

2740625

Registered provider: SBL Care Services (UK) Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned and operated by a private organisation. It is a multi-building registration for up to 6 children living across 4 settings.

At the time of this inspection, 5 children were living at the home.

All settings were visited as part of the inspection, and all children spent individual time with inspectors.

There is a qualified and experienced registered manager in post.

Inspection dates: 6 to 8 January 2026

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection, and care.

Date of last inspection: 4 March 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
04/03/2025	Full	Outstanding
11/12/2023	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Three children have left the home since the last inspection. This was done in a positive way. Following these moves, managers sought feedback from the children about their time at the home. Two children have recently moved into the home. Before the children moved in, they were given pen pictures of the staff, which helped to ease any anxieties they had about meeting new people. This prepared children and helped them to settle in well.

Children living in the home are thriving because of the exceptional care they receive. They are making excellent progress in all aspects of their lives because of the consistent routines and nurture staff consistently provide. There is a strong focus on promoting children's independence skills. Children of all ages are learning skills to equip them for adulthood.

All the settings are spacious and welcoming. There are photos displayed throughout, and some children have chosen to personalise their rooms to reflect their hobbies and interests. Others have enjoyed designing a games room with support from the responsible individual.

Staff encourage children to develop new and existing hobbies and interests. They experience a wide range of fun opportunities, such as holidays and games nights. Additionally, they have participated in community-based activities, including football, cricket and swimming. Some children also enjoy accessing a nearby gym. One child participated in the local community Christmas parade. Memories of these activities, events and holidays are captured in photo books that children receive as keepsakes.

Children's attendance in education is excellent. One child attended his school awards ceremony with staff and received a trophy for their hard work in education, which is proudly displayed in the home. Managers and staff are tenacious in ensuring that children have access to the right education provision. When one child was struggling with education, staff and managers met with education professionals to identify and secure a more suitable college. One professional said, 'Staff are child focused and listen to the child's voice and advocate on their behalf.'

Staff and managers understand the importance of family and friendships for the children, and they go the extra mile to support and promote these relationships. This is a key strength. Recently, staff carried out a piece of work with one child to enable them to visit their parent. This was detailed and included the use of photos and discussions to help ease any anxiety the child had. A family member said, '[Name of child] has blossomed, matured, and is doing really well. Staff are doing a grand job.'

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

Safeguarding practices are robust. Children are allowed to take age-appropriate risks and feel comfortable discussing their concerns with staff. There is a high level of importance placed on children staying safe online. Recently, the provider has introduced a creative new digital application that alerts staff to any safeguarding concerns. When safeguarding concerns arise, staff use their trusting relationships to have child-centred and detailed conversations promptly to help children understand the dangers the internet can pose.

Leaders and managers attend monthly police and community forums where important information is shared. Following these meetings, the manager cascades this to staff, and when necessary, the home's locality assessment is updated. Staff use information from these forums to inform areas of research, which is then used to design bespoke pieces of work with children on topics including bullying, vaping, knife crime and substance misuse.

Incidents of children going missing are minimal. When these occur, staff liaise effectively with other agencies to ensure that children return safely. Restraint practices are not used in the home. Nevertheless, the staff are all suitably trained and use their relationships with children to de-escalate situations.

Positive behaviour is consistently promoted and suitably rewarded. However, one incident record contains language that would not support a child's reflection on their actions. A recommendation has been raised to address this.

Staff have a thorough understanding of whistleblowing practices. Following an allegation, leaders and managers carried out a robust investigation, appropriately referring to the local authority designated officer. Records are detailed and clearly outline the outcome and how this was reached. Following the allegation, the manager carried out a learning review with all staff.

There are procedures in place for safely administering medication. Staff and managers carry out audits regularly, and records are clear and identify any discrepancies.

Recruitment procedures are safe and effective. All staff are fully vetted before they start work. These checks ensure that only suitable adults are employed to work with the children in the home.

Staff have extensively supported one child who felt their wishes and feelings had not been considered in making a complaint to the local authority. The manager sourced external training for staff in relation to complaints to help them understand the process. Professionals were complimentary about the strong leadership, staff professionalism and the relentless advocacy for children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

Leadership in the home is highly effective. Since the last inspection, a new manager has been appointed, who is well supported by a deputy and several house leads. The manager and deputy work extremely well together, and they are motivated to provide outstanding opportunities and outcomes for children and staff.

Staff have a great insight into the needs of the children. Children speak warmly about the leaders and managers, which reflects the consistent care they receive and contributes to their sense of belonging.

Staff feel valued and well supported. One staff member said:

'The management team are brilliant; they are always available to offer guidance, reassurance and encouragement, which makes a big difference when working in a role that can sometimes be challenging. This has helped me grow in confidence and develop my skills.'

Staff engage in monthly reflective supervision and have appraisals twice a year. They speak about the children, their training needs and wider work priorities. Team meetings are well attended. Managers are ambitious for staff to develop. Staff recently came together to deliver presentations on each child's journey and outcomes.

Leaders and managers are visible in the home. There is strong oversight, and they continually review practice and look at how they can learn and improve. Since the last inspection, there have been improvements in the home environment, case records and auditing systems.

Staff receive a wide range of excellent online and face-to-face training opportunities that are bespoke to the children's needs. Courses on topics such as screen time for teenagers, advocacy, harmful sexual behaviour, depression and suicide ensure that staff have the knowledge and skills needed to support children.

There have been occasions when serious incidents have occurred. Managers ensure that they notify the regulator and provide relevant updates. However, there was a delay in making the regulator aware of two incidents. This did not affect children's safety. A recommendation has been raised to address this.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff record information about children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third-party information. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)
- The registered person should ensure that there is a system in place so that all serious incidents are notified, within 24 hours, to the appropriate individuals. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 63, paragraph 14.3)

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: 2740625

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: SBL Care Services (UK) Limited

Registered provider address: 17 St Peters Place, Fleetwood FY7 6EB

Responsible individual: Michael Swift

Registered manager: Liam Fairnie

Inspectors

Judith Birchall, Social Care Inspector

Julia Edwards, Social Care Inspector

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