

# 2742671

Registered provider: Connections 2 Independence Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

The home is owned by a private provider and offers care for up to four children who have experienced social and emotional difficulties. At the time of this inspection, two children were living in the home, and both spoke with the inspector.

The home was initially registered with Ofsted to care for up to two children. However, a request to increase the number of children that the home can care for was agreed with Ofsted in August 2025.

The registered manager was registered by Ofsted on 14 August 2025. They were previously in role as the deputy manager and stepped up to the manager role when the previous registered manager left the home in May 2025.

### Inspection dates: 27 and 28 August 2025

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| <b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people,</b> taking into account | <b>requires improvement to be good</b> |
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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:** 15 January 2025

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement |
|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| 15/01/2025      | Full            | Good                 |

## Inspection judgements

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

Children are making some progress. Children are supported to build their confidence, which helps them to contribute to their care planning. This has resulted in one child taking a more active role in meeting their healthcare needs, which has had a positive impact on their emotional and psychological health. In addition, children's attendance at school has improved and behavioural concerns in the classroom have reduced.

However, children's views and wishes are not always heard or swiftly acted on by professionals. Although staff support children to spend time with some of the people who are important to them, delays in care planning and decision-making have resulted in one child not being afforded the opportunity to get to know some of their family members or spend as much time with them as they would like. Despite this being raised several times by the child, leaders and managers have not challenged external professionals or escalated their concerns effectively when responses have not been forthcoming. The child expressed disappointment about the amount of time that it was taking for decisions about their care to be made.

Children's care plans are not always up to date, accurate or helpful for staff. The plans are not accessible and do not provide a clear overview of children's individual needs or the support that they require. As a result, the approach to children's care is inconsistent, and it cannot be determined what support helps children to meet their needs effectively.

Children are experiencing ongoing difficulties because they are not being provided with individualised care. Furthermore, ineffective oversight and monitoring systems mean that actions to help children to meet their needs are often left to drift.

One child has developed positive friendships and joined local clubs to help them to widen their social circle. However, staff sometimes find it difficult to motivate the other child to spend time out in the community. Despite this, both children are offered opportunities to participate in activities that are of interest to them. They both recently enjoyed a holiday to a seaside resort.

The environment is mostly warm and homely. Children have been supported to decorate their bedrooms in line with their preferences and interests. However, there are some institutionalised features in communal spaces that detract from the otherwise homely feel. One member of staff described the home as 'sterile'. The registered manager recognises the impact that the quality of the environment can have on children's sense of belonging and perception of being 'in care' and outlined plans to make improvements.

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

Staff are provided with training opportunities to help them to develop their skills and knowledge. However, staff are not always able to apply their learning to their day-to-day practice. For example, staff do not demonstrate a sound understanding of the procedures that should be followed when children raise concerns about staff's practice. As a result, staff are unable to determine whether sufficient action has been taken to ensure that children have been protected from harm effectively.

Staff's responses to children are not always in line with the approach to care that is set out in the home's statement of purpose. This is further compounded by inaccurate and inaccessible care plans. Leaders and managers do not always critically analyse the support that staff provide to children. As a result, opportunities to help staff to reflect on and improve their practices are missed.

During the last inspection, one child raised a concern about the conduct of an external professional. However, when the resulting investigations were delayed, leaders and managers did not ensure that the child was kept informed about what was happening. As a result, the child has been left without a satisfactory understanding of the actions that have been taken to protect them.

Staff help children to stay safe while using the internet and social media. When concerns are identified, children are helped to understand risk and how to respond more safely in the future. However, records do not clearly demonstrate how children have been helped to develop their understanding of risk, nor what further support they might benefit from. Consequently, staff's response to online safety concerns can only be reactive, as an assessment of children's learning needs has not been completed.

Children say that they feel safe in the home. Restraint has not been used, and children have not been reported missing from home. Staff help children to identify harmful relationships and support them to make positive choices about who they spend their time with. When children are exposed to difficult relationships, staff help children to think about what they could do differently in the future and challenge negative viewpoints or opinions.

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

Leaders and managers have taken some action to address the shortfalls that were raised at the last inspection. However, not enough has been done to make the improvements to the quality of care that is offered to children.

The registered manager recognises the areas for development that will help to ensure that children receive good-quality care and support. The registered manager has not felt able to implement the necessary changes to make improvements,

although they feel more able to do this now that they are registered with Ofsted. The registered manager is aware of the impact of leaders and managers' inaction on the progress and experiences of children.

Staff supervision sessions are not always individual to the member of staff. A generic, pre-populated template is used, so discussions are not always tailored to the staff member's needs. When issues are raised in staff supervision, actions and outcomes are not always agreed. As a result, staff supervision sessions do not promote reflection, learning or development.

Staff team meetings are held regularly. However, records are brief and do not provide an overview of the discussions that have been held or the decisions that have been made. Minutes are not a helpful resource for staff to refer to, nor do they help staff who were unable to attend the meeting to understand what has been agreed. This contributes to the inconsistent care practices.

Leaders and managers continue to support staff to understand the importance of impactful and restorative consequences to help children to understand the impact of their behaviour on themselves and others. Further training sessions have been arranged for staff, as some consequences remain punitive in nature. Leaders and managers do not routinely evaluate the use of consequences, so some learning opportunities are missed.

Staff say that they enjoy working in the home and that they can see some of the positive changes that are being made by the registered manager. Staff explain that the registered manager will go 'above and beyond' for the children. The registered manager says that they are committed to improving the care and support that children receive.

## 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         |
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| <p>The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who—</p> <p>understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; and</p> <p>use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>ensure that staff—</p> <p>provide personalised care that meets each child's needs, as recorded in the child's relevant plans, taking account of the child's background. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(iv))</p> <p>In particular, the registered person must ensure that children are provided with consistent care and support that helps them to meet their individual needs. Children's plans must be up to date and reflective of children's needs so that they help staff to deliver good-quality care. The effectiveness of the support that children receive must be regularly reviewed so that continual improvements can be made and actions to meet children's needs are not left to drift.</p> | 24 November 2025 |
| <p>The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that—</p> <p>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and</p> <p>promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | 24 November 2025 |

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| <p>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;</p> <p>ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate;</p> <p>ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;</p> <p>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; and</p> <p>use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(c)(f)(h))</p> <p>In particular, the registered manager must use oversight and monitoring systems to ensure that the care that is provided to children is effective and consistent with the home's statement of purpose. The registered manager must ensure that staff understand the impact of the care that they provide to children and that staff are supported to reflect on their practice and make improvements.</p> <p>In addition, the registered manager must ensure that staff are able to apply their learning from training to their day-to-day practice.</p> |                        |
| <p>In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff—</p> <p>seek to involve each child's placing authority effectively in the child's care, in accordance with the child's relevant plans;</p> <p>seek to secure the input and services required to meet each child's needs; and</p> <p>if the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority's or a relevant person's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 5 (a)(b)(c))</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <p>20 October 2025</p> |

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| In particular, the registered person must ensure that they challenge and escalate concerns when they consider that the responses from external professionals are inadequate and are detrimentally impacting on children's care and experiences. |  |
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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:** 2742671

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** Connections 2 Independence Limited

**Registered provider address:** 16 The Glenmore Centre, Jessop Court, Waterwells Business Park, Quedgeley, Gloucester GL2 2AP

**Responsible individual:** Keaton Pearce

**Registered manager:** Damien Harrison

## Inspector

Martin Brown, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
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Manchester  
M1 2WD

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