

# 2553543

Registered provider: Social Care Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

The home is one of several homes owned by a private provider. It provides care for up to three children who may have social and emotional difficulties.

There were three children living in the home at the time of this inspection. One child has moved out, and one child has moved into the home since the last inspection. The inspector spoke to three children about their experiences of living in the home.

The registered manager has left the employment of the provider since the last inspection. A new manager has been appointed who was previously registered at another home for the provider. She has applied to register with Ofsted.

### Inspection dates: 24 and 25 September 2025

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| <b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account</b> | <b>good</b> |
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|                                                             |      |
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| How well children and young people are helped and protected | good |
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|-------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| The effectiveness of leaders and managers | requires improvement to be good |
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

**Date of last inspection:** 15 January 2025

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement |
|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| 15/01/2025      | Full            | Good                 |
| 19/07/2023      | Full            | Good                 |
| 02/08/2022      | Full            | Good                 |
| 08/02/2022      | Full            | Good                 |

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good**

Children say they are happy living in the home and that they like the people caring for them. There have been a number of changes in staff since the last inspection. One child said that even though the staff are new, they view them as family members.

Staff are beginning to build positive relationships with the children. They get to know the children's likes and dislikes by spending time talking with them. Children are starting to view them as people they can trust, and they enjoy being with them.

Managers and staff prioritise children's educational needs. When children cannot attend formal education, managers and staff work closely with educational professionals to explore the barriers that children are facing. When one child was struggling to attend school, the manager invited the educational professionals into the home to build the child's relationship with them. This supported the child's return to school, and they are now attending regularly.

Children's voices are at the forefront of managers and staff's practice. When decisions are made that are not in the best interests of the children, they advocate on children's behalf to challenge the relevant professionals. One child said, 'I know they have my back and are fighting for me.' Children know that their wishes and feelings are important, and they feel heard.

Overall, the home is well maintained, and children have areas where they can watch television together or play games, as well as relax separately. However, some areas of the home are in need of repair. The kitchen windowsill, the wall between the kitchen and conservatory and several windows in the home are damaged. The condition of one child's bedroom carpet is poor. The manager states this is due to be replaced, as well as their bedroom being painted and new furniture being purchased. The manager is aware of the other maintenance issues and has plans to make improvements to the home to ensure that children live in a warm and welcoming environment.

Children have alarms on their bedroom doors, and the rationale for their use is not clear for each child. This unnecessarily limits children's privacy.

### **How well children and young people are helped and protected: good**

The manager is proactive at escalating safeguarding concerns for children. When there were concerns that one child was a victim of sexual exploitation, the manager worked collaboratively with education professionals to ensure that the risks were clearly identified and presented to the relevant professionals. As a result, there is a strong multi-agency approach to addressing the risks for the child.

Managers ensure that staff have the skills to de-escalate situations effectively. As a result, restraints are rarely used by the staff with children.

Leaders and managers ensure that the relevant safeguarding checks are undertaken for new members of staff. They attend training as part of their induction that is linked to the children's individual vulnerabilities. This ensures that staff have the skills to keep children in their care safe.

Staff are aware of the individual vulnerabilities for children and follow their risk plans. However, the plans do not always contain the detailed steps for staff to follow. Although this has not resulted in a safeguarding incident, there have been occasions when staff have not taken the necessary actions when children are missing from home. This is a missed opportunity to ensure that the safeguarding strategies used by staff are consistent and effective.

Incident records for children do not always contain the necessary detail needed by staff. This limits the manager's oversight of actions taken by staff to keep children safe. This is something the new manager has identified and is taking action to address.

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

Since the last inspection, the registered manager has left the organisation. A new manager has been appointed who was previously registered for another home owned by the provider. She has identified several of the shortfalls that need to be addressed and is taking action. This has led to an improvement in the leadership and management of the home. However, the positive changes are not yet fully embedded.

Leaders and managers do not address shortfalls in staff practice effectively. When practice concerns were identified, leaders and managers did not ensure that they followed a robust plan to support improvement. This resulted in the continuation of poor practice by members of staff. The new manager and the responsible individual have recognised this shortfall and are taking steps to establish a positive safeguarding culture within the team.

Leaders and managers do not always notify Ofsted of significant incidents. The regulator was not informed of a potential safeguarding incident following allegations made against two members of staff. This limits the external oversight of the safeguarding practice in the home.

Leaders and managers have not ensured that the independent person's reports are effective in improving their care of the children. Reports often contain factual inaccuracies and do not thoroughly evaluate staff practice and responses to

safeguarding incidents. This is a missed opportunity to identify any areas of development at the earliest point of intervention.

Leaders and managers make use of internal systems of monitoring that have recently been improved. The impact of this is currently being embedded and is starting to show in practice.

## 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         |
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| <p>The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that—</p> <p>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and</p> <p>promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>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;</p> <p>ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate;</p> <p>ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;</p> <p>ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child;</p> <p>use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.<br/>(Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(c)(e)(h))</p> <p>Specifically, the registered person must ensure that shortfalls in staff practice are identified and addressed by managers at the earliest opportunity. Where there are concerns relating to staff practice or conduct, managers must ensure there is a robust action plan in place that is adhered to.</p> <p>The registered person must ensure that incidents are recorded by staff with the necessary detail so that managers can evaluate staff safeguarding practice effectively.</p> | 28 November 2025 |

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| <p>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>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;</p> <p>help each child to understand how to keep safe;</p> <p>have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm;</p> <p>understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person;</p> <p>take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child’s welfare;</p> <p>are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home’s child protection policies;</p> <p>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)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(b))</p> <p>The registered person must ensure that staff are provided with clear guidance to follow to keep children safe. This includes ensuring that the provider’s policies are up to date and contain the relevant information for staff.</p> | <p>28 November 2025</p> |
| <p>The registered person must ensure that—</p> <p>the privacy of children is appropriately protected;</p> <p>children can access all appropriate areas of the children’s home’s premises; and</p> <p>any limitation placed on a child’s privacy or access to any area of the home’s premises—</p> <p>is intended to safeguard each child accommodated in the home;</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | <p>28 November 2025</p> |

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| <p>is necessary and proportionate;</p> <p>is kept under review and, if necessary, revised; and</p> <p>allows children as much freedom as is possible when balanced against the need to protect them and keep them safe.<br/>(Regulation 21 (a)(b)(c)(i)(ii)(iv))</p> <p>Specifically, the registered person must ensure that the use of door alarms is thoroughly assessed in respect of each child and only used as a safeguarding measure. Any use of monitors must also be kept under regular review, with a clear rationale for their use.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                         |
| <p>The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if—</p> <p>an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious;</p> <p>there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious.<br/>(Regulation 40 (4)(b)(e))</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <p>28 November 2025</p> |
| <p>The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month.</p> <p>When the independent person is carrying out a visit, the registered person must help the independent person—</p> <p>if they consent, to interview in private such of the children, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home as the independent person requires; and</p> <p>to inspect the premises of the home and such of the home's records (except for a child's case records, unless the child and the child's placing authority consent) as the independent person requires.</p> <p>A visit by the independent person to the home may be unannounced.</p> <p>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—</p> <p>children are effectively safeguarded; and</p> | <p>28 November 2025</p> |



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) (2)(a)(b) (3) (4)(a)(b) (5))

In particular, the registered person must ensure that their visits evaluate the practice of staff effectively and this is reflected in their reports. The information contained in the report must be accurate and there must be frequent unannounced visits to the home.

## Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that children live in a warm and welcoming environment that has a homely feel. Walls and windows should be repaired, and damaged carpets should be replaced in a timely manner. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

## 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:** 2553543

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** Social Care Services Limited

**Registered provider address:** Social Care Services Group, 31 Shaw Road,  
Stockport SK4 4AG

**Responsible individual:** Rebecca Doherty

**Registered manager:** Post vacant

## Inspector

Sarah Gilbert, Social Care Regulatory Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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