

1259061

Registered provider: Outbound Care

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned and operated by a private provider. It is registered to provide care for up to two children with social and emotional needs and/or learning disabilities.

At the time of this inspection, two children were living in the home. The inspector spoke with both children during the inspection.

The manager was registered with Ofsted on 23 October 2024.

Inspection dates: 2 and 3 September 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	requires improvement to be good
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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: 5 February 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
05/02/2025	Full	Good
20/09/2023	Full	Good
08/02/2023	Full	Good
08/02/2022	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

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

The home is well furnished and staff create a warm, homely environment. However, the home's back garden looks unkept and is not usable for children to play in or relax. The children's bedrooms are well furnished, however, paintwork is worn and damage needs repairing. One child's bedroom is very messy. Staff do not support children to keep their bedrooms clean.

The manager and deputy manager implement plans to help children settle into the home, even when they are far away from their families. This helps children to feel reassured and welcomed when they move into the home. However, action is not taken to ensure that children's statutory care plans are obtained at the time of moving in. This does not ensure that the manager or staff can provide care to the children in line with their local authority plans.

Staff work well with social workers and parents to facilitate family time and help children maintain family connections even when they live far away. This has included arrangements for parents to stay close to the home and staff taking children to see family.

The manager and staff promote children's education. The manager works with the virtual school headteacher and social workers to find suitable schools for children. While waiting for applications to be processed, children are provided with some one-to-one tutoring to support their learning. However, plans in place to support alternative learning in the home lack structure, and do not ensure children have access to their entitled hours of education each week.

Children are encouraged to enjoy various activities, such as cooking, baking, pamper days, theme parks, drives out, concerts and nature walks. Staff include children in activity planning and are creative in providing options linked to children's interests. They try to engage children in activities to get them out of the home and integrate them into the local community.

The children say they have good relationships with staff and feel supported by them. However, some children do not want to live in the home because they are too far away from family and friends. Staff advocate for children and work with professionals involved to find suitable homes closer to their families and friends. One child's move out of the home was unplanned. However, the manager and staff worked with the placing authority to ensure the child was supported in their move and their needs were met.

Not all children are registered with a dentist. This does not ensure children have routine dental check-ups to maintain oral health.

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

Staff understand the risks to children. Risk assessments provide staff with measures to reduce risks; however, they fail to identify specific protocols for staff to follow when faced with immediate danger. Staff are able to say how they would respond to keep children safe, however, due to a lack of guidance, staff responses are not consistent.

Plans for children to do activities together do not always consider their individual risks or previous concerns, to provide staff with strategies to reduce risks while on activities. This does not ensure that activities are managed effectively. This has led to children going missing together and being involved in anti-social behaviour.

There have been a high number of incidents of children being missing from the home. Action is not always taken to ensure that children are located and returned home quickly. Staff follow the children's plans to remain in contact with them and encourage them to return home. However, the plans for children returning home are not effective. Leaders and managers do not ensure there are sufficient staff to collect children when they have travelled long distances from the home. This means that there are delays in children returning home. Arrangements are made for them to stay in alternative accommodation.

Incidents of self-harm are managed effectively. Staff offer first aid and know when to escalate concerns and seek additional medical support. Staff reflect on incidents with children, sensitively discussing feelings and alternative coping mechanisms.

The manager and deputy manager notify the regulator of serious incidents. However, some notifications are delayed, which prevents the regulator from having prompt oversight.

Staff speak to children sensitively about issues such as online safety, mental health, drug and alcohol use and child sexual exploitation. This helps children to develop strategies to keep themselves safe.

The manager and deputy manager seek support from specialist agencies and professionals to ensure children have support with issues such as child sexual exploitation, mental health and substance misuse. Staff encourage children's engagement with specialist professionals. This means children have access to the support they need.

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

The home is managed by a registered manager and deputy manager. They complete monthly and quarterly audits and spend regular time together to review the quality of care being provided in the home. However, the monitoring systems that are used are not

effective. They do not always identify areas for development or identify actions to improve the quality of care for children.

Care planning processes for children's moves into the home are not robust. Leaders and managers do not consider challenges for children who are moving a long distance from their home area. Lessons have not been learned in respect of reasons for children's moves out of the home. As a result, children's needs are not met, and they have moved on from the home. This has impacted on children's overall experiences in the home.

Team meetings take place monthly. They support staff to maintain consistent routines and boundaries with the children and to understand children's plans. The manager and deputy manager also use this time to help develop staff's understanding of the home's model of care and how to implement it in their practice. Additional meetings ensure staff are fully informed of children's care needs before they move into the home.

The manager and deputy manager understand staff's individual strengths and areas for development. Staff receive regular reflective supervision and additional single-subject supervision, which focuses on their personal development. Staff say they feel fully supported in their roles.

Leaders and managers do not always follow safer recruitment checks. Further information is not always obtained during reference verification. This does not ensure that leaders and managers can be fully assured of an applicant's character and integrity, nor does it provide an opportunity for leaders and managers to address any possible development needs.

Induction programmes for new starters are informative and well structured. This ensures that staff are aware of role expectations and key information and processes to aid them in their roles.

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; 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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(b)) Specifically, leaders and managers must ensure that action is taken to safeguard children and effectively manage incidents of children being missing from the home. In addition, children's individual risks and other external factors must be considered and measures put in place to reduce risks when planning individual and joint activities for children.	17 October 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— 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;	17 October 2025

ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to 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; demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on— research and developments in relation to the ways in which the needs of children are best met; and feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received; and use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(b) (2)(a)(d)(e)(f)(g)(i)(ii)(h)) Specifically, leaders and managers must ensure the home is sufficiently staffed to meet the needs of the children. They must ensure they reflect on the experiences of children in their care to learn from past situations, reduce risks and improve the quality of care provided. Leaders and managers must ensure that systems are in place to monitor staff practice and identify any areas for development.	
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home's statement of purpose. (Regulation 14 (1)(a) (2)(a))	17 October 2025

Specifically, leaders and managers must carefully consider children's care needs and how staff will meet their needs, before they move into the home.	
The health and well-being standard is that— the health and well-being needs of children are met; children receive advice, services and support in relation to their health and well-being. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that each child is registered as a patient with a general medical practitioner and a registered dental practitioner; and that each child has access to such dental, medical, nursing, psychiatric and psychological advice, treatment and other services as the child may require. (Regulation 10 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(c)) Specifically, leaders and managers must ensure that children are registered with a dental practitioner and attend routine check-ups to maintain oral health.	17 October 2025
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The requirements are that— full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1) (3)(d)) Specifically, leaders and managers must ensure they follow safer recruitment practices, ensuring further discussions take place to explore potential concerns when verifying references.	17 October 2025
The quality and purpose of care standard Requires the registered person to— ensure that staff—	17 October 2025

provide personalised care that meets each child's needs, as recorded in the child's relevant plans, taking account of the child's background; provide to children living in the home the physical necessities they need in order to live there comfortably; make decisions about the day-to-day arrangements for each child, in accordance with the child's relevant plans, which give the child an appropriate degree of freedom and choice; ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— meet the needs of each child; and enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home. (Regulation 6 (1)(2)(b)(iv)(vii)(ix)(c)(i)(ii)) Specifically, leaders and managers must ensure that the home is maintained to a good standard, that repairs to damage are carried out and children's bedrooms are decorated to a good standard. Additionally, staff must ensure children's bedrooms are clean and tidy and support them to maintain this.	
The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which— include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child; are kept up to date; and are signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)(c)) Specifically, leaders and managers must ensure that risk assessments clearly detail responses to children's identified risks. Also, leaders and managers must ensure that admission documentation is signed and dated by relevant professionals on the date of admission.	17 October 2025

Recommendations

- Where children living in the home are not participating in education because they have been excluded or are not on a school roll for some other reason, the registered

person and staff must work closely with the placing authority so that the child is supported and enabled to resume full-time education as soon as possible. In the interim, the child should be supported to sustain or regain their confidence in education and be engaged in suitable, structured activities. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 28, paragraph 5.15)

- The registered person should have a system in place so that all serious events are notified, within 24 hours, to the appropriate people. This includes notifying the regulator when children are missing for long periods. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 63, paragraph 14.3)

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: 1259061

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Outbound Care

Registered provider address: Outbound Care Ltd, Unit 2, Metropolitan Business Park, Preston New Road, Blackpool FY3 9LT

Responsible individual: Ian Chadwick

Registered manager: Suzanna Hargreaves

Inspector

Renée Sims, Social Care Regulatory Inspector

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