

2602980

Registered provider: Cambridgeshire County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is run by a local authority. It provides short breaks for up to four children with moderate to severe learning disabilities. One of the four children can live at the home permanently.

At the time of this inspection, three children were staying at the home under shared care arrangements, and six children were accessing respite care on a rotational basis.

The manager registered with Ofsted in November 2024.

Inspection dates: 29 and 30 July 2025

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account

requires improvement to be good

How well children and young people are helped and protected

requires improvement to be good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers

requires improvement to be good

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: 13 March 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/03/2025	Full	Good
19/12/2023	Full	Good
16/08/2022	Full	Good
21/12/2021	Interim	Improved effectiveness

Inspection judgements

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

At the time of the inspection, three of the children were observed to be relaxed and comfortable at the home.

Children do not receive regular key-work sessions. The planned monthly sessions are not always taking place. This means that opportunities for children to express their views and wishes are missed.

Children do not all have clear targets identified. Some children have achieved their identified target, without another target to work towards. One child has a target identified, which they say they do not wish to achieve. This does not show children influencing their care. Records regarding children's progress towards their targets are limited. This means that it is not possible to see whether children are making progress or require any additional support.

The children's guide is written in a child-friendly way. However, there are no details about how to raise complaints, access advocacy or contact the Office of the Children's Commissioner. This could prevent children from raising concerns about their care.

Children's plans and paperwork are of variable quality. Some plans are detailed and provide strategies for staff to follow to support the child. Other plans lack detail, and some sections are blank. Some plans are undated, so it is unclear whether they are up to date. Some previous plans are unavailable. This means that full records of children's care are missing.

The only bath at the home remains out of use. A new bath has been ordered, but its delivery has been delayed. The manager has chased the order, although she has not escalated the continued delays effectively. The absence of a bath has health and safety implications, as children are only able to shower. For some children, a shower is not the safest option. The manager has not proactively sought alternative measures to use while there is no bath available.

Children's families are positive about the support provided. Families believe that communication levels are appropriate and that they are kept updated about their children's activities during their stays.

Staff support children's interests. Children participate in a range of activities, including arts and crafts, playing in the garden and visiting farms. Staff understand what children enjoy doing.

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

Three serious incidents have occurred, all of which could have resulted in significant harm to the children involved. One of the incidents resulted in an injury to a child, while another caused a child to experience pain. Staff practice errors were the root cause of all the incidents. Referrals to the local authority designated officer and Ofsted were made, although these were delayed. Opportunities for additional measures to be immediately implemented were missed. One incident involved an external transport team; the transport provider was not made aware of it and therefore could not make immediate changes. In one incident, staff missed opportunities to identify the cause of a child's injury. This failure was due to poor recording and a lack of acknowledgement of the child's nonverbal communication, which indicated an attempt to show them what had happened. Fact-finding investigations took place, and some actions were then identified.

Marks and bruises identified on children are documented on a body map, and parents are contacted. However, unexplained marks on children are not always explored in a timely manner. One unexplained mark has not been explored for over a month. This could mean children are being placed at ongoing risk due to a lack of timely investigation.

Measures of control are not regularly reviewed. One child wears a harness for safety reasons when out of the home. The manager does not review whether this is still a proportionate control measure to use. This could mean the least restrictive option is not always used.

Following the last inspection, the manager reviewed the use of all visual and audio monitors in children's bedrooms. However, there are no ongoing reviews of these. As a result, opportunities to assess their continued necessity could be missed.

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

The manager is experienced and qualified for the role. She is aware of the shortfalls and is making plans to address them.

Regular audits of children's files take place. However, when shortfalls are identified in the files, there are limited follow-up actions. This means that there could be repeated concerns about the same aspects.

Actions are not fully carried out following fact-finding investigations. One action regarding safeguarding training has not been met, and the staff member continues to work at the home. Another staff member has not been spoken to about their involvement in a previous concern. This means that opportunities to address staff practice issues are being missed, which could mean staff are not aware of what they need to do to improve their practice.

Team meetings are not being held regularly. Since three concerning incidents occurred, no team meetings have been held. This limits staff's ability to learn from incidents and develop their practice.

Several staff members have yet to achieve their level 3 qualification. Overall, six staff members have not completed their qualification within the required time frame. The manager has not implemented a clear plan or time frame for these qualifications.

The shortfalls identified at the last inspection have not been fully addressed. Three requirements have been restated. In addition, three new requirements have been raised. A recommendation about appraisals has been restated because there have been no staff appraisals since the last inspection.

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; and take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(v)(vi))	5 September 2025
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;	5 September 2025

ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of 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; 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)(c)(f)(h)) In particular, ensure that actions from fact-finding investigations are carried out; safeguarding concerns are followed up; actions are taken to address missing records, such as goals and key-work sessions; team meetings take place regularly to inform the team of learning following incidents; and monitoring devices and restrictive measures, such as harnesses, are reviewed frequently.	
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— understand and apply the home’s statement of purpose; ensure that staff— help each child to develop resilience and skills that prepare the child to return home, to live in a new placement or to live independently as an adult. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(vi)) In particular, ensure that children have clear targets that are regularly reviewed by staff.	5 September 2025
The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who—	5 September 2025

understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children. 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. (Regulation 6 (1)(a) (2)(c)(i)) In particular, leaders and managers must ensure that delays in sourcing a replacement bath are challenged. This requirement was raised at the last inspection and is restated.	
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there; there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(c)(e)) This requirement was raised at the last inspection and is restated.	5 September 2025
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— the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (England) ("the Level 3 Diploma"); or a qualification which the registered person considers to be equivalent to the Level 3 Diploma. The relevant date is— 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; or	3 October 2025

in the case of an individual who was working in a care role in a home on 1st April 2014, 1st April 2016.
(Regulation 32 (4)(a)(b) (5)(a)(b))

This requirement was raised at the last inspection and is restated.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the children's guide helps children understand how to make a complaint in line with the home's complaints procedure, how they can access advocacy support or independent advocacy if eligible, and how to contact the Office of the Children's Commissioner. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 24, paragraph 4.22)
- The registered person should ensure that annual appraisals for staff include, where reasonable and practical, the views of other professionals who have worked with the staff member over the year and children in the home's care. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.5)
- The registered person should ensure that clear records are kept about children. The records should be dated and stored securely. Children's case records must be kept for 75 years from the date of birth of the child, or if the child dies before the age of 18, for 15 years from the date of their death. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.3)

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: 2602980

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Cambridgeshire County Council

Registered provider address: Sunley House, Summers Hill Drive, Papworth Everard, Cambridge CB23 3AB

Responsible individual: Mark Leadbetter

Registered manager: Amelia Hayes

Inspector

Leanne Lyon, Social Care Inspector

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