

2561501

Registered provider: Smartcare Services

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The privately run home provides care for up to 4 children with social and emotional difficulties.

At the time of the inspection, 3 children were living in the home.

The home was registered in April 2020. The manager is currently applying for registration with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 16 and 17 June 2026

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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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	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 13 May 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/05/2025	Full	Good
18/06/2024	Full	Good
11/07/2023	Full	Good
20/04/2022	Full	Good

Summary of findings

Managers and staff at the home provide good-care quality for children. Staff enable the children to make good progress. One child has lived in the home for a number of years; this shows how staff maintain stability for children. Children are supported to engage in education, and their views are considered and captured in creative ways. Staff understand the risks for children. Missing-from-home episodes and incidents in the home have reduced over time. Children are settled, and regular direct work helps them to talk about how they feel.

Areas for development include: ensuring that staff know how to report a whistleblowing concern; ensuring that recruitment records contain a full work history; and updating the workforce development plan so that it has a record of the experience of staff and of how leaders and managers oversee and improve poor performance.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Warm and motivated staff care for the children. This helps the children to thrive and make good progress. Staff build strong relationships with children, helping them to settle well. One child has lived in the home for 5 years, illustrating the stability that the home provides.

Since the last inspection, 2 children have moved out of the home, and 2 other children have moved in. Staff prepare well for children who come to live in the home, ensuring that plans and impact risk assessments are fully considered. Staff take account of children's needs to help them to feel comfortable and supported.

Staff consistently support children's education. Children attend educational provisions throughout the day; this helps children to achieve and learn. Staff encourage children to identify small goals to help them to develop and recognise skills and achievements.

Children gain independence skills at their own pace. Older children are supported to make health appointments and carry out tasks, such as budgeting, preparing meals and doing laundry, to help them in their transition to adulthood.

Staff support planned family time in collaboration with professionals. This enables children to maintain positive connections with people who are important to them.

Staff obtain children's views in different ways, such as through the use of QR codes and a suggestion box; these help them to feel valued. Staff also seek the views of others, including professionals who visit the home.

Staff engage in direct-work sessions with children on a regular basis; records are up to date and are reflective. Children are offered further external support if needed. This helps children to make informed choices and develop self-awareness.

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

Since the last inspection, there have been very few incidents. Staff know the children well and they understand their risks. They have implemented strategies and debriefs for children, which have helped to reduce the number of incidents over time.

Children's risk assessments identify their needs and strategies to help keep them safe. The use of a timeline helps staff and leaders to identify any patterns and themes, and these are then discussed during direct-work sessions with children.

Staff have a good awareness of missing-from-home protocols, with robust records in place. Since the last inspection, missing-from-home episodes have significantly reduced.

Some staff are not fully aware of how to report a whistleblowing concern.

Safer recruitment of staff is in place. However, some areas of recruitment are not robust. For example, the full work history of staff is not recorded adequately, and this is not challenged or requested by managers.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Since the last inspection, there have been 2 changes of manager. Recently, a new manager has been successfully appointed. The manager is applying for registration with Ofsted.

The manager and leaders have good insight into the areas for development at the home. They are proactive in creating solutions to improve practice. Innovative ideas have been proposed and are currently being considered.

Positive feedback from staff demonstrates how much they value their role in caring for children safely. Staff supervision considers staff wellbeing as well as discussion about the children in their care.

An effective training programme is provided for staff, with specialist training to meet the needs of the children living in the home. Additional training is considered in accordance with emerging or new needs and risks for children.

The workforce development plan outlines current areas and policy for the home. However, there are sections of the plan which are missing, for example the experience of staff and how the home manages and improves poor performance.

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 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 (3)(d)) In particular, ensure that records include a full employment history, together with a satisfactory explanation of any gaps in employment.	7 August 2026

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that all staff are familiar with the home's whistleblowing procedures. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 43, paragraph 9.15)
- The registered person should ensure that a workforce development plan is in place that complies with the quality standards and includes staff experience and managing and improving poor performance. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.8)

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: 2561501

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Smartcare Services

Registered provider address: 10 Watermark Way, Foxholes Business Park, Hertford, Hertfordshire SG13 7TZ

Responsible individual: Neville Henry

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Andrea Ulett, social care inspector

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