

2678404

Registered provider: WILLOW CARE GROUP LIMITED

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is a privately run home and is led by a registered manager.

The home provides care for up to three children with emotional and behavioural difficulties. At the time of the inspection, two children were living at the home, both contributed to this inspection. During this inspection period, two children had moved on from the home.

Inspection dates: 5 to 6 August 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: 28 August 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
28/08/2024	Full	Good
13/11/2023	Full	Good
11/10/2022	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The home is welcoming and inviting, and it is also well maintained. There is a large garden area where children can relax. Children take pride in their bedrooms and report that they like how they look; this helps them to feel a sense of belonging.

Staff are patient with children and take a nurturing approach to care. Staff understand the importance of consistent boundaries, which helps children settle and feel safe. Children report that staff are helpful and supportive. One child found it difficult to identify where to begin when describing the range of support they receive. The child spoke proudly of their progress in developing independence skills and was able to articulate their next steps and goals.

Leaders and managers understand the importance of children's education and work proactively with external agencies to support children's learning. While this remains an area of ongoing development, staff are consistent in their efforts to explore and implement strategies to promote educational progress. Staff also promote structure and positive daily routines to help children re-engage with education. One child attends school regularly and spoke with confidence about their recent achievement in mock exams.

Staff are committed to supporting children to maintain meaningful relationships with important people outside of the home. Staff understand the significance of family connections and how this supports children's emotional well-being and sense of identity.

Children are asked about what is important to them and their views are taken into consideration when planning activities and experiences. One child recently visited London and created some memories which will be long lasting. Children are also involved with holiday planning. This supports children's well-being and provides support to further build and strengthen relationships with staff members.

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

Staff have a clear understanding of the individual risk factors that may affect the children in their care. Staff are confident in identifying concerns and taking appropriate action to keep children safe. Risk assessments are generally detailed and regularly reviewed. However, in one case, a child's risk assessment had not been promptly updated following a recent incident relating to internet safety. The child was supported after this incident. However, this oversight limits the effectiveness of the safeguarding procedures.

Staff help children to develop an understanding of risk. Children are encouraged to take age-appropriate, calculated risks. This is evident in the safety planning for children's free time, where staff support children to promote independence while maintaining boundaries.

Each child has a detailed Philomena Protocol in place in order to help locate and return them to the home should they go missing from care. Staff are confident in their version of The Philomena Protocol; they actively look for children who go missing from home and are curious about the reasons they left in the first place. Children do not consistently receive an external missing from home return interview, which is a missed opportunity to share their views with a person external to the home.

Children know how to make a complaint in this home and are confident to do so. Over the past inspection year, two complaints were made by two different children. Both were taken seriously and investigated thoroughly by senior leaders and managers, in line with organisational procedures. Children received outcomes and feedback, reflecting a culture of transparency and respect, where children's voices are listened to and acted on.

There has been one allegation during the last inspection year involving one child. The matter was taken seriously, action was taken to ensure children were safe while the investigation was carried out. Managers and leaders alerted relevant external safeguarding agencies.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is led by a registered manager who is dedicated to the children. The manager knows each child well, and this positive relationship is reflected in the way children respond to her. Two children who have left the home during the last inspection year continue to contact the manager, reflecting the lasting impact of the relationships developed in the home.

Staff share feeling well supported in their roles. They receive regular supervision and attend frequent team meetings, which contributes to their confidence and effectiveness in supporting children. Staff speak positively about the culture of the home; they value the strong support not only by the manager but the director. This supportive environment helps to promote staff well-being and contributes to a stable staff team.

Leaders and managers proactively address concerns relating to staff performance and effectively use the probationary process to resolve any issues. This ensures that the team maintains the necessary standards when caring for children.

Leaders and managers show due diligence during the recruitment process. They ensure that all appropriate pre-employment checks are completed thoroughly, helping to safeguard children by ensuring that only suitable candidates are appointed.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that when a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from the home without permission, the responsible local authority must provide an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. Homes should take account of information provided by such interviews when assessing risks and putting arrangements in place to protect each child. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.30).
- The registered person should ensure that children's full medical history is explored and considered clearly in their written plans regarding holds which may or may not be appropriate. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 49, paragraph 9.55).
- The registered person should ensure that recent incidents are reflected in risk assessments for children and there are clear responses for staff to follow. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5).

Information about this inspection

The inspector has 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: 2678404

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: WILLOW CARE GROUP LIMITED

Registered provider address: Vicarage Corner House, 219 Burton Road, Derby DE23 6AE

Responsible individual: Andrea Spurr

Registered manager: Lesley Kirkham

Inspector

Becky Thompson, Social Care Inspector

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