

1230268

Registered provider: Kites Children's Services Limited

Assurance inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is one of two children's homes run by a private provider. The home provides specialist therapeutic care and treatment for up to five children who have complex needs.

The manager registered in May 2025.

There were four children living at the home at the time of the inspection.

Inspection date: 4 November 2025

Date of last inspection: 13 May 2025

Judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Information about this inspection

At this inspection, the inspector evaluated:

- the care of children
- the safety of children
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers.

The inspector has looked closely at the experiences and progress of children, using the social care common inspection framework. This assurance 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'.

Findings from the inspection

We identified the following serious and widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance inspection.

At the time of this inspection, four children were living at the home. Three children directly contributed to the inspection. Two children said that they feel that staff do not listen to them when they have raised concerns.

When children have raised concerns and complaints about their peers or staff practice, these have not always been appropriately investigated by leaders and managers.

In one instance, a child alleged they had been racially abused by another child at the home on more than one occasion. The child reported their peer to the police for a hate crime. Follow-up work with the children did not take place and records do not demonstrate if the alleged perpetrator is aware of the complaint to the police. On another occasion, a child made a complaint about a member of staff not letting them phone their social worker. The manager reviewed the complaint but did not investigate it. This does not ensure that the children's views, wishes and feelings are consistently taken into account and that their complaints are taken seriously.

As part of a transition plan, leaders and managers let a new child sleep over at the home. They did not assess the child's needs and risks effectively. The child was on bail for significant incidents relating to other children. Effective safeguards were not put in place to mitigate any potential risks between the child and children already living in the home. The child only stayed for one night and the transition into the home did not happen. This does not demonstrate that leaders and managers have a comprehensive understanding of risk assessment.

When children have raised allegations of harm, these have been shared with the local authority designated officer (LADO) and investigations have taken place. However, during the inspection, the registered manager was unable to locate allegation investigation minutes for one allegation of harm made by a child and a 'no lone working risk assessment' for a member of staff who required one. This does not give assurance that advice given by the LADO has always been followed up by leaders and managers.

Several incidents, including allegations of harm, have not been shared with Ofsted when it would have been appropriate to do so.

Leaders and managers let an unknown adult sleep in the home to accompany a visiting child. Leaders and managers did not assess the risk of this practice or make assurances that the unknown adult was suitable to sleep in the home.

On one occasion, a child physically harmed another child. Records do not detail what measures were implemented to attempt to separate the children, do not show if the

child who was physically harmed received medical and emotional support or detail what resolution work was done with the children to repair their relationship. This does not support children to reflect on their relationship and their behaviour or support them to find appropriate resolutions.

Leaders and managers have failed to ensure that all the children's risks have been suitably assessed, with clear strategies identified for staff to minimise risk. Risk management plans do not contain all identified or emerging risks for children. This has the potential to lead to inconsistencies in staff's responses to the risks children face.

The manager's monitoring is ineffective. Incident reports and complaint records lack scrutiny. They do not always identify learning or additional measures that could be put into place to help and support children. Leaders and managers have not always identified where staff practice requires improvement. For example, a child was left with a digital camera for two days despite adults knowing this was a potential risk for the child. Although the child was spoken with about this when the camera was retrieved, the manager failed to follow up the staff's lapse in practice. This does not ensure that staff are supported to make the necessary identified improvements to their practice.

Children are supported to access activities in line with their interests. This includes staff supporting children to visit gaming lounges, youth clubs, sports clubs and the seaside. This has helped support children to have enjoyment.

Staff support children to spend time with people who are important to them. This approach has helped children to maintain and develop positive relationships.

One child has moved out of the home since the last inspection; this was a planned move. Staff supported the child to visit their new home. The child's achievements were noted with a celebratory meal.

Following concerns regarding the care and safety of children, a restriction of accommodation notice has been served. This notice prevents the provider from moving any more children into the home. Two of the requirements from the full inspection have been met, three requirements have been restated and one further requirement has been raised.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/05/2025	Full	Requires improvement to be good
20/05/2024	Full	Good
21/06/2023	Full	Good
06/06/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good

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 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; 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)(vi)(vii)(b)(e)) In particular: work with children to address individual risks. Work should be carried out with children to help them to recognise and understand risks in a meaningful way; ensure that children are supported to understand that bullying is unacceptable. Staff must be equipped with the skills to recognise incidents or indications of bullying and understand how to address them.	4 January 2026

ensure that incident records contain sufficient detail. This includes the actions staff have taken and any relevant medical or emotional support offered to children after incidents; ensure that there is a full account of any allegations made by children. This includes the actions taken in response to an allegation, including any measures in place while the matter is being investigated, who the information has been shared with and how the matter has been concluded; ensure that advice given by the LADO is actioned and appropriate records are kept; ensure that children's plans contain all known and emerging risks for children, and the actions staff are to take to manage these risks; ensure that children's risk management plans are known and understood by staff.	
*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— use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(h)) In particular: implement a system to ensure effective monitoring and oversight of all aspects of the day-to-day running of the home; ensure oversight, review and monitoring of risk assessments, complaints and incident reports, ensuring necessary action is taken;	4 January 2026

ensure that when concerns with staff practice are identified that action is taken to address these with staff and that clear records are maintained; help staff to learn from any shortfalls in their practice, to improve the care provided to children. In particular, learning from any incidents, including learning from the admission of children to the home.	
*The children's views, wishes and feelings standard is that children receive care from staff who— engage with them; and 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 staff— ascertain and consider each child's views, wishes and feelings, and balance these against what they judge to be in the child's best interests when making decisions about the child's care and welfare; help each child to express views, wishes and feelings; help each child to understand how the child's views, wishes and feelings have been taken into account and give the child reasons for decisions in relation to the child; regularly consult children, and seek their feedback, about the quality of the home's care; ensure that each child— is enabled to provide feedback to, and raise issues with, a relevant person about the support and services that the child receives; is given appropriate advocacy support. (Regulation 7 (1)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(v)(b)(i)(iii)) In particular:	4 January 2026

complaints made by children must be investigated by leaders and managers; provide an outcome to children's complaints and inform them of any action taken by leaders and managers to address any concerns raised; ensure that all staff understand and act in accordance with the home's complaints policy; ensure that children have the opportunity to share their views regularly. Leaders and managers must have systems in place for gathering and responding to feedback.	
The registered person must ensure that— any limitation placed on a child's privacy or access to any area of the home's premises— is kept under review and, if necessary, revised; and allows children as much freedom as is possible when balanced against the need to protect them and keep them safe. (Regulation 21(c)(iii)(iv)) This requirement has been restated.	4 January 2026
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious; there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there. (Regulation 40 (4)(b)(c))	4 January 2026

*These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 1230268

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Kites Children's Services Limited

Registered provider address: The Forge, Langham, Colchester CO4 5PX

Responsible individual: Deborah Carr

Registered manager: Dylan Older

Inspector

Syvanna Matthew, Social Care Inspector

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