

2736705

Registered provider: Acheron Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home was registered with Ofsted in May 2023 and is owned by a private company. It provides care for up to 3 children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

At the time of the inspection, 2 children were living in the home and spoke with the inspector.

The manager registered with Ofsted in May 2025 and is suitably qualified. The manager is also registered to manage another children's home in the company.

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 May 2026

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account

requires improvement to be good

How well children and young people are helped and protected

requires improvement to be good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers

requires improvement to be good

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: 13 May 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/05/2025	Full	Good
05/06/2024	Full	Good
26/09/2023	Full	Good

Summary of findings

There are some strengths in practice and leadership, and children have made some progress. Although children have formed good relationships with staff, children's experiences of living in the home are not consistently positive.

Inspection judgements

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

The home's overall environment is clean and tidy. However, children's bedrooms are a concern. One child's bedroom is in poor condition, and these issues have gone unnoticed or unaddressed. This lack of oversight has the potential to pose health and safety risks. In another child's room, the blind is attached to the window with gaffer tape. This is unsightly and stands as a lasting reminder of a difficult incident. As a result, the children are not being provided with a nurturing and hygienic environment in which to live.

Since the last inspection, 3 children have moved into the home and 3 children have moved out. Their moves were well planned, even when transitions have quickly identified that the home is unable to meet the child's needs. Staff actively support children to develop their independence skills and encourage children to carry out daily tasks to learn important life skills. This approach has supported a child to successfully move to semi-independence.

Children are supported to use their voice and express their feelings in a range of ways. However, children do not always feel listened to. As a result, children have become disengaged and frustrated, impacting on their overall welfare.

All children access appropriate education. Staff prioritise children's education, and the manager advocates strongly for children to ensure that they have what they need. For one child, the progress they have made is significant despite poor local authority provision. Another child sat his exams when he was not expected to, and another child has been supported to have face-to-face tuition when other ways of learning were unsuccessful. These examples demonstrate consistent advocacy and support by staff.

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

While staff demonstrate a sound understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities and receive related training and theoretical knowledge, there are notable inconsistencies in practice that impact on the quality of care provided. These shortfalls appear to be linked to staff burnout and growing sense of helplessness when managing complex behaviours and needs. As a result, staff responses are not

always aligned with the home's therapeutic care model. This inconsistency reduces the effectiveness of interventions and limits positive outcomes for children.

Inconsistent approaches from staff do not always ensure children's safety. Staff supervision and behaviour management of children has not always been in line with children's risks or needs. This has resulted in incidents where children have harmed one another. Careful consideration has also not been given to the impact that incidents within the home can have on each child. This has affected children's comfort and created negative experiences in their safe spaces, particularly their bedrooms.

Despite some shortfalls identified, some safeguarding responses are good. For example, managers take allegations and complaints seriously and ensure they are investigated. When children display risk-taking behaviour, staff respond in line with expected practice. For 2 children, there has been a significant decline in behaviours associated with self-harm and going missing. This demonstrates a positive impact of some targeted support for children.

Where children's behaviour has impacted on the local community, this is managed well. Leaders and managers have taken steps to ensure that children are protected but also undertake reparation work with the local community. This helps children to develop an understanding of their role within their community and how to have a positive impact. Staff address stigma in the community associated with children who are looked after.

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

Leaders and managers are committed to helping children achieve their potential. The manager demonstrates a calm and reflective approach and has identified areas of development in staff practice. However, current management systems do not monitor and improve consistently the care children receive.

Staff morale is low, with some staff reporting that they feel undervalued and insufficiently supported, particularly during periods of increased demand. This has contributed to reduced motivation and higher staff turnover. Although leaders recognise these challenges, actions to improve morale have not had a sustained impact. As a result, workforce instability affects consistency in practice and creates a negative atmosphere in the home and a decline in the quality of care to children.

Staff have received training relevant to the needs of children living in the home. Supervision sessions are regular and are used to provide staff with additional support, share key information and address practice shortfalls.

Leaders challenge and advocate on behalf of children to ensure that they get the support and resources they are entitled to. When this has not been forthcoming, formal complaints have been made on behalf of children. One person external to the

home has stated that if they were a child in care, they would want the responsible individual and manager to represent them due to their tenacity to challenge. This highlights the confidence others have in their advocacy.

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person 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 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; manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other; 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. 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)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(b)) In particular, the manager must ensure that staff respond to children in line with the therapeutic model of the home and in line with their plans.	10 July 2026

The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that each child is encouraged to build and maintain positive relationships with others. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(b)) Staff must manage behaviour to prevent children from harming one another and support them to understand the impact of their actions.	10 July 2026
The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children’s home’s overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children’s needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— meet the needs of each child; and enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(i)(ii)) In particular, the manager must maintain a safe and supportive environment for children. Children must be supported to care for their personal spaces, and staff should undertake daily checks to ensure items, such as food and kitchen items, are removed from children’s bedrooms.	10 July 2026

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 work as a team where appropriate; 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. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)) In particular, the manager must address staff morale and promote a positive supportive team culture. This includes ensuring that staff feel valued, communication is effective and that staff can work cohesively as a team to deliver consistent, high-quality care.	10 July 2026
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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: 2736705

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Acheron Care Limited

Registered provider address: Manor House, Hilderstone, Stone ST15 8SQ

Responsible individual: Emma Robey

Registered manager: Lucy Hammersley

Inspector

Tonia Dubidat, Social Care Inspector

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