

2638470

Registered provider: Acheron Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is operated by a private company and provides care for up to 3 children who have social and emotional difficulties.

At the time of the inspection, 3 children were living in the home. One child spoke with the inspector as part of the inspection activity.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since June 2024.

This inspection took place on 10 February 2026, but we also returned on 9 March 2026 to gather additional evidence.

Inspection dates: 10 February to 9 March 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: 28 October 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: inadequate

Enforcement action since last inspection:

Ofsted carried out a full inspection of the home in October 2025. This inspection identified serious and widespread concerns in safeguarding practice, and in leadership and management, which resulted in an overall judgement of inadequate. As a result, Ofsted issued a compliance notice under Regulation 12, 'The protection of children standard'. Following a monitoring visit in December 2025, the compliance notice was deemed to have been met.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
28/10/2025	Full	Inadequate
11/03/2025	Full	Good
09/08/2023	Full	Good
24/01/2023	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children at this home benefit from a stable environment in which their progress, safety and wellbeing are prioritised. Since the last inspection, some outcomes for children have improved within a short period of time. The strengthening of routines and a consistent staff approach have contributed to a calmer and more predictable atmosphere. These improvements help children feel more secure and allow them to engage more positively in their daily lives.

Education is actively promoted, encouraged and supported. As a result, some children's participation in education has increased significantly, leading to improved confidence and greater consistency in their learning. Staff are proactive and support children to access education in ways that meet their individual needs and promote positive achievement. This means that children make meaningful progress and develop stronger belief in their abilities.

Children are actively encouraged to think about the matters they wish to discuss with their social workers, and staff support them to prepare for these conversations. Staff work sensitively alongside children to explore key areas that are important to them, which also contributes to effective independence planning. This approach demonstrates a positive commitment to promoting children's voices and supporting their meaningful participation in planning for their futures.

Staff generally work well with wider networks. However, on one occasion, partnership working with families was not as strong as it should have been. Staff did not consult those with parental responsibility before key decisions were made. A lack of professional curiosity and lapses in communication hindered opportunities to maintain positive and collaborative relationships with children's families. On this occasion, this had an impact on a child's emotional wellbeing and the quality of their relationship with family members. Leaders recognise these concerns and have taken steps to strengthen communication practices and reinforce expectations in relation to consultation and family engagement.

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

When children harm themselves, staff respond well, remain alert and take appropriate and timely action to keep them safe. Staff follow established plans and ensure that children receive reassurance and support during and after incidents. However, risk management plans require updating to reflect all emerging and known risks so that staff have clear, detailed guidance on how risks can be mitigated effectively.

While staff respond appropriately to safeguarding concerns, there are occasions where staff lack sufficient professional curiosity to fully explore potential risks. Which limits their ability to consistently prioritise children's safety.

There has been one instance of physical restraint. However, records relating to this intervention do not clearly outline the specific reason for the measures used by staff. Discussions with staff were delayed, limited in content or did not take place with all relevant staff. The child was also not given the opportunity to speak about the measure used, which occurred in their bedroom. These shortfalls reduce the effectiveness of analysis and limit opportunities for learning from the intervention.

Positive behaviour is consistently promoted, and a range of rewards and incentives are used to recognise and celebrate children's achievements. The members of the team have a good understanding of the children and what motivates them. The systems in place for positive reinforcement work well and are applied consistently. As a result, children feel a sense of pride and are able to recognise the progress they are making.

Children are encouraged to voice their opinions and views freely. They understand how to access the home's complaints procedure. When children raise concerns or express that they are unhappy, staff listen carefully and take them seriously. This means that children can feel confident that their views matter because staff take appropriate action to address the issues raised. As a result, children feel respected and valued.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is led by a registered manager, who is dedicated, reflective and caring. She is focused on ensuring positive outcomes for children and is continually seeking ways to improve the quality of care they receive.

The manager is taking effective action to strengthen team cohesion and improve team connections. She recognises the importance of having a supportive and consistent team of staff who work well together. She has implemented strategies to enhance communication, collaboration and shared responsibility across the workforce. These efforts are helping to build a more unified team culture in which staff feel more confident, valued and aligned in their approach to supporting children.

The manager ensures that staff receive reflective supervision to support the development of their practice. Safeguarding and children's experiences are central to supervision discussions, and there is a clear focus on addressing any practice shortfalls to improve the quality of care within the home.

Staff are appropriately trained and have the relevant qualifications; however, one member of staff has not completed their qualifications in the required time frame. The manager has been proactive in addressing this shortfall and has implemented targeted strategies and support measures to help the staff members progress.

Decision-making is informed by effective monitoring, oversight and reflective practice, with a clear commitment to continuous improvement. Managers respond promptly to emerging issues to ensure that children receive safe, consistent and well-coordinated support.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person 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 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; manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other; 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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)) In particular the registered person should ensure that staff have the knowledge and skills to recognise and be alert for any signs that might indicate a child is in any way at risk of harm, and that they demonstrate professional curiosity when they are aware of known risks. Additionally, risk management plans should be up to date and provide clear guidance on how to manage risks associated with ligature.	16 April 2026

In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff— seek to involve each child’s placing authority effectively in the child’s care, in accordance with the child’s relevant plans; seek to secure the input and services required to meet each child’s needs; if the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority’s or a relevant person’s performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child’s needs are met in accordance with the child’s relevant plans; and seek to develop and maintain effective professional relationships with such persons, bodies or organisations as the registered person considers appropriate having regard to the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the children’s home is to provide care and accommodation. (Regulation 5 (a)(b)(c)(d)) In particular, the registered person should ensure that there is effective partnership working with children’s families, and that those with parental responsibility are consulted when decisions are being made about children.	16 April 2026
The registered person must ensure that— within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes— the name of the child; details of the child’s behaviour leading to the use of the measure; the date, time and location of the use of the measure; a description of the measure and its duration; details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure; the name of the person who used the measure ("the user"), and of any other person present when the measure was used;	16 April 2026

the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and

a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure;

within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person")—

has spoken to the user about the measure; and

has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and

within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(b)(i)(ii)(c)(iv))

This specifically relates to ensuring that records are clear and accurate, and that leaders and managers complete debriefs with staff following the use of restrictive physical interventions within the required timescales. Debriefs should consider the proportionality and necessity of the intervention, particularly when it takes place in a child's bedroom.

Additionally, the manager should ensure that children are given the opportunity to discuss the restraint.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure all staff in a care role, including external agency or bank staff, have the qualification in regulation 32(4) within the relevant timescale listed in regulation 32(5). ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.12)

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: 2638470

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Acheron Care Limited

Registered provider address: Manor House, Hilderstone, Stone ST15 8SQ

Responsible individual: Emma Robey

Registered manager: Lucy Hammersley

Inspector

Tonia Dubidat, Social Care Inspector

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