

# 2590405

Registered provider: 5ab Care Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

The home is privately owned and provides care for up to 3 children who experience social and emotional difficulties.

At the time of this inspection, 2 children were living at the home, and both spoke with the inspector. Since the last inspection, 2 children have moved on, and one child has recently moved in alongside the child who has lived at the home on a long-term basis.

The manager registered with Ofsted in October 2024 and is suitably qualified. The manager is also registered for one of the provider's other homes.

### Inspection dates: 10 and 11 March 2026

|                                                                                           |             |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| <b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account</b> | <b>good</b> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|

|                                                             |      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| How well children and young people are helped and protected | good |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|------|

|                                           |      |
|-------------------------------------------|------|
| The effectiveness of leaders and managers | good |
|-------------------------------------------|------|

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

**Date of last inspection:** 11 February 2025

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement |
|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| 11/02/2025      | Full            | Good                 |
| 05/02/2024      | Full            | Good                 |
| 10/01/2023      | Full            | Good                 |
| 01/02/2022      | Full            | Good                 |

## Inspection judgements

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

Children's health needs are prioritised, and staff promote healthy routines effectively. Staff encourage good oral hygiene; however, some missed dental appointments mean that preventative care is not always maintained. Medication is managed safely. Staff are trained to store, administer and record medicines correctly, which supports children's health. Children's emotional wellbeing is strengthened through support from the in-house therapist, who helps staff respond to children during times of heightened emotions.

Children attend school regularly and make steady educational progress. They participate in their review meetings and are encouraged to express their views about their learning. One child has moved on successfully from school to a vocational college course that aligns with their chosen career aim. This helps build children's confidence and provides a clear pathway towards their future goals.

Children form trusting, positive relationships with staff and leaders. As a result, their needs are well understood and met consistently. One child was supported to return to family life, with staff planning the transition carefully to ensure that it was safe and well managed. Leaders recognised the emotional impact of this change on the remaining child and responded by providing additional social opportunities. This reflects child-centred practice and a thoughtful approach to meeting children's social and emotional needs.

Family time is well planned and supported, enabling children to maintain meaningful relationships with the important people in their lives. For example, staff organise an annual birthday barbecue at the home, inviting all family members. This thoughtful practice strengthens the child's sense of identity and helps build trust in the adults who care for them.

Children enjoy a wide range of activities that reflect their interests, including trips, concerts, bowling and dog walking. They also go on holidays that provide fun and memorable experiences. Staff consult children each month when planning the weekly activity schedule, ensuring that it reflects their individual preferences. This reflects child-led practice, as it helps children feel heard and gives them choices over how they spend their free time.

The home is well maintained, spacious and welcoming. Children personalise their bedrooms to reflect their individual tastes and preferences. One child recently helped to refurbish their bedroom and chose the decor and furniture, which supports their sense of ownership. Photos of children participating in activities with staff are displayed throughout the home, along with trophies and awards, creating a pleasant and welcoming environment. The rear garden provides a private outdoor space for playing

and socialising. It also includes a summer house, which offers a relaxing area where children can watch television, play games and enjoy a range of activities.

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

Allegations made against staff are managed well and recorded clearly. The local authority designated officer (LADO) and relevant agencies are notified when appropriate. On occasions when managers and social workers decide not to notify the LADO, the matter is discussed and considered jointly. However, on one occasion, leaders failed to notify the regulatory body, which limits oversight, transparency and compliance with regulatory expectations.

Children understand how staff keep them safe. The children's guide is clear and explains expectations and consequences using a restorative approach. Children know how to raise concerns and have access to an independent advocate and a straightforward complaints process. However, fire drills are not consistently carried out. It is essential that children regularly practise the fire evacuation procedures so that they know what to do to keep themselves safe in an emergency.

When children experience heightened emotions, staff follow individual behaviour support plans to help them feel safe and understood. Physical intervention is used only as a last resort to protect children and staff, and staff are appropriately trained in safe holding techniques. Following any incidents, staff ensure that the child is safe and well, and managers review all incidents to ensure effective oversight. For one child, the overall number of physical interventions has reduced since the last inspection. This shows that staff learning and agreed strategies are effective, helping children feel safer and better able to manage their emotions.

When children go missing from home, staff follow clear procedures and each child's individual protocol. When children return, staff provide a caring and supportive response that helps them feel safe. Staff and managers work closely with police and social workers to understand any emerging patterns and reduce future episodes. For one child, incidents of going missing have reduced. This demonstrates that staff understand the child's needs and risks well and that the support provided is helping them stay safer.

Children are supported in using the internet and mobile phones safely. Children and staff monitor individual plans together to ensure that any increased device time is safe. When children make unsafe choices online, staff use these opportunities to teach and guide them. This helps children understand potential risks, develop digital resilience and make safer decisions. As a result, children feel trusted and well supported by staff.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

The manager is experienced and suitably qualified, and she demonstrates a strong commitment to the children's wellbeing. She also manages another of the provider's homes locally and is supported by a capable deputy in both settings. They share the same commitment to children and work effectively together. The manager supports the

professional development of staff and ensures that they receive regular, reflective supervision that identifies any unmet needs and areas for practice improvement.

Since the last inspection, new staff have joined the home, creating a diverse and inclusive team. Children are developing positive relationships with staff, which helps them feel settled and understood. Staff have received specialist training relevant to the needs of the children they care for. However, not all staff have achieved the required qualification within regulatory timescales. This shortfall has the potential to affect the consistency and quality of care children receive.

The registered manager maintains effective oversight of the home for most of the time, supported by a digital recording system that enables remote monitoring. Monthly audits carried out by the manager are thorough and concise, and the responsible individual reviews them to develop clear and purposeful action plans. Independent visitor reports are consistent and provide a strong level of external scrutiny. When appropriate, the manager challenges recommendations, fostering a healthy professional culture that welcomes constructive discussions and differing views.

The manager works effectively with partner agencies to safeguard and support children. She ensures that plans progress without delay and is a strong advocate who escalates concerns when needed. As a result, children's needs are recognised and addressed through a robust multi-agency approach. One social worker commented, 'Missing-from-home episodes have reduced. The home is good, and they always contact me.'

Staff regularly attend and participate in team meetings. The in-house therapist supports these meetings by helping staff consider children's needs from a trauma-informed perspective. This enables staff to understand children more fully and respond in a therapeutic and consistent manner. As a result, staff benefit from strengthened practice, and children receive care that helps them build trust and develop positive relationships.

## 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      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| <p>The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety.</p> <p>The requirements are that—</p> <p>the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform;</p> <p>For the purposes of paragraph (3)(b), an individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification if, by the relevant date, the individual has attained—</p> <p>the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (England) ("the Level 3 Diploma"); or</p> <p>a qualification which the registered person considers to be equivalent to the Level 3 Diploma.</p> <p>The relevant date is—</p> <p>in the case of an individual who starts working in a care role in a home after 1st April 2014, the date which falls 2 years after the date on which the individual started working in a care role in a home. (Regulation 32 (1) (3)(b) (4)(a)(b) (5)(a))</p> | 29 May 2026   |
| <p>The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if—</p> <p>there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there.</p> <p>there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious.<br/>(Regulation 40 (4)(c)(e))</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | 24 April 2026 |

## Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that each child attends all necessary health appointments as advised by professionals. Children should attend all routine dental reviews and treatments as invited by NHS England. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 34, paragraph 7.11)
- The registered person should ensure that children are safe when inside the home and know how to keep themselves safe. In particular, the registered person should ensure that all children understand the fire evacuation procedure and are informed about the fire alarm in accordance with the recommended fire risk assessment guidance. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 43, paragraph 9.9)

## 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:** 2590405

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

**Registered provider:** 5ab Care Ltd

**Registered provider address:** Devonshire Business Centre, Unit 27 Works Road,  
Letchworth Garden City, Hertfordshire SG6 1GJ

**Responsible individual:** Lyndsay Bryden

**Registered manager:** Carly Cherriman

## Inspector

Gill Rudkin, Social Care Inspector

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