

2703722

Registered provider: 5ab Care Ltd

Assurance inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is privately owned and provides care for up to 3 children who experience social and emotional difficulties.

The manager registered with Ofsted in January 2023.

At the time of the inspection, one child was living in the home and spoke with the inspector.

Inspection date: 25 March 2026

Date of last inspection: 27 August 2025

Judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Information about this inspection

At this inspection, the inspector evaluated:

- the care of children
- the safety of children
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers.

The inspector has looked closely at the experiences and progress of children, using the social care common inspection framework. This assurance 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'.

Findings from the inspection

We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance inspection.

The home is beautifully presented and provides a warm, welcoming environment. Personal touches, including photos and positive affirmations, add to the homely and nurturing atmosphere. Children are involved in decisions about the appearance of the home, which helps them feel a sense of belonging and ownership.

One child has moved in, and 3 children have moved out of the home since the last inspection. Children's moves into and out of the home are generally well planned. Before children move in, staff visit them and provide them with information about the home. Also, staff support children to visit their new homes when moving on. For one child, staff provided individualised support, including weekly visits to support the child to settle into their new home. This supportive approach minimises the anxieties that children may have regarding moving into or out of the home.

However, managers do not complete robust assessments when considering the suitability of children moving into the home. The manager did not gather all available information to fully evaluate the staff's ability to meet a child's needs or to assess the compatibility of the new child alongside the child already living in the home. Consequently, shortfalls in care planning and assessment led to an increase in incidents, which resulted in a negative experience for children.

The child living in the home is settled and making good progress. They are engaged in education, and staff have ensured that arrangements are in place to support their return to school at the start of the next term. The child has formed positive relationships with staff, who are helping them to build their independence. The child spoke positively about their experiences in the home and the support they receive from staff, stating, 'The staff are the best. They do such a good job.'

Children's emotional needs are well supported. The home's therapist meets with children monthly and works closely with the staff team to build their understanding of each child's needs and to guide therapeutic practice. As a result, children feel understood and receive care that is aligned with their emotional and developmental needs.

Leaders and managers have effective systems in place to maintain oversight of the home. Monthly audits and the online recording system allow for strong monitoring and analysis of areas for development. The manager's oversight identifies learning from incidents, which is shared with staff and addressed through supervision and training. As a result, leaders and managers have clear, accurate oversight of practice and take timely action to address any shortfalls.

The manager is a strong advocate for children and challenges agencies effectively when practice falls short. She has escalated concerns to education services when they have not taken responsibility for securing appropriate education for the child. She has also addressed poor information-sharing by professionals where this has negatively affected a child's experience. The manager's proactive challenge and advocacy support improves outcomes for children.

Physical interventions are used safely. Following any intervention, children and staff are spoken with to ensure their safety and wellbeing. However, staff responses when children become heightened are not consistently therapeutic. Records do not always clearly reflect the actions taken by staff to evidence the de-escalation strategies used. Furthermore, staff sometimes use language that is blaming and not child focused.

Allegations and safeguarding concerns are taken seriously. Managers share information with the relevant professionals and ensure protective measures are put in place while investigations are ongoing to keep children safe. However, investigations are not consistently robust, as they do not fully explore all aspects of the concerns raised or demonstrate sufficient professional curiosity when new information comes to light. Children have not consistently been informed of the outcomes of these investigations. As a result, children do not receive closure and may lack confidence that their concerns have been fully considered and addressed.

Three of the requirements and the one recommendation raised at the last inspection have been met. One requirement has been partially met and is restated, and a further requirement and recommendation have been raised.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
27/08/2025	Full	Requires improvement to be good
09/12/2024	Full	Good
19/09/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good

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; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies; and that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(v)(vi)(vii)(b)) The registered person must ensure that when children raise safeguarding concerns, appropriate action is taken and all aspects of the allegation and any new information are explored in full. This also relates to ensuring that children are provided with an outcome when they have raised concerns.	28 April 2026

This requirement was raised at the last inspection and is restated.	
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children’s home; and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home’s statement of purpose. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that they gather all necessary information about children before they move into the home. In addition, the registered person must ensure that they consider the compatibility of the needs of children moving into the home and children who are already living in the home, to ensure that children are able to live alongside each other safely.	28 April 2026

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that staff are familiar with the home’s policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. Staff should record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third-party information. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. (Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards,’ page 62, paragraph 14.8)

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 2703722

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: 5ab Care Ltd

Registered provider address: Devonshire Business Centre, Unit 27 Works Road,
Letchworth Garden City, Letchworth Garden City, Hertfordshire SG6 1GJ

Responsible individual: Lyndsay Bryden

Registered manager: Carly Cherriman

Inspector

Menaka De Silva, Social Care Inspector

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