

1259547

Registered provider: Semi-independent House Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is part of a private organisation and provides care for up to three children with social and emotional difficulties. At the time of the inspection, there were two children living in the home.

The manager registered with Ofsted in May 2022 and is not yet suitably registered.

Inspection dates: 30 September and 1 October 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: 24 April 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
24/04/2024	Full	Good
29/06/2023	Full	Good
21/02/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
23/02/2022	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

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

Children living in the home do not consistently make positive progress. A lack of professional curiosity and planning from leaders and managers means that some children have moved into the home without a clear understanding of their support needs, compromising the support that has been immediately available to them. For two children, this has led to unplanned endings following the emergence of support needs that were already known by other professionals, and which the team of staff have been unable to safely manage. These circumstances have impacted on the physical and emotional well-being of other children in the home.

One child has made positive progress since living in the home and has benefited from external therapeutic support. This has promoted notable progress in relation to this child's ability to manage their feelings and emotions. Despite this, there is uncertainty about this child's underlying neurodevelopmental needs, despite previous assessments. This child has lived in the home for nearly two years, and this has not yet been resolved.

Another child has recently moved into the home and does not have any external education support in place. Staff are providing interim educational support, but this is inconsistent and may undermine this child's engagement when they return to school. For example, one staff member was observed supporting a child to engage in learning late afternoon, while they lay in bed with the television on. The previous day, another staff member was doing this work at the kitchen table and the child's engagement was better.

Children's health needs are well supported, and children receive help and emotional support, as necessary. For example, staff undertook sensitive child-focused conversations with one child, who was anxious about visiting the dentist.

All children have benefited from individualised conversations with staff, reflecting their presenting needs and aspirations. Staff also ensure that there are opportunities for children to reflect on their areas for learning and development following difficult events.

Children know how to make a complaint and are supported to express their wishes and feelings. One child was unhappy that the toiletries allowance was different based on gender and raised a concern with the home manager. This was subsequently explored and rebalanced, with a positive handwritten note by the manager to the child, thanking them for their comments and outlining the mutually agreed outcome.

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

Children do not always receive the help and support they need to thrive. For one child, where their presenting emotional and mental health needs were known to the home,

referrals to support agencies were not prompt and were not made until a point of crisis. This child was subsequently moved on from the home very quickly, likely reinforcing the rejection that they had experienced during their time in care. By this time, the impact of these unmet needs had already expanded across the home and compromised the emotional well-being and stability of another child in the home.

The physical environment does not always meet children's emotional and physical needs; there is an excessive number of weeds in the garden which may present a health and safety issue in wet weather. The home environment does not promote a strong sense of belonging for children, as photos in the home have not been regularly updated. For example, in the gaming areas there are photos of children who lived in the home some years ago, rather than current children.

One child's bedroom is unkempt and has food stains on the wall. Their bedroom has not been decorated despite them living in the room for over five weeks. During the inspection, there was an incident whereby the child vomited the evening before, and despite frequent checks on this child during the day, this was not cleaned until late afternoon. The inspector later observed that this had not been cleaned appropriately, with it still present in the early evening. This does not demonstrate appropriate standards of care, or that the task to clean this had been sufficiently prioritised.

Children's risk assessments and support plans are well structured and demonstrate positive strategies to help and support them. Children are supported to have appropriate levels of free time and increased independence as they grow older. There is a strong emphasis of supporting children to acquire the necessary life skills to progress into adulthood, and this links to the wider organisation's ethos.

Staff are safely recruited, and comprehensive background checks ensure that the risks of unsafe adults working in the home are minimised.

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

The home manager is a positive role model and is child centred, although they frequently struggle to balance their management responsibilities with their relationship-based approach and not wanting to compromise their positive relationships with children. This has impacted on the manager's ability to be able to complete all the tasks required of them.

During periods where the home's manager is absent from the home, interim management arrangements put in place are inconsistent. This has had an impact on how effective the home has been in following safeguarding procedures and in providing children with the timely help and protection they need.

All staff receive regular supervision and a range of training. The manager takes sole responsibility for completing the supervision of staff. The deputy manager is not directly involved in this, and this mirrors other management responsibilities across the home.

This means that the foundations of good management are not in place, as they rely far too much on the home manager, who struggles to balance all the expectations on them.

The physical location of the home is some distance from the other homes in the organisation. At times, staff and the management team feel isolated from the wider organisation. Although there are organisational managers' meetings, these are infrequent, and consequently, there are very limited opportunities to share learning and connect all the strands of the organisation in a unified and meaningful way.

The home manager has a leading role in much of the day-to-day arrangements in the home, and this supports staff confidence. However, this has a long-term impact on the acquisition of shared knowledge and coping strategies across the team and creates too much reliance on the home manager. The home manager at times struggles to delegate relevant tasks across the team, and this further increases their workload.

There are some strained relationships between staff due to disagreements regarding shared responsibilities while on call and the consistency in the implementation of routines and boundaries across the home. Although these dynamics have not had any significant impact on children, it does create additional pressure regarding the staffing rota, as the manager tries to mediate differing personalities.

The home's independent person has not changed for many years, and at times there have been quality assurance concerns regarding their reports. In addition to this, in the past, reports have gone back and forth between the organisation and the independent person before being submitted. While senior management gave assurances that this has improved, this practice detracts from the independence and impartiality of the report.

The home manager has not yet completed their mandatory management qualification and has gone far beyond the date provided as part of their application to register. Protected time to complete this has not been sufficiently prioritised. Another staff member also experienced significant difficulties in having the time available to complete their relevant NVQ within the prescribed timescales.

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 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; and enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(c)(i)(ii)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that the interior décor of the home and the garden spaces meet children's needs and that any soiling of walls, stains or accidents by children must be cleaned in a prompt and effective manner. The registered person should also ensure that the garden area is maintained appropriately to avoid excessive weed growth and reduce the potential for trips and falls. This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	28 November 2025
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and	28 November 2025

have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the 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; that arrangements are in place to— ensure the effective induction of each child into the home; manage and review the placement of each child in the home; and plan for, and help, each child to prepare to leave the home or to move into adult care in a way that is consistent with arrangements agreed with the child's placing authority. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(i)(ii)(iii)) In particular, ensure that sufficient background information is gathered and fully considered when determining which children may be suitable to live in the home.	
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 work as a team where appropriate;	28 November 2025

ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for 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. Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(d)(f)) In particular, the registered person should support all staff to develop consistent routines and boundaries for the benefit of children. The working pattern for staff, including managers, should provide enough flexibility to enable them to meet children's day-to-day needs and record their actions.	
The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month. The independent person must produce a report about a visit ("the independent person's report") which sets out, in particular, the independent person's opinion as to whether— children are effectively safeguarded; and the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being. The independent person's report may recommend actions that the registered person may take in relation to the home and timescales within which the registered person must consider whether or not to take those actions. (Regulation 44 (1) (4)(a)(b)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that the report by the independent person meets the organisational requirements and that any internal quality assurance processes do not compromise the independence and impartiality of the report. This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	28 November 2025
A person may only manage a children's home if— For the purposes of paragraph (1)(b)(i), a person has the appropriate experience and qualification if the person has—	31 March 2026

by the relevant date, attained—

the Level 5 Diploma in Leadership and Management for Residential Childcare (England) ("the Level 5 Diploma").

The relevant date is—

in the case of a person who starts managing a home after 1st April 2014, the date which falls 3 years after the date on which that person started managing a home.

(Regulation 28 (1) (2)(c)(i) (3)(a))

Recommendation

- The registered provider should ensure that staff can access appropriate facilities and resources to support their training needs and should understand the key role they play in the training and development of staff in the home. This may include ensuring that appropriate additional time is available to support continuous professional development such as the completion of NVQ qualifications. (Guide to the Children's Home Regulations, including the quality standards, page 53, paragraph 10.11)

Information about this inspection

The inspector has 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: 1259547

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Semi-independent House Limited

Registered provider address: 51 Ploverly, Peterborough PE4 6HZ

Responsible individual: Amanda Charlie

Registered manager: Hayley Couldridge

Inspector

Ashley Edwards, Social Care Regulatory Inspector

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