

2571846

Registered provider: New Forest Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is run by a private organisation that operates several registered children's homes. This home is registered to provide care for up to five children with social and emotional difficulties. At the time of the inspection, five children were living at the home.

The manager registered with Ofsted in July 2023.

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 June 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: 18 September 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/09/2024	Full	Good
21/06/2023	Full	Good
21/02/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
04/01/2022	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

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

Since the last inspection, four children have remained living at the home and one child has moved in. Children like living in the home. However, significant changes to the staff team and the leadership team of the home have resulted in mixed outcomes for children. These changes have been unsettling for children and have negatively impacted the consistency and quality of the care they receive.

In the main, children's placement plans drawn up by managers are detailed and provide information regarding children's individual needs. They provide guidance for staff on how to provide support. However, for some children, there are no local authority care plans or review reports on their files. This means that children's placement plans are not fully informed and have resulted in some children not having clear plans. Consequently, staff lack information on how to deliver the care children need and how to support them to reach their full potential. This compromises children's progress.

The home is nicely decorated, and parts of the home have been refurbished. This includes children's bedrooms, which the children enjoyed helping develop. The children have made some progress in their development from their starting points, and they are supported to explore hobbies and interests that will help them develop further.

Children are encouraged and supported to spend time with their families. Staff support has helped one child rebuild relationships with their extended family. For another child, staff have advocated for adjustments to their family-time arrangements in line with the child's wishes and feelings. As a result, the children can develop and maintain relationships with the important people in their lives.

Children are encouraged to participate in education. Staff maintain regular communication with professionals from the children's schools and attend all education meetings. As a result, children are showing improvements in both school attendance and academic achievements. Those who previously struggled with regular attendance or had missed a significant amount of education have successfully reintegrated into the learning environment. Staff take pride in sharing stories about the educational progress each child has made.

Children are happy and relaxed in the home, and they interact well with the staff. Managers and staff speak affectionately about the children. They frequently have conversations with them to understand their views, wishes and feelings. As a result, children have numerous opportunities to share their ideas for the home and suggest activities they would like to try.

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

There have been a high number of physical restraints, involving all the children living in the home. Leaders are aware of this issue and have appointed a temporary additional manager to support the team. They have also sought assistance from the clinical team and have devised a plan to review and analyse each child's situation. The plan includes tracking the number of incidents and identifying possible triggers and influences on behaviour. However, the plan has not been fully implemented. There is little evidence that children are being helped to manage their emotions or learn better coping strategies.

It is not clear whether staff are consistently using appropriate de-escalation techniques to avoid the use of restraint except when absolutely necessary. As a result, incidents leading to the use of restraint continue to occur regularly.

Many incidents involving the use of restraint have resulted in allegations being made. Furthermore, some holds have caused injuries. In each case, managers take appropriate follow-up action to investigate the incidents and consult with relevant professionals to determine whether the use of restraint was appropriate. However, leaders have not adhered to safeguarding practices as effectively as they could. There is a noticeable lack of professional curiosity and, at times, staff have failed to seek independent opinions or medical advice regarding the injuries children have sustained. Additionally, when a child retracted an allegation relating to an injury, this matter was not thoroughly investigated.

There has been an incident in which serious staff practice issues were identified in relation to one staff member. Managers took appropriate and immediate action to reduce risk and reported the incident to the relevant professionals for investigation. There is an ongoing investigation in relation to this incident.

There have been occasions when children have gone missing from the home. Clear protocols are in place to manage this, which staff understand and follow. This includes effective communication with police and local authorities. As a result, children return home as soon as possible.

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

The registered manager is receptive to feedback and is developing an understanding of the strengths of the home and the areas for development. However, they have failed to recognise some of the vulnerabilities that have been identified during this inspection.

Following significant instability and change in the staff team, a period of rebuilding is under way. There have been a considerable number of changes, with eight staff leaving and 10 new staff starting since the last inspection. There has been limited consideration by leaders of the impact this has had on children developing strong and trusting relationships with the staff who care for them. Furthermore, it undermines the potential for children to receive consistency and stability of care.

Staff have the best interests of children at heart and are doing their best for children. However, there is mixed feedback from staff regarding the support and guidance they have in their roles. Staff say they do not feel listened to or supported by managers, and that managers are not present in the home to support staff on a day-to-day basis or through difficult situations.

Leaders and managers do not liaise swiftly enough with partner agencies to request copies of relevant records, such as children's care plans. This means that there is a lack of oversight of children's current needs and what further help staff can give to help support children with their individual challenges and progress.

Staff do not receive regular supervision. There is no consistent oversight across the home, staff well-being is not fully considered and children's care planning is not being reviewed in discussions with staff. As a result, staff say that they find managing children's behaviours more difficult. This has contributed to the increase in incidents that have resulted in children being restrained.

The leadership team is committed to the care and well-being of the children and has plans in place to address areas of concern. They are aware that the identified plans need to be implemented and sustained for the required improvements to be embedded in the culture and day-to-day running of the home.

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; help each child to understand how to keep safe; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies; 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)(v)(vi)(vii)(b)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that physical restraint is used only when necessary to protect the child and/or those around them and must be proportionate. All incidents must be recorded, reviewed and monitored by leaders.	12 July 2025

In particular, this refers to the management and recording of allegations against staff. The registered person must ensure that safeguarding concerns and incidents are reported to the appropriate professionals for review and that follow-up action is taken to protect to children from the identified risk.	
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 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; and 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)(d)(f)(h)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that there is full and consistent management oversight of the home, including consistency of staff, frequency and quality of staff supervision and that incidents and staff practice are evaluated to establish patterns and trends. Any learning identified should be used to ensure continuous improvements.	12 July 2025
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—	12 July 2025

that each child's relevant plans are followed.
(Regulation 14 (1)(a) (2)(c))

In particular, the registered person must ensure that they have access to children's care plans and that these plans are followed. Furthermore, ensure that plans for children are clear, include all the required information and enable staff to provide safe and effective care to each child.

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: 2571846

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: New Forest Care Limited

Registered provider address: West Shore House, West Street, Hythe, Southampton, Hampshire SO45 6AA

Responsible individual: Richard White

Registered manager: Melanie Spiers

Inspector

Sharron Dormand, Social Care Inspector

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