

SC465579

Registered provider: Benecare Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is privately owned and provides care for up to three children who experience social and emotional difficulties. Two children were living in the home at the time of the inspection.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since 2 December 2021.

Inspection dates: 2 and 3 October 2024

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 7 February 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
07/02/2024	Full	Good
04/01/2023	Full	Good
08/12/2021	Full	Good
28/01/2020	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children make good progress because they are looked after by staff who have a sound understanding of their individual needs and form strong bonds with them. Children say that they enjoy living at the home, they feel safe and staff take care of them well.

Children are encouraged to express their wishes and feelings, and staff ensure that these are responded to appropriately. For example, children have had a say in the way their bedrooms and the communal areas are decorated. This gives children a sense of ownership and pride in their surroundings. There is also a sharp focus on helping children to make choices about the food that they eat and the activities that they do. As a result, children know that their views are important and their voices will be heard.

Children's emotional well-being improves when they move into the home. One child has become more independent in their personal care, and this has had a positive impact on their self-esteem. In another example, a child has learned how to eat more healthily. A social worker for one of the children said the child is 'thriving in all areas of their life'. Another social worker said a child had 'come on in leaps and bounds'. One particular achievement is that the child feels able to attend their care planning meetings for the first time.

Children are supported to take part in activities that are in line with their talents and interests. They particularly enjoy caravan holidays. Some of their other hobbies include swimming, bowling and trampolining. Children are benefiting from having access to a wide range of positive experiences.

One child is currently not accessing full-time education. The registered manager is working closely with other professionals and advocating strongly on behalf of the child to address this. The other child completed exams in the summer and is achieving well in their new education setting.

Working in partnership with people who are important to children is given high priority. Staff develop good relationships with children's families and invest time and effort in supporting children to have a positive time with them.

Two children have moved out of the home since the last inspection. One child left the home in an unplanned way. Staff made every effort to avoid this and had formed strong relationships with the child, but managers recognised that the child could not be kept safe at the home. There were missed opportunities to ensure that the ending was as positive and child-focused as it could be.

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

Safeguarding arrangements are robust because staff know the best ways to support children. Staff understand children's strengths and vulnerabilities. Robust risk assessments and care and support plans clearly describe how to care for children and keep them safe.

Effective joint working with external professionals contributes to ensuring children's safety and well-being. For example, the local police community support officer (PCSO) has visited the home to carry out some prevention work, such as how to stay safe online, understanding the risks of going missing from the home and risks associated with radicalisation. The PCSO said that they know the children well because they have been visiting for several years. They added that children are safe and are helped to understand their own risks.

Incidents of children going missing from home are rare and the children currently living at the home do not go missing. Records of missing-from-home episodes for a child who has now left the home demonstrate that there is a robust response from staff to ensure that children return safely when they go missing.

When safeguarding concerns arise, the registered manager rigorously follows procedures to make sure that children are protected from harm. Close liaison with external safeguarding professionals ensures that a safe resolution is reached without delay.

Due to the positive relationships between children and staff, physical restraint is not used. Staff are skilled at using de-escalation techniques to help children who are struggling to manage their emotions. One child has been prescribed medication that helps them to calm down when they are distressed. The medication is being administered in line with advice from medical professionals, but this has not been recognised as chemical restraint. As a result, records do not demonstrate that the use of the medication meets the legal criteria for restraint. Additionally, the child's behaviour support plan lacks clarity about when the medication should be offered.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager has a sound understanding of the strengths of the home. They are ambitious and passionate about providing a good quality of care to the children. Children's views are central to all decisions about the way the home is run.

Staff appreciate the support that they receive from the registered manager. Staff said the registered manager is always there for them and the children. One child said that the registered manager is approachable and 'good at their job'.

The home is fully staffed, and the registered manager is proud of the way new staff are developing in their roles. For example, the quality of records completed by staff has significantly improved.

Staff receive regular supervision and say that they find supervision beneficial. They also have annual appraisals that are used to good effect to identify their goals for development. However, records of staff supervision do not demonstrate that it provides opportunities for staff to reflect on their practice and understand any shortfalls.

The home's statement of purpose includes most of the information required by regulation. However, it lacks sufficient detail about the range of needs of the children who live in the home. This risks staff being unclear about the home's intended aims and objectives.

Records of staff attendance at training do not demonstrate that all staff have received training that is relevant to their roles and deemed mandatory by the organisation.

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, The 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 care planning standard is that children— have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. (Regulation 14 (1)(b))	29 November 2024
The registered person must ensure that all employees— undertake appropriate continuing professional development. (Regulation 33 (4)(a))	29 November 2024
The registered person must— keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision. (Regulation 16 (3)(a)(b))	29 November 2024

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that any use of chemical restraint follows a rigorous assessment process and, as with any restraint, be necessary and proportionate. Wherever such restraint is planned, it should be identified within a broad-ranging, robust behaviour support plan which aims to bring about the circumstances where continued use of such restraint will no longer be required. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 47, paragraph 9.45)
- The registered person should have systems in place so that all staff, including the manager, receive supervision of their practice from an appropriately qualified and experienced professional, which allows them to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 61, paragraph 13.2)

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: SC465579

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Benecare Limited

Registered provider address: The Thatch Vine Farm, Stockers Hill, Boughton-under-Blean, Faversham, Kent ME13 9AB

Responsible individual: Post vacant

Registered manager: Diana Davies

Inspectors

Sonata Brisley, Social Care Inspector
Kerry Howarth, Social care Inspector

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