

1230268

Registered provider: Kites Children's Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

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

The manager registered in May 2025.

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

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 May 2025

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

requires improvement to be good

How well children and young people are helped and protected

requires improvement to be good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers

requires improvement to be good

The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: 20 May 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/05/2024	Full	Good
21/06/2023	Full	Good
06/06/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
12/10/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

During the inspection, two children spoke to the inspector. One child was away from the home, and two children were observed being supported by staff.

Since the last inspection, one child has moved into the home. Children make progress from their starting points. However, there are shortfalls in the safeguarding procedures and managerial oversight. Combined, these shortfalls undermine the quality of care for children.

Staff do not ensure that all children's bedrooms are clean and hygienic. The bathrooms require refurbishment. A build-up of limescale, mould and peeling paint are present in bathrooms. The rear of the garden has high stinging nettles and brambles. Improvements are necessary to ensure a homely and safe environment for the children. The children have contributed to how they would like their bedrooms decorated. These represent the children's individual personalities.

At times, children have struggled to form positive relationships with one another. Staff have supported children to raise complaints and engage in resolution meetings to talk through their differences. One child recently made a complaint to the police due to racist language used by a peer. The child said that they felt supported to raise their concern by staff. However, incidents of this nature have not always been recorded effectively. As a result, the manager has been unable to monitor the frequency of this behaviour and the effectiveness of staff's responses.

Children attend education provisions relevant to their needs. Staff support the children with their attendance, and each child is progressing with learning. Staff supported one child to apply for apprenticeships in transportation. Another child has been supported to apply for a college course. This supports children to plan for their futures.

Staff offer children a range of activities that support their interests. Children have taken part in youth clubs, cycling, meals out and trips to theme parks. This has supported the children to enjoy life.

Staff support children to see their families and friends. This has helped children to maintain links with people who are important to them.

Children are supported to take age-appropriate risks to develop their understanding of risk. Some children spend time in the community alone due to their progress. This has helped the children to understand how to keep themselves safe in the community and helps prepare them for independence.

Children's health needs are met. Staff support the children to attend routine medical appointments. Appropriate referrals are made for children to access additional support when required. Children benefit from regular therapeutic intervention and attend therapy sessions frequently. These help to support children with their health and emotional well-being.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

On one occasion, the manager and staff failed to follow the safeguarding procedure. A child made an allegation of harm, and the staff connected to the allegation spoke to the child about what they had alleged. The allegation was not recorded as such, and therefore, management oversight was not provided. The manager failed to share the child's concern with the local authority designated officer. The child retracted their concern, and information was shared with the local authority. However, failing to follow safeguarding procedures could increase the risk of harm to children.

One child's record of allegation was not factually correct. Although the manager reviewed the information, crucial information was removed. This included the child's verbatim account. This does not ensure that factual information relating to allegations of harm is appropriately recorded and shared with professionals.

Children's risk management plans are updated after incidents. However, these are not a clear representation of the children's vulnerabilities. One child is susceptible to radicalisation and requires a high level of supervision when using the internet. This information was not included in their plan. Another child's plan describes that they frequently make allegations. Records do not capture this risk. Missing information and inconsistencies in risk management plans could limit staff's alertness to the risks children face.

Staff use consequences to support children to develop and reflect positive behaviour. The monitoring of consequences is poor. Records do not always include the effectiveness of the measure used by staff. The children's views about the measure are not always obtained. Management oversight of records is not always provided. This does not ensure proportionality or consistency for each child.

Internal Closed-Circuit Television and door alarms are used due to the risks some children face. However, these measures have not been kept under regular review. This does not ensure that these restrictive measures have been considered on an individual basis for all children.

Physical intervention has been used on one occasion since the last inspection. This was used as a last resort. The child was supported with aftercare and spoken to about the measure.

There have been some incidents where children have been missing from home. Staff have responded appropriately and worked well with other professionals. When

children return, they are welcomed home and supported to discuss the reasons for their absence.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

Leaders and managers do not have a consistent approach to monitoring the home's performance. During a period where the manager was absent, monitoring did not take place.

Management evaluations do not acknowledge poor staff practice. Gaps in records have not been identified. This does not ensure that staff are offered sufficient opportunities to learn from their practice and make the necessary improvements.

Some staff benefit from regular supervision sessions and annual appraisals. However, not all staff have received supervision regularly. Staff are either enrolled on a level 3 qualification course or have gained this qualification. However, two staff members did not gain this within the required timescale. Leaders and managers did not identify these gaps. The lack of effective management oversight limits the ability to identify weakness and make continuous improvements.

The shortfalls identified at the last inspection have not been fully addressed. Three requirements have been reinstated. In addition, two new requirements have been set.

The manager registered with Ofsted in May 2025. He is qualified and dedicated to his role. Professionals talk positively about the support offered to children and feel children have made progress. Staff talk positively about the support that they receive.

Team meetings are child centred and support staff practice discussions. This gives staff the support to reflect and develop.

Safer recruitment processes are followed. New staff benefit from thorough inductions, which include mandatory training. For existing staff, additional training takes place that is specific to the needs of the children who live at the home.

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: leaders and managers must ensure that risk management plans are factual and include all risks for the children; ensure children are spoken to by someone independent when they make an allegation of harm; leaders and managers must review staff's knowledge and training to ensure staff act in accordance with the home's safeguarding and whistle-blowing procedures.	5 July 2025

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)) This requirement has been restated.	5 July 2025
The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(i)) In particular, ensure that children's bathrooms are in good condition, the garden is free from brambles and children are supported to keep their bedrooms clean. This requirement has been restated.	5 July 2025
The registered person must ensure that— within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes—	5 July 2025

details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure; within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person")— has spoken to the user about the measure; has signed the record to confirm it is accurate. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(v)(b)(i)(ii)) This requirement has been restated.	
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))	5 July 2025

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. In particular, ensure that all records are clear and detail the information in a concise and factual way. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

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: 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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