

1231458

Registered provider: Sherlock Healthcare Services Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is operated by a private organisation. The home provides care for up to three children who have social and emotional difficulties. There were three children living at the home at the time of the inspection.

Inspection dates: 1 and 2 July 2025

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	inadequate
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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: 16 April 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
16/04/2024	Full	Good
16/08/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
07/12/2022	Full	Good
10/01/2022	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

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

There has been no registered manager at the home since July 2023. Even though the provider has made several attempts to appoint people, they have not stayed. The lack of stable leadership is reflected in the length of time the home has been without a permanent, suitably experienced and qualified registered manager. This has therefore impacted on the judgements at this home.

Since the last inspection, four children have moved into the home and three have moved out. The quality of children's experiences during these transitions has varied. One child benefited from a planned and supported move into semi-independent living, which reflected good practice. In contrast, another child experienced a rapid admission to the home, despite there being sufficient time to facilitate a more gradual and child-centred transition. This inconsistency highlights a need for improved planning and coordination around admissions.

Children are supported to develop positive relationships with staff. For one child, this progress has been particularly evident. Initially, the child found it difficult to maintain eye contact and engage socially. However, during the inspection, they were observed seeking out staff company, initiating conversations, and expressing interest in shared activities, such as swimming. This demonstrates the nurturing approach of staff and the child's growing sense of trust and emotional security.

Preparation for independence is not consistently effective for one child whose independent reviewing officer raised that the placement had not been able to work with the child meaningfully in planning for independence. The child has experienced uncertainty regarding their future plans, which has contributed to feelings of instability. Although staff have, at times, advocated for children when services have not been provided, this has not been consistent. For example, one child approaching independence had not been allocated a personal adviser, and staff did not escalate this omission with the placing authority. Consequently, the child missed an opportunity to access support that could have eased their transition into adulthood.

Staff promote children's engagement with education. One child has made notable progress from their starting point, reflecting the positive impact of staff support. Another child has recently completed their GCSEs and is being encouraged to explore post-16 education and training options. These examples illustrate staff commitment to supporting children's educational achievement and aspirations.

The home provides a welcoming and comfortable environment. There are designated areas for children to play and relax, contributing to a homely atmosphere. While some maintenance tasks are required, these do not pose any safeguarding risks. When damage occurs as a result of incidents, staff respond promptly by engaging the

maintenance team to carry out repairs, ensuring the environment remains safe and well maintained.

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

When children go missing, staff take appropriate action to locate them and notify relevant safeguarding agencies in a timely manner. However, the recording of missing incidents is sometimes delayed. This undermines the effectiveness of monitoring and review processes.

Physical restraint is used only when necessary and proportionate. Incidents are recorded appropriately, and both children and staff are offered debriefs in a timely manner. Despite this, management oversight of these incidents is not sufficiently robust. Staff debriefs have been conducted by individuals who do not hold the appropriate qualifications, which compromises the integrity of post-incident review and reflective practice.

Children are supported to take age-appropriate risks in line with their developmental stage. Individualised plans for free time and internet access are tailored to each child's assessed needs and risks. Behaviour support plans are personalised and include specific strategies to help staff engage children effectively. For example, one child responds positively to music and is calmed by listening to particular songs. However, the use of door alarms or other surveillance mechanisms require review to ensure they reflect each child's individual risk assessment and care plan.

There is no centralised system for recording key information, which limits staff's ability to access important data and documentation efficiently. During the inspection, staff were unable to provide a complete record of medication errors and complaints since the last inspection. This lack of accessible information hinders effective monitoring and evaluation of practice.

Recruitment procedures do not consistently explore gaps in employment history, dates of employment and concerns about previous roles. This does not provide a clear history and rationale about potential applicants.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

The home has not had a registered manager in post since the last inspection. Although a manager was appointed, they left the role within a few months. A new manager commenced during the inspection and demonstrates enthusiasm and commitment to the role. However, they have no prior experience of working in residential children's homes and do not yet hold the required qualification. As a result, leadership of the home remains vulnerable, and the capacity to drive improvement is limited.

Monitoring systems are in place but have not been used effectively due to the absence of a registered manager. This has weakened leaders' oversight and contributed to missed opportunities to identify shortfalls and implement timely improvements. For example, serious incidents involving children have not always been notified to Ofsted, or have been reported outside the required time frames. This undermines regulatory compliance and accountability.

Leaders demonstrate care and concern for both children and staff. When the home has experienced significant changes, the emotional impact has been acknowledged. For instance, following the departure of the previous manager, the responsible individual facilitated a team meeting where staff were encouraged to share their feelings. This response showed sensitivity to the disruption and distress caused.

Feedback from family members is positive. Parents report that staff keep them well informed about their child's activities and emotional well-being, which helps to build trust and maintain strong relationships.

Staff receive regular training to enhance their knowledge and skills. Opportunities for team consultation with a clinical psychologist provide valuable space for reflection and support staff in understanding and responding to children's behaviours. This contributes to a thoughtful and therapeutic approach to care.

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 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; or there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(b)(e))	31 August 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— 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 have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of 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. use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(c)(f)(h))	31 August 2025

In particular, the registered person must ensure that they challenge the placing authority when care planning for children falls below the expected standard; the system of recording in the home is effective; recruitment practice is safe and that where an applicant has failed probation in their previous role working with vulnerable persons or where an applicant has gaps in their previous employment, this is sufficiently explored; monitoring systems are implemented to provide effective oversight of the home; and the use of door alarms on children's bedrooms is proportionate.	
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The registered person may only— employ an individual to work at the children's home; or if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home, if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). The requirements are that— the individual is of integrity and good character; the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform; the individual is mentally and physically fit for the purposes of the work that the individual is to perform; and full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3)(a)(b)(c)(d)) In particular, the registered person must demonstrate that individuals working in the home and undertaking managerial responsibilities, such as reviewing missing incident records and undertaking staff debriefs following physical restraint, is appropriately qualified to do so.	31 August 2025

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: 1231458

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Sherlock Healthcare Services Ltd

Registered provider address: Suite LP38724, 20–22 Wenlock Road, London N1 7GU

Responsible individual: Hilton Mutariswa

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Becky Rutter, Social Care Inspector

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