

2741726

Registered provider: PALS Residential Services

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is operated by a private provider. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to three children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since February 2024.

Three children were living in the home at the time of this inspection. All three children were spoken with.

Inspection dates: 9 and 10 December 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: 26 September 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: Outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
26/09/2024	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

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

Management oversight and safeguarding arrangements are not consistently robust. Reviews of safety measures and confidentiality practices have not been maintained effectively, and monitoring systems do not always ensure standards are met. While children's experiences are positive, these shortfalls limit the home's ability to demonstrate consistently good practice.

Children experience warm, nurturing care and enjoy a homely environment where they feel settled and secure. They are making progress in education, health, and emotional well-being. Staff spend meaningful time with children, playing games and talking about their day, and children speak enthusiastically about activities such as holidays and special outings. Plans for further experiences, including festive trips, reflect a commitment to creating fun and stimulating opportunities.

The home is clean, tidy, and welcoming. Seasonal decorations, including a Christmas tree, create a festive and homely atmosphere. Communal areas are well maintained and organised, providing a comfortable space for children. Children's bedrooms are personalised and reflect their individual identities, promoting a sense of belonging and emotional security. Window restrictors are fitted to upstairs windows, and a motion sensor is in place on the landing to alert staff if children leave their bedrooms. These measures were agreed with the local authority; however, they have not been reviewed for over six months.

Children attend school regularly and are making progress in their education. Education professionals report strong support from the home in promoting learning and maintaining school attendance. Health needs are met effectively, with evidence of appointments being kept and care plans followed. All children have access to weekly therapy sessions which helps support them with boundaries, routines and emotional support. Staff work well with external agencies to strengthen children's overall development.

Family time is promoted when it is safe to do so. Children are supported to maintain important relationships through face-to-face visits, with staff providing practical and emotional support. These efforts help children to sustain and strengthen connections with significant people in their lives. Where family time is assessed as not being in the child's best interests, the manager shows confidence in making decisions that prioritise the child's welfare.

However, children's personal information is displayed on a board in the office. This does not protect confidentiality and risks unauthorised access to sensitive details.

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

Safeguarding arrangements in this home are not consistently effective. A serious incident occurred in which two children were left unsupervised despite known risks. Leaders and managers informed external agencies; however, Ofsted did not receive a notification, and no internal investigation was completed because the staff involved had left employment. There were limited discussions with the children, and staff did not explore the reasons for the behaviour or provide individual sessions, reducing opportunities for children to be able to talk openly. Leaders and managers acted by installing sensors and ensuring children are no longer left unsupervised, but these measures were reactive and implemented after the incident rather than being proactive. While there have been no further serious incidents since, this highlights limitations in risk management and oversight.

Incident recording and managerial oversight have not been consistently robust. Some children's documents have lacked sufficient detail, and the quality of language used in direct work sessions has not always been professional. An incident report from November where a child made a complaint about a member of staff was incomplete, and there is no clear evidence that staff on shift were spoken to following the event or that the child was informed of the outcome. These gaps reduce accountability and limit opportunities for reflection and learning.

During the inspection, the medication cupboard key was found in an open key cupboard with the key left in the door. This arrangement does not fully ensure the security of controlled medication.

There have been two incidents where a child was physically held. Records confirm that these interventions were appropriate and proportionate, in line with the child's assessed needs and the home's procedures. However, these events were not initially recorded as restraints by the home's own monitoring systems; this was identified by the Regulation 44 visitor and then raised with leaders.

Measures are in place to ensure that children can access the internet safely. Firewalls and parental controls help to protect children when using the internet, and staff monitor Wi-Fi activity. Staff plan work with children before they receive personal devices, ensuring that they understand how to use technology safely.

The registered manager takes appropriate steps to escalate matters to professionals when children require additional services. This demonstrates a clear understanding of the importance of multi-agency working and a commitment to ensuring children's needs are addressed.

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

Management oversight of the home has not been consistent. This has led to shortfalls in the safeguarding and risk management practice in the home. Leaders and managers did take action to address some shortfalls identified during the inspection.

There have been concerns about staff conduct since the last inspection. These were managed with input from external agencies; however, internal investigations lacked analysis and did not demonstrate how decisions assured children's safety. Risk assessments and supervision records were updated, but evidence of reflection and learning was limited.

Changes within the staff team since the last inspection have led to periods of disruption and instability for children, which affected the consistency of care and relationships. Managers have worked hard to restore stability and continuity, and children are now benefiting from improved consistency and positive engagement from staff. Although the home is now fully staffed, several team members are newly appointed and have limited experience in managing the complex needs of some children. This places additional pressure on more experienced staff.

Training is in place and includes mandatory and specialist courses tailored to children's needs. However, it is not yet fully embedded across the team, as some newer staff have not completed all required modules. While the training programme is thorough, therapeutic approaches are not consistently reinforced in practice and are still developing within the team.

Staff feedback reflects a positive and supportive culture. Team members describe feeling valued and well supported by managers, with consistent guidance and open communication. Despite this, the departure of four staff members with immediate notice following safeguarding concerns has affected stability and placed additional pressure on the remaining team.

Professionals report that communication with staff and the manager is generally positive and consistent, and they feel children are well cared for. One professional noted that they are occasionally informed about incidents later than other agencies. Some instability for children has been observed due to recent staff changes, and it was highlighted that the manager can sometimes be inflexible when making decisions about family time.

Quality assurance processes have not consistently identified shortfalls in practice, which has limited opportunities for improvement. While the registered manager has introduced revised documentation, learning from serious incidents is not yet consistently embedded. Internal investigations have lacked depth, and some serious incidents were not reported to Ofsted, reducing external oversight.

Leaders and managers demonstrate a developing understanding of the home's strengths and areas for improvement. There is evidence of a commitment to trauma-informed and relational practice, and steps are now being taken to strengthen oversight through audits. However, these improvements are not yet embedded or consistently applied across the service.

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. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi) and (vii)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that safeguarding practice is robust and that thorough internal investigations with documented findings, conclusions and learning is completed. Also, they need to provide staff with training and supervision to strengthen therapeutic responses and safeguarding practice.	30 January 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—

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;

demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on—

research and developments in relation to the ways in which the needs of children are best met; 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)(b)(c)(d)(e)(g)(i) (h))

In particular, the registered person should ensure that records are up-to-date and have clear strategies within them, so staff understand how to support children. That staff understand and consistently implement the home's therapeutic model in both practice and written records. Also, the registered manager should have oversight of incidents and key documents.

Furthermore, leaders and managers should ensure that they use effective monitoring and review systems, to help them understand where improvements can be made and so standards are raised, so children experience a better level of care in the home.

30 January 2026

The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— a child is involved in or subject to, or is suspected of being involved in or subject to, sexual exploitation; an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious; there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there; there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. A notification made under this regulation— must include details of— the matter; the other persons, bodies or organisations (if any) who or which have been notified; and any actions taken by the registered person as a result of the matter; must be made or confirmed in writing. (Regulation 40 (4)(a)(b)(c)(e) (5)(a)(i)(ii)(iii) (b) In particular, the registered person must ensure that all serious safeguarding incidents are completed accurately and submitted to Ofsted without delay whenever a notifiable event occurs. Also, the registered manager should send in retrospect any notifiable incidents that have occurred since the previous inspection.	30 January 2026
The registered person must make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the children's home. In particular the registered person must ensure that— medicines kept in the home are stored in a secure place so as to prevent any child from having unsupervised access to them; (Regulation 23 (1) (2)(a)	30 January 2026

In particular, the registered person must ensure that the key for the medication cupboard is locked and secured and only accessible to authorised staff.	
The registered person must ensure that— the privacy of children is appropriately protected; children can access all appropriate areas of the children's home's premises; and any limitation placed on a child's privacy or access to any area of the home's premises— is necessary and proportionate; is kept under review and, if necessary, revised; and allows children as much freedom as is possible when balanced against the need to protect them and keep them safe. (Regulation 21 (a) (b) (c)(ii)(iii) iv)) In particular, the registered manager must ensure that children's personal information is not displayed in any area accessible to professionals or the public. The manager should maintain oversight of the use of window restrictors to ensure they remain appropriate and effective. In addition, the registered manager must regularly review current monitoring and surveillance practices to ensure they remain necessary and proportionate.	30 January 2026

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: 2741726

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: PALS Residential Services

Registered provider address: 64 Mill Lane, West Derby, Liverpool L12 7JB

Responsible individual: Doreen Kane

Registered manager: William Sergeson

Inspector

Karen Hallam, Social Care Inspector

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