

2711401

Registered provider: SureCare Residential Limited- The White Trees Group

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is run by a private organisation. It provides care for up to five children who experience social and emotional difficulties.

At the time of this inspection, four children were living at the home. Since the last inspection, no children have moved in or out of the home.

The manager registered with Ofsted in June 2023.

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 August 2025

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: 25 September 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
25/09/2024	Full	Good
27/11/2023	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

Despite some children making consistent progress, the shortfalls identified at the inspection have reduced the overall quality of care provided. Effective safeguards are not in place. The management of the home has not been effective. Children's views and concerns have not been addressed and allegations about staff members have not been reported or investigated properly. These shortfalls fail to demonstrate good care.

Three children contributed to the inspection. Children are established and settled in the home. Generally, the staff are child focused, motivated and enjoy working at the home.

Some children had been out of education for a significant period. Staff help children to access education based on their learning style, seeking education provisions in keeping with children's needs. For one child, staff have worked effectively with other professionals to provide the child with a variety of bespoke education packages. As a result of staff's commitment to children's education, children have made positive progress. Two children have recently completed their exams and been accepted to local colleges. Another child's attendance has significantly increased.

Children have complex needs, with histories of going missing from home, self-injurious behaviour and exploitation risks. Staff have a good understanding of the children's backgrounds and lived experiences. Staff use a therapeutic approach in their practice. This is helping children to understand and manage their emotions in healthier ways.

Interactions between staff and children appear warm and caring. Children speak highly of the support that they receive from staff. One child said, 'Support from staff is brilliant, they always tell me how proud they are of me.' Children's families are complimentary about how well children are cared for and the progress that they are making.

Staff know the children well and invest time in creating special memories together. Staff approached a production company of a famous singer and, as a result, a child was offered tickets to a concert. The child said that experience was the best day of her life. Other children have enjoyed visits to London, watching significant football games, feeding giraffes, having super-car experiences and attending their local boxing club. Children said that they appreciate the meaningful experiences they have. These help children to build a sense of community and belonging. Staff create memory books for children that detail special events. These books are given to children when they leave.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

There has been one significant safeguarding concern, relating to medication, that had the potential to cause significant harm to children. This concern remained unidentified

for a considerable period. Leaders and managers have taken some action to increase the potential for the necessary improvements to occur. This includes retraining the staff team and a higher level of management oversight. Despite this, during the inspection, staff were still dispensing medication to children outside of the home's policy. This means that children are still at risk of harm.

Concerns relating to staff conduct, including allegations made by children, have not always been investigated thoroughly or in a timely way. Records have not consistently provided assurance that concerns have been recorded. These records have not been shared with senior managers, the local authority designated officer or Ofsted in accordance with the home's safeguarding policy. This has meant that the opportunity to add a higher level of scrutiny has been missed. Leaders and managers have, in some cases, concluded concerns about staff to be unsubstantiated without having investigated them fully. This means that potentially unsafe practice has not been challenged or addressed. The new manager has identified some learning points and addressed these with staff.

Children rarely go missing from home. When they do, staff respond in line with children's missing-from-home plans, encouraging children to return safely. Children are welcomed back to the home. Staff work with the children to help them to understand risks associated with going missing. However, after one incident, a child said that they were not feeling happy and the staff did not show sufficient curiosity to understand why. Leaders and managers had not followed up with the child's local authority for a return home interview. As a result, opportunities to gather information in relation to factors affecting their well-being were missed.

Consequences are very seldom implemented by staff. These are relevant and relate to the child's behaviour. Children have recently begun to benefit from changes made by the new manager, such as the way that staff recognise and reinforce positive behaviour.

Staff regularly monitor, discuss and review children's management plans. The home employs specific well-being staff devise helpful strategies to support children's progress. Children feel understood and they appreciate staff's input. One child said that because of the staff's support they are learning to regulate their emotions. As a result, they are more settled, which has meant that their independence is increasing.

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

The registered manager was not present during the inspection and is on extended leave. A new manager has been appointed. He is supported by a deputy manager. At the time of the inspection, the new manager had been in post for three weeks. At this inspection, several shortfalls were identified in the leadership and management of this home. This has undermined the care provided to children.

Audits completed by leaders, managers and compliance staff fail to identify concerns regarding allegations and incidents. Additionally, leaders and managers have not always ensured that actions have been followed up. This means that leaders and managers do

not have a clear understanding of areas that require scrutiny. As a result, the opportunities to reflect on staff practice and share learning with the wider team have been missed.

Ofsted was not notified of an allegation made by a child regarding a staff member. Another notification regarding an allegation lacked significant detail and was submitted late. This reduces Ofsted's level of oversight.

Leaders and managers have not consistently recognised shortfalls in reporting and recording. For example, a child raised concerns about room searches. Despite this, the manager did not review the proportionality of the searches. A child did not leave their bedroom at night as they did not want to wake staff with their door alarm. This prevented them using the bathroom at night. Despite this being raised to the registered manager, the use of door alarms was not reviewed. The new manager has since removed them, and the child feels comfortable to use the bathroom as needed.

Staff feel supported by the current management team. However, leaders and managers' oversight of staff's performance and development has not been effective. One staff member who has worked at the home for over two years was only registered to begin their qualification during the inspection. The leaders and managers were not aware of this shortfall. They had failed to evaluate the staff's skills to ensure that they had the training and knowledge to meet the needs of the children.

The new management team has high expectations for the service and has begun to make necessary changes. They have established good relationships with external professionals, including social workers and families.

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 notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there. A notification made under this regulation— must include details of— the matter; any actions taken by the registered person as a result of the matter. (Regulation 40 (4)(c) (5)(a)(i)(iii))	6 August 2025
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— 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; and are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies;	2 September 2025

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; that the effectiveness of the home's child protection policies is monitored regularly. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(iii)(v)(vi)(vii)(b)(e)) In particular, ensure that staff request that the child's placing authority conducts an independent return home interview.	
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— 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; 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— 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)(b) (2)(a)(f)(g)(ii)(h)) In particular, ensure that the use of bedroom searches is reviewed to ensure that they are proportionate.	2 September 2025
The registered person may only— employ an individual to work at the children's home. The requirements are that—	2 September 2025

the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform.

For the purposes of paragraph (3)(b), an individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification if, by the relevant date, the individual has attained—

the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (England) ("the Level 3 Diploma"); or

The relevant date is—

in the case of an individual who starts working in a care role in a home after 1st April 2014, the date which falls 2 years after the date on which the individual started working in a care role in a home; or

The registered person must take reasonable steps to ensure that any individual who is working at the home and who does not fall within paragraph (2)(a) and (b) is appropriately supervised while carrying out the individual's duties.
(Regulation 32 (2)(a) (3)(b) (4)(a) (5)(a) (8))

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: 2711401

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: SureCare Residential Limited- The White Trees Group

Registered provider address: Whitetrees Group, The Old Snap Factory, Twyford Industrial Estate, Twyford Road, Bishop's Stortford CM23 3LJ

Responsible individual: Emma Barr

Registered manager: Leah Blackman

Inspector

Lexi Mitchell, Social Care Inspector

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