helping the child to complete independent study;	11 July 2022

understand the barriers to learning that each child may face and take appropriate action to help the child to overcome any such barriers; help each child to understand the importance and value of education, learning, training and employment; promote opportunities for each child to learn informally; help each child to attend education or training in accordance with the expectations in the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(x)) This relates to the need for staff to provide a proactive and creative approach to ensure that children consistently engage in education.	
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; help each child to develop socially aware behaviour; encourage each child to take responsibility for the child's behaviour, in accordance with the child's age and understanding; communicate to each child expectations about the child's behaviour and ensure that the child understands those expectations in accordance with the child's age and understanding; help each child to understand, in a way that is appropriate according to the child's age and understanding, personal,	11 July 2022

sexual and social relationships, and how those relationships can be supportive or harmful. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(v)(vi))	
*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 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; that the effectiveness of the home’s child protection policies is monitored regularly. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(v)(vi)(vii)(b)(e)) This relates to staff understanding and following children’s risk assessments. In addition, ensure that children’s risk assessments and protocols contain clear information about the steps staff must take to keep children safe.	26 June 2022
*The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children’s home that—	26 June 2022

helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; 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 work as a team where appropriate; 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; 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. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f))	
The registered person must ensure that— the privacy of children is appropriately protected; children can access all appropriate areas of the children’s home’s premises; and any limitation placed on a child’s privacy or access to any area of the home’s premises— is intended to safeguard each child accommodated in the home; is necessary and proportionate; is kept under review and, if necessary, revised;	11 July 2022

allows children as much freedom as is possible when balanced against the need to protect them and keep them safe. (Regulation 21 (a)(b)(c)(i)(ii)(iv))

This relates to ensuring that children can access all areas of their home.

* These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

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: SC372630

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

Gareth Leckey, Social Care Inspector

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