

2651802

Registered provider: Willcob Care Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

A private provider operates this residential children's home, offering both long-term residential care and short-break services. The home provides residential short breaks for up to seven children at any one time and provides long-term care for up to five children. The service is for children with emotional and social difficulties and/or learning disabilities, including autism.

The home was registered with Ofsted in December 2021, and the manager was registered in September 2023.

At the time of inspection, three children were living at the home; no children were staying there on a short break.

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 November 2025

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 August 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/08/2024	Full	Good
14/06/2023	Full	Good
18/10/2022	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The staff show love and care for the children in the home, helping them to form strong and meaningful relationships with those who look after them. Staff speak about the children with warmth and affection, placing great emphasis on open and honest communication as the foundation for building positive and effective relationships. This approach helps the children to develop the skills that they need to build and manage healthy relationships in their lives.

The children have made significant progress in many aspects of their lives, including their health and well-being. Each child has individualised plans, including a placement plan and a 24-hour behaviour management plan. The information contained in these plans is updated regularly.

The children are all in receipt of education and they are supported well by staff, including being safely taken to and from school each day if necessary. Since the last inspection, two children have been supported to maintain their school place, despite the significant distance. This continuity means that the children are taught by teaching staff who understand their learning styles and support needs.

Each child receives one-to-one support from staff who know them well. The staff understand how each child communicates. One child, who does not express themselves verbally, uses signs and pictures to enable staff to understand their wishes and feelings.

Children are helped to build and maintain positive relationships with the important people in their lives. Staff work with external professionals to ensure that contact plans that prioritise children's well-being are followed. This enables children to spend time with their family in a safe way.

Children are supported and encouraged to develop their hobbies and interests. Staff are keen to learn about the activities that children enjoy, and they participate in these with them. This helps to build the children's self-esteem.

The children say that they enjoy living in the home and feel safe. They appear happy and relaxed. Staff understand the importance of children having fulfilled lives, irrespective of their additional vulnerabilities.

The home environment is in need of some repair. At the time of this inspection, there were some damaged items in the home. For example, there were broken cabinet doors in the kitchen and broken wardrobes in two of the children's rooms. There are plans to improve the home environment, and some repair work has been undertaken to make the home safe. The lack of care and attention to the environment prevents children from taking pride in their home and impacts on their self-esteem.

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

The staff have a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the children's risks and vulnerabilities. They take time to talk to the children and to educate them about risk. These discussions help children to devise strategies to keep themselves safe, and they are effective in reducing risks. Children have a strong sense of well-being, which means that they do not go missing from the home.

Staff respond appropriately to incidents and these are well managed. Risk assessments are kept under regular review. Staff undertake ongoing work with children to reduce risk and there is clear management oversight of each incident. All serious incidents are notified to Ofsted. This allows the regulator to have sufficient oversight and scrutiny.

Staff are consistent in their approach to implementing rules with the children. This sets the standard for acceptable and safe behaviour and the children are clear about what is expected of them. Staff have a good understanding of the children's behaviour and positive behaviour is promoted. Physical intervention has only been used on one occasion since the last inspection. This was used as a last resort and was proportionate for a child when they were in crisis. The child was able to have a debrief following the incident.

The systems to manage allegations are robust. Two allegations have been made since the last inspection. The registered manager has oversight of all incidents and opportunities are provided to staff to reflect and learn from them.

Time with children is well used. Discussions are meaningful and well recorded, and cover a variety of areas. Children and staff work together to set goals or targets for children to work towards. This helps children to modify their behaviour and to develop skills which will help them, for example with their independence. Rewards are fair and restorative.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager is an effective role model for staff. He provides strong leadership and guidance to the team. He is child centred in his approach and ensures that children are at the centre of staff practice. Staff say that they can approach the registered manager and deputy manager with any concerns.

There is a stable staff team, which provides consistency and stability to meet the children's needs. Staff are child focused and committed to the home.

A thorough induction process is provided for new staff. This includes additional supervision and shadowing opportunities. There is a comprehensive training programme in place, from induction to ongoing training. All staff are up to date with mandatory training and have completed further training specific to the needs of the children. Staff speak enthusiastically about the learning opportunities that they are given and identify how this supports them to carry out their roles with increased confidence.

Staff receive appropriate supervision and appraisals in line with the home's statement of purpose. Staff have an opportunity to reflect on their practice and identify any learning needs.

Team meetings are held regularly. They cover all relevant information and staff are given the opportunity to refresh their knowledge of policies, procedures and the regulations. Staff contribute to the agenda and are able to reflect on their practice.

Staff speak highly of the management team and say that they enjoy working at the home and feel valued and supported. One member of staff said: 'The team works closely and coherently, with excellent leadership from the registered manager and senior leaders. If I need support on my shift, I can turn to my team leader, who supports me.'

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

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that repairs to all areas of the home's interior continue to be addressed promptly, including the children's bedrooms and the home's fittings. This will help ensure that the home offers a nurturing, welcoming environment. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

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: 2651802

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Willcob Care Ltd

Registered provider address: Cavendish House, Hoddesdon EN11 0LB

Responsible individual: Chimaobi Erundu

Registered manager: Isioma Odega

Inspector

Sadia Akhtar, Social Care Inspector

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