

2677619

Registered provider: Helm Care Services Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is operated by a private provider. It offers care for up to 3 children who experience social and emotional difficulties.

The home registered with Ofsted in May 2022. The registered manager left the home in September 2025. A new manager has been in post since March 2026 and has applied to register with Ofsted.

There were 2 children living at the home at the time of this inspection.

Inspection dates: 27 and 28 April 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	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 6 August 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection:

An assurance inspection took place on 8 January 2026 in response to concerns about the leadership and management of the home. The inspection found no serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
06/08/2024	Full	Good
14/06/2023	Full	Good
12/10/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Summary of findings

Children are supported to make positive progress from their starting points. The staff team works hard to understand children's views and to advocate for them with other professionals.

Risks for children have reduced during their time living at the home. Children's safety is prioritised, both in how staff respond during times of need and in how they help children understand the impact of their behaviours.

There have been changes in the staff team and in the leadership of the home. Gaps in the manager's oversight mean that documentation and records lack detail, and areas for improvement are not consistently identified or acted on.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children have developed trusting relationships with the staff who care for them. These strong relationships help children to share their views and feelings and to receive the support they need.

One child's social worker said that the child's views are listened to and acted on and highlighted the joint working with the home as a strength. The child, who recently moved to the home, said that staff have 'stuck with me'. A detailed transition plan was put in place, including daily discussions to help staff and professionals understand the child's needs.

Staff support children to engage in education. One child's attendance at school has increased significantly and they are enthusiastic about their future opportunities. Another child who has not attended school for some time is keen to return and is slowly being reintroduced to school life. There is an informal learning plan in place to support their continued educational development.

Children's health needs are well met. There is effective partnership work in place with agencies such as child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) for ongoing support to meet children's specific needs.

Children's individual interests and activities are supported. This includes children having pets that they care for at the home and staff supporting a child to play football at a local club. Staff understand the benefits for children's emotional and physical wellbeing.

Children are supported to spend time with people who are important to them. One parent said they have been able to work with staff around any concerns they had, which has helped their child.

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

The risks for children have reduced significantly since moving to the home. Staff understand the risks well and know what is expected of them to keep children safe. Detailed discussions took place between the manager and external professionals to consider the potential risks between children before a second child moved to the home.

A child who recently moved to the home initially experienced lengthy physical interventions to prevent them from harming themselves. The manager has monitored these incidents. They have reduced in frequency, duration and complexity over a short period. This demonstrates how the child has begun to settle and build relationships with staff. The child said that the way staff have helped her makes her feel safe.

Physical interventions are not recorded consistently. Some records refer to the use of therapeutic touch when staff have physically intervened to prevent a child from harming themselves. A child debrief was completed by a staff member involved in the incident, and the record did not reflect the child's voice. Staff often carry out debriefs collectively, which limits opportunities for individual accountability and reflection. Records lack detail, which prevents a robust review of practice.

When children go missing from the home, staff work hard to locate them. During one incident, a child subject to a court-directed deprivation of liberty order was able to leave the provider's unlocked vehicle. The incident record does not show how staff had assessed this risk.

A child's allegation against a member of staff was managed well and addressed in a timely way. Staff and the child have since worked together to rebuild trust and strengthen their relationships.

There are safer recruitment practices in place to ensure that only people who are safe to care for children are employed.

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

There has been no registered manager since September 2025. Another manager was in post. However, they did not submit their application to register with Ofsted.

There have been changes to the management team of the home and to staffing. This has resulted in a high number of inexperienced and unqualified staff working at the home, with additional agency staff working alongside them. This impacts on consistency of care for children.

Despite the challenges, staff spoke positively about the support they receive from managers including the current manager and the strong team spirit.

The manager's oversight of the home is not robust. Some areas of analysis are repeated, and practice shortfalls and opportunities for learning are missed.

The managers' assessment of a referral for a child moving to the home did not reflect the thorough nature of the meetings held with professionals. The actions identified to manage risk are generic, with little consideration of the specific measures the child requires. The manager did not evaluate the staff team's capacity to meet the child's needs.

Risk assessment documentation relies on generic actions that do not reflect the specific strategies staff use to support each child's individual risks. Due to changes in staffing, these inconsistencies affect how children are managed.

Some serious incidents involving children have not been reported to Ofsted. This includes a child being taken to hospital and a child going missing overnight. This does not ensure that Ofsted has the oversight it needs to monitor children's safety and the home's safeguarding practice.

A complaint made to the provider by a neighbour was not reviewed or actioned in line with the complaints process. Instead, it was discussed with the complainant in person. The manager did not provide a formal written response to communicate the outcome of their investigation.

Training provided to staff is specific to children's needs. Recent sessions have used scenarios as a practical way to support learning. There is a detailed induction plan for new starters, and staff progress with qualifications is kept under review.

Team meetings have a clear agenda and are well attended. Records show how staff contribute to planning for the home and how they are supported to reflect together as a team. Clear actions are identified for staff to follow up. Staff receive regular supervision, and discussions help them reflect on their role and consider their wellbeing.

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 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; 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	31 May 2026

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)(b)(i)(ii)(c)) Leaders and managers must ensure that any physical intervention is recorded in detail as above. Debriefs with children should be completed by someone independent of the incident and records should reflect the child's views and feelings. Debriefs with staff should be completed individually by the manager reviewing the incident as good practice, to ensure that there is clear accountability for staff actions.	
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 staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to 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; demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on—	31 May 2026

research and developments in relation to the ways in which the needs of children are best met; and feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received; 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)(c)(d)(e)(f)(g)(i)(ii)(h)) Specifically, leaders and managers must ensure that they have effective oversight of the home to identify improvements in staff practice and opportunities for learning. They must ensure that records of incidents are thorough, to explain the rationale for staff decision-making around risk. Assessments completed to consider the placement of a new child in the home must outline the measures which will be put in place to manage risk and should demonstrate how staff skills, knowledge and experience can meet children's needs. They must ensure that risk assessment documents contain measures specific to the child's risks and reflect the actions being used by staff. They must ensure that complaints made to the home are responded to formally in writing.	
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— a child is involved in or subject to, or is suspected of being involved in or subject to, sexual exploitation; an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious; there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there; a child protection enquiry involving a child — is instigated; or	31 May 2026

concludes (in which case, the notification must include the outcome of the child protection enquiry); or there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(a)(b)(c)(d)(i)(ii)(e))	
The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ("a quality of care review") at least once every 6 months. In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating— the quality of care provided for children; the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children. The system referred to in paragraph (2) must provide for ascertaining and considering the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff. (Regulation 45 (1) (2)(a)(b)(c) (5)) The registered person must ensure that they have a system in place which allows them to monitor these matters, specifically in relation to the opinions of the child, parents, placing authorities and staff.	31 May 2026

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: 2677619

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Helm Care Services Ltd

Registered provider address: Suite 103, Group First House, 12A Meadway, Padiham
BB12 7NG

Responsible individual:

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Andrea Foreman, Social Care Inspector
Chervone Collins, Social Care Inspector

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