

2726010

Registered provider: Elm Lodge Residential Limited

Full 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 four children aged seven to 17 years, who may experience emotional and social difficulties.

Two children were living at the home at the time of the inspection.

The manager registered with Ofsted in September 2024.

Inspection dates: 5 and 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: 22 October 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
22/10/2024	Full	Good
07/11/2023	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Since the last inspection, three children have moved into the home and three children have moved out. Staff supported two children to move to foster families in line with their local authority care plans. One child moved out in an emergency as staff were not able to support their increasing needs. One child shared their views about the home with the inspector.

Leaders and managers plan children's moves into the home carefully and sensitively. They consider the needs of the children already living at the home. Staff meet the children prior to them moving in, and they arrange for them to visit the home beforehand. This helps children to develop relationships with staff and settle.

Staff support children to make progress with their education. For example, one child had missed a significant amount of learning prior to moving into the home. They are now attending school full time. Staff also support another child to attend a specialist school, which is far from the home. Staff help the children to learn life skills.

Staff have good relationships with children's families and understand the importance of encouraging family time. They support the children to spend time with the important people in their lives. Staff invite family members into the home and involve them appropriately in decision-making. This helps children to maintain their sense of identity.

Staff know the children well and help them develop their interests. They spend time with the children and offer them activities they enjoy both inside and outside of the home. One child enjoys their boxing classes, while another child likes gaming.

Staff support the children to understand their own emotions. The home's behaviour mentor works with the children to help them understand their feelings through discussion and fun activities. Children identify staff as trusted adults who they can talk to if they have upsetting feelings.

The home is spacious, and children's bedrooms are personalised to their preferences. However, some parts of the home lack a homely feel. Some of the doors are not painted and wall art, which had been removed during times of distress, has not been replaced.

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

The manager has developed positive relationships with other professionals to help keep children safe. When incidents happen, staff share relevant information with police and social workers. The manager meets regularly with children's social workers to reflect on strategies to support the children. This joint working has resulted in a reduction in the severity and frequency of incidents.

Managers listen to the children. When there are any concerns relating to staff conduct, managers share information with appropriate agencies, such as the local authority designated officer for safeguarding and social workers. Managers complete appropriate internal investigations quickly. The manager seeks to identify any practice concerns and addresses these with staff to improve practice. The manager keeps children informed of the outcomes of investigations. This helps children feel valued and respected.

Staff have planned and unplanned conversations with the children to help them understand how to keep themselves safe. The home's behaviour mentor has therapeutic conversations with the children through fun activities about making positive choices and personal safety. This helps children to understand their emotions and how to keep themselves safe. As a result, risks to children have reduced.

Staff support children to calm when feeling upset. They use de-escalation techniques, such as negotiation and distraction, to support the children to manage their feelings. Staff have therefore rarely used physical intervention to manage children's behaviour or to prevent harm. All incidents of physical intervention have a clear rationale for their use, and the manager maintains good oversight of these. The manager ensures that the staff and children involved are spoken to quickly after the event to reflect on and learn from it. The manager ensures opportunities and support are in place for children and staff to rebuild their relationships through restorative work following physical intervention.

When children go missing from home, staff follow them and help them return home safely. Staff share information quickly with other professionals, such as the police and social workers. However, there is no system to request that return home interviews are carried out. Therefore, on some occasions these have not happened. This is a missed opportunity to understand risk and keep children safer.

Leaders and managers have not addressed all fire precautions. For example, the side gate, which is a fire exit, was padlocked. Furthermore, one fire door had a hole in it where a key lock had been installed, and several fire doors were wedged open without an appropriate risk assessment or management plan. Ineffective fire prevention arrangements leave children and staff vulnerable to the risk of fire.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is suitably qualified and experienced. He has taken action to meet the requirement and one recommendation from the last inspection. One recommendation from the last inspection is reinstated.

The manager ensures that the home is sufficiently staffed. Staff speak positively about their experiences of working at the home, and they work together as a team to support the children. Consequently, the home has a stable workforce and rarely uses agency staff. This provides continuity of care for children.

Staff report that the manager is approachable. They are well supported through regular supervision with the manager and clinical supervision from an external consultant. Supervision is focused on the care for children and staff well-being. The manager has regular appropriate supervision to support his own practice and development. Team meetings are held regularly and are a platform for further staff development.

Leaders and managers work effectively with other professionals to ensure the children's needs are met. They work in partnership with parents and involve them in the care of their children. Managers meet regularly with children's social workers to reflect and discuss further strategies on how children can be supported. For example, there was a collaborative effort between the home, professionals and parents to support one child to settle into the home.

New staff receive suitable induction training. Staff access a variety of further learning opportunities relevant to the children's individual needs, such as neurodiversity. Staff feel confident to support the children. They report that managers are 'hands on' and this provides them with opportunities to observe practice.

The home has a learning culture. Leaders and managers incorporate recommendations from external feedback, and this is discussed with staff in team meetings. Managers also reflect on endings when children have moved on to help them look for any lessons learned. This helps to improve practice.

Leaders and managers have, on occasion, submitted delayed serious incident notifications to Ofsted. This has potentially undermined Ofsted's capacity to ensure managers take appropriate actions to safeguard children.

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
If the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005(a) applies to the home— paragraph (1) does not apply; and the registered person must ensure that the requirements of that Order and any regulations made under it, except for article 23 (duties of employees), are complied with in respect of the home. (Regulation 25 (2)(a)(b)) In particular, ensure clear access through fire exits and that fire doors are of suitable integrity and are closed in the absence of a risk assessment.	2 September 2025

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the home is a nurturing environment that meets children's needs. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that when a child returns to the home after being missing, that they request that the responsible local authority provides an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.30)
- The registered person should notify the child's placing authority, Ofsted and other relevant persons about serious events. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.4)

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: 2726010

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Elm Lodge Residential Limited

Responsible individual: Farxiya Ismail

Registered manager: Peter McGugan

Inspector

Priscilla Koroka, Social Care Inspector

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