

2742968

Registered provider: Dimensions Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is privately owned and provides care for up to five children who have social and emotional difficulties.

The manager registered with Ofsted in October 2023. She holds the relevant level 5 qualification.

The registered provider has appointed a new responsible individual, and Ofsted is currently checking this person has the relevant capacity, experience and skills to carry out the role.

Inspectors were aware during this inspection that serious child protection allegations were being investigated by the appropriate authorities. While Ofsted does not have the power to investigate allegations of this kind, actions taken by the setting in response to the allegations were considered (where appropriate) alongside other evidence available at the time of the inspection to inform inspectors' judgements

At the time of the inspection, four children were living in the home. They were all present during the inspection and spoke with the inspectors.

Inspection dates: 28 and 29 July 2025

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	inadequate
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	inadequate
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	inadequate
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There are serious and widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded, and the care and experiences of children and young people are poor and they are not making progress.

Date of last inspection: 12 August 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12/08/2024	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

Children's experiences and progress have been significantly affected by shortfalls in how they are cared for by staff and managers. This includes how they are helped and protected. The leadership and management of the home fails to keep children safe. There are immediate risks to the safety and well-being of the children living in the home. As a result of these findings, two compliance notices have been issued, under regulation 12 and regulation 13.

There is a disorganised approach to care planning arrangements for children. Managers did not ensure that they had all the information about children and their vulnerabilities and potential risks before they moved into the home. Significant shortfalls in care planning mean that children move into and on from the home quickly. Children are not given the opportunity to settle and to be cared for by staff. Additionally, staff have not carefully considered how to manage and support children to live together safely when new children have moved into the home. As a result, children do not enjoy stability, and have experienced sudden unplanned endings which are likely to add to their trauma and feelings of rejection.

The home environment is tired and in need of repair. This is due to poor maintenance work and outstanding issues not being addressed promptly. Some walls are damaged and need repairing and decorating. Areas of the garden are overgrown with brambles and there are loose slabs on the garden wall. Staff had failed to keep a child's en-suite bathroom clean or ensure that they had sheets on their bed. Children are not provided with a hygienic, safe and comfortable place to live.

The manager does not use thorough and consistent approaches to managing complaints from children. Complaints are not recorded properly or followed up in accordance with regulatory requirements. Consequently, children do not feel listened to and valued.

In addition, complaints from placing local authorities have not been consistently followed up to ensure learning. One local authority carried out an internal audit which highlighted issues related to reporting and recording of incidents, deficits in management oversight and significant shortfalls in their child's care and support. The local authority shared their concerns with the manager. However, managers and leaders could not demonstrate what action had been taken to address the concerns raised. As a result of this, the local authority removed their child from the home.

All children access education that is appropriate to their individual needs, and they have good attendance. Most children are making progress in aspects of their education. Effective links and regular communication with children's schools ensure that staff understand children's progress in school and can support them well at home.

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

There have been repeated failings to respond to significant safeguarding incidents when children have been at risk of harm. Incidents have not been responded to effectively or recorded or reported in line with regulation. The manager and staff do not demonstrate that they have the skills and knowledge to keep children safe.

Managers have failed to recognise and take appropriate action following significant allegations and disclosures of harm. Allegations and disclosures made by children have not always been robustly followed up, recorded and referred to the local authority social worker, local authority designated officer or Ofsted. Managers have not fulfilled their statutory safeguarding responsibilities. Record-keeping is inadequate and there is weak managerial oversight of this area. The manager does not ensure that there is vigilant recording of all actions and outcomes. This lack of oversight has left children at unnecessary and prolonged risk of harm.

Leaders and managers have not escalated serious safeguarding concerns to senior leaders in the relevant authorities with sufficient rigour or persistence following significant disclosures made by children. As a result, children have continued to spend time with family members despite unclear assessments of safety and whether this arrangement was in their best interests.

Staff do not do all they can to reduce the risks of self-harm to children. Staff are not alert to risk, and they do not respond appropriately to try and remove items from children which they have then used to harm themselves. Managers' inability to identify and act on signs that a child is at risk of harm at an early stage places them at further risk. Furthermore, leaders and managers lack professional curiosity when reviewing incidents and fail to identify what staff could have done differently. This lack of effective oversight means that opportunities for learning from incidents are not always taken up. It has led to a significant increase in risks for children, including threats to harm themselves on the road or train tracks and by jumping off a high wall. The staff and manager have not responded in a timely way to these incidents, and children have been left at risk of harm.

Staff routinely lock doors, restricting children's freedom and movement as a behaviour management strategy. This is also a fire risk. One child smoked in their bedroom on a regular basis with little or no action taken by staff to address this concern. This lack of action by the manager to ensure the safety of the premises leaves children at unnecessary risk of harm. The manager took prompt action during the inspection to rectify this, removing all locks on doors to communal living spaces. However, this is a worrying pattern which had been clearly identified at previous inspections of other homes within the group. This suggests a wider issue around a culture where door locking has been used as an accepted form of restrictive practice across the provider's homes.

Children have been exposed to bullying between peers. There have been occasions when children have been threatened with violence and intimidated. Staff have failed to

keep children safe in these circumstances and have lacked parental control in the home. This has resulted in children experiencing physical and emotional harm.

There are serious weaknesses in how children's vulnerabilities and risks have been assessed and managed. Staff do not demonstrate the skills or experience needed to protect children effectively. Leaders do not consistently consider all relevant information about children to inform risk management, nor do they provide staff with clear guidance or protocols to follow. In addition, the review of the premises does not equip staff with effective strategies to manage known environmental risks, such as nearby roads, open water and bridges. As a result, staff are not provided with all the information they need to safeguard children when they are out in the community.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

There are serious weaknesses in the leadership and management of this home which mean that children do not have their needs met and are left in situations of significant risk and harm. A failure to take effective action to improve the quality of care in the home has compromised children's safety, experiences and progress.

Since the last inspection, there have been significant changes in the senior leadership team. The impact of these changes has not been well managed. This has led to a poor culture characterised by a lack of transparency and open communication and a hierarchical structure that has discouraged the involvement of the wider staff team. There has been a lack of oversight and accountability. Board directors have completed an investigation into failings and concerns raised to date and are devising plans aimed at improvement. However, the effectiveness of these plans is as yet unmeasured and there are still investigations ongoing.

There are significant gaps in the manager's knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the home. Leaders have failed to recognise this vulnerability and offer the manager the support and challenge they need to develop their practice and ensure a consistent level of oversight which will keep children safe. Leaders have failed to ensure that there are good enough systems to review the quality of care and fully understand children's experiences. As a result, they do not consistently understand the impact of emerging, potential and actual risks to children. This has led to a failure to challenge poor staff practice and has failed to keep children safe.

Managers and leaders do not always notify the placing authority and Ofsted when there are serious incidents. There has been a culture of under-reporting, with occasions when the manager has failed to notify Ofsted and the local authority designated officer. Senior leaders have identified this through audits and immediately directed the manager to make the required referrals to both Ofsted and the local authority. The manager failed to take the action directed of them and only did so when the inspector shared this lack of action with the senior leadership team during the inspection. Overall, this lack of information-sharing reduces the regulator and external professionals' understanding of safety and quality of care in the home. It also compromises the local authority's ability to

safeguard their children and further weakens the safety net for children. This is unsafe practice.

The manager and staff do not have the necessary skills to care for vulnerable children with complex needs. These shortfalls impact on children's safety, experiences and well-being.

Staff have mixed views about working in the home. While most staff said they enjoy working in the home and feel supported by the manager, this conflicts with other information. Records show that staff have said they felt 'burnt out'. Staff have also shared concerns around the vulnerability of some children living together and their concerns that they could not keep the children safe. There has been a lack of response to this, and staff have been left without the level of support that they needed. In addition, managers have not clearly followed up with staff when they have shared concerns about poor and unsafe practice.

Ofsted issued a notice of suspension following this inspection, due to a significant escalation of risk. The provider later applied to voluntarily cancel their registration and this has been accepted.

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
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff— seek to involve each child's placing authority effectively in the child's care, in accordance with the child's relevant plans; seek to secure the input and services required to meet each child's needs; 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; and seek to develop and maintain effective professional relationships with such persons, bodies or organisations as the registered person considers appropriate having regard to the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the children's home is to provide care and accommodation. (Regulation 5 (a)(b)(c)(d)) The registered person must ensure that they escalate concerns and challenge any practice around performance or the response of relevant people, to ensure children's needs are met.	26 October 2025
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.	26 October 2025

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)) The registered person must ensure that the home is in good repair and maintenance concerns are addressed without delay.	
*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)(vii)) The registered person must ensure that they have effective oversight of all incidents, have an effective system in place to report, record and monitor safeguarding concerns, that the	26 October 2025

manager and staff are aware of their responsibilities to protect children and review all risk assessments to give clear guidance to keep children safe.	
*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— ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child, use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(h)) The registered person must ensure they have effective oversight of the home and take action to bring about improvements. In addition, to ensure that the staff team completes all relevant training specific to the needs of the children.	26 October 2025
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home's statement of purpose. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)) The registered person must ensure that children coming to live in the home are suitably assessed and that transitions in and out of the home are a positive experience for children.	26 October 2025

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 intended to safeguard each child accommodated in the home; 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)(i)(ii)(iv)) The registered person must ensure that children have free access to all areas of their home and bedroom door alarms are kept under regular review.	26 October 2025
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 (5)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(b)) The registered person must ensure that all serious incidents are reported to the regulator without delay.	26 October 2025
The registered person must review the appropriateness and suitability of the location of the premises used for the purposes of the children's home at least once in each calendar year taking into account the requirement in regulation 12(2)(c) (the protection of children standard).	26 October 2025

When conducting the review, the registered person must consult, and take into account the views of, each relevant person. (Regulation 46 (1) (2))

The registered person must ensure that the location risk assessment takes into account all location concerns and is kept under regular review.

*These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

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: 2742968

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Dimensions Care Limited

Registered provider address: Harold Sharp Ltd, Unit 5, Brooklands Place, Brooklands Road, Sale M33 3SD

Responsible individual: Post vacant

Registered manager: Karen Humphreys

Inspectors

Marianne Grandfield, Social Care Inspector
Nick Bennison, His Majesty's Inspector

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