

1183574

Registered provider: Cheshire West and Chester Local Authority

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned and managed by a local authority. It provides care for up to 4 children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

The home registered with Ofsted in January 2016.

The manager post is currently vacant.

At the time of this inspection, 3 children were living in the home.

Inspection dates: 3 and 4 March 2026

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 June 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
11/06/2024	Full	Good
05/12/2023	Full	Good
17/01/2023	Full	Good
10/11/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Since the last inspection, 3 children have left the home and 2 children have moved in. Managers completed a detailed risk assessment to ensure the suitability of children living together, considering the views of other professionals.

One child who moved out of the home benefited from a well-planned move to their new home. The child's views were clear throughout the move and staff worked with professionals to ensure that the placement was suitable to meet her needs. Staff celebrated the progress that she had made since moving into the home with the child before she left, and she left with a memory book of her time at the home.

Staff have high aspirations for children. They liaise with and challenge schools to ensure that children receive the education that they need. They also involve the virtual school, when necessary, to promote the needs of children.

Staff promote the importance of education with children. They make sure that the children have good bedtime routines to help with their attendance and ability to learn. Consequently, children have good attendance levels and are currently working towards their exams.

Staff understand the difficulties and challenges that some children face in attending health appointments and work with them to attend appointments successfully. Staff are trained in the safe administration of medication and follow these practices to safeguard children and promote their health.

Children enjoy a range of activities together with staff at the home but also with their families and friends. One child was planning the breakfast that she intended to prepare for her mum at the home on Mothers' day, showing that she was comfortable in inviting her family to the home.

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

Professionals spoke positively about the safeguarding practice of staff. They also said that staff keep children at the centre of their decision-making and are not afraid to challenge professionals about the standard of care that children are being provided.

Risks to children living at the home are low. Missing-from-home incidents are rare, but when they happen, they are managed well. Physical intervention is used appropriately and safely. Records of intervention are well written and clear. The manager evaluates each incident to identify any potential areas of learning following incidents.

While staff understand children's known risks, risk management plans could be more detailed to ensure that staff have clear strategies to follow to minimise risks to children.

Children have positive relationships with staff, which enable staff to have good, reflective and open conversations with children about how to keep themselves safe. Although there are systems in place to promote online safety in the home, recording systems are not in place to reflect any action taken in response to concerns raised by the system. Therefore, it is not possible to assess the suitability of action taken by staff when a concern has been identified.

Children know how to raise concerns and make complaints about their care. Managers act and respond to any complaints made. However, the process for if children do not agree with the outcome of complaints could be made clearer for children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Since the last inspection, the registered manager has left the home. To prevent a delay in securing a permanent manager, the authority sourced an interim manager from a recruitment company. This manager has now left the home, and another manager has been recruited and has started working at the home.

The home has experienced an unsettled period since the last inspection. Despite significant challenges for the team, they have remained in post. This demonstrates their resilience and commitment to the children in their care.

Staff spoke highly of the support that they were offered by the manager and deputy throughout a difficult period at the home. They said that there was always someone available for help and guidance when they needed it. Additional support was provided, as well as an increase in staffing levels to help manage the behaviour of one child.

Staff receive regular supervision that they say helps them with their role. They say that both the manager and deputy are always available to provide them with support, advice and guidance when needed. Staff clearly work as a team and provide children with a consistent approach so that children understand clear boundaries and expectations in which to grow and develop.

A range of both face-to-face and online training provides staff with the skills that they need to care for the children who live at the home. Staff speak highly of the quality of training that they receive and say that it helps them to carry out their role successfully.

Social workers spoke about the professionalism of staff at the home and of their ability to share intelligence, as appropriate, with other agencies to safeguard the children in their care.

Direct work with children is planned and evaluated by the manager. The records are well written and reflect the views and wishes of children.

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person 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 must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
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; 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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(v)(vi)) In particular, ensure that risk assessments for children are clear and provide strategies for staff to keep children safe. In addition, ensure that, when necessary, staff carry out and record checks of phones and IT equipment.	30 June 2026

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that staff encourage children 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 23, paragraph 4.13)

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: 1183574

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Cheshire West and Chester Council

Registered provider address: The Portal, 4 Civic Way, Ellesmere Port, Cheshire
CH65 0BA

Responsible individual: Eifion Burke

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Julia Toller, Social Care Inspector

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