

2744303

Registered provider: Ancora Children's Homes Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned by a private provider. It provides care for up to 3 children of either gender with emotional and social difficulties and learning disabilities. No children were living in the home at the time of the inspection.

The manager registered with Ofsted in December 2025.

Inspection dates: 2 and 3 June 2026

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 widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded.

Date of last inspection: 24 June 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
24/06/2025	Full	Outstanding
30/04/2024	Full	Good

Summary of findings

This inspection identified serious concerns regarding the home's safeguarding arrangements, leadership oversight and staff's ability to consistently meet children's needs. Assessments for children moving into the home and living together were not sufficiently robust and did not fully consider children's vulnerabilities. Staffing levels were not consistently maintained, reducing assurances that children received appropriate supervision and support. Serious safeguarding concerns remain subject to ongoing investigations.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

Since the last inspection, 3 children have lived at the home. One child moved out in a planned way, and leaders and managers gave notice on the other 2 children as they could not safely meet their needs. At the time of the inspection, there were no children living in the home. As a result, the inspector was unable to obtain children's views directly.

Children's emotional wellbeing was not always promoted effectively. One child spent significant periods of time in their bedroom and had limited involvement in activities. The child's local authority raised concerns about the child's lack of day-to-day activity. Despite this, staff did not consistently encourage or support the child to participate in activities or community opportunities. This resulted in missed opportunities to build relationships.

Children shared with their social workers that they did not feel able to raise worries and concerns with staff.

Staff supported children to access education where possible and helped one child rebuild family relationships and prepare for adulthood. Children also had advocacy services and child-friendly care plans, which helped them understand the support available to them.

A child who had lived in the home for over a year was supported to move into adulthood in a planned and positive way. Staff worked well with the local authority and other professionals to ensure that appropriate support was in place before the move. This helped the child feel reassured about the transition and contributed to a positive ending to their time in the home.

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

At time of the inspection, investigations by police and the local authority designated officer (LADO) are ongoing. Therefore, the outcome of these concerns could not be determined.

Initial assessments for one child moving into the home were not sufficiently thorough and did not adequately consider children's vulnerabilities, known associations or the impact that the child moving in would have on other children living in the home. One local authority advised that they had not been consulted before children moved in. They said that they would have shared important information that may have informed safer planning for children.

Some children's plans appear helpful and up to date. However, others such as the initial assessments for children moving in do not identify when changes have been made or what information has informed those changes. This undermines transparency and makes it difficult to understand how decisions were reached, and how risk was evaluated.

Staff did respond appropriately to incidents of self-harm and sought medical advice for these incidents when necessary. Staff also worked with the police and placing authorities when children went missing from home and made consistent efforts to support their safe return. Children were missing from home for long periods of time.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

The registered manager and all staff members have been suspended pending ongoing investigations by the police and LADO.

Leaders and managers have not consistently maintained the staffing levels required to meet children's assessed needs. This is particularly concerning given the complexity of the children who were living in the home, including children subject to deprivation of liberty orders and those at risk of exploitation, going missing from care and other safeguarding concerns. Leaders were unable to demonstrate that children consistently received the level of supervision and support necessary to keep them safe.

Staff did not always receive supervisions within the required timescales. This limits the manager's ability to provide necessary guidance to staff.

Staff sometimes moved between other homes within the organisation, and it was not clear how their suitability and skills to work with the children were assessed or what oversight the manager had on these staff.

The manager did not ensure that the independent visitor completed robust reports. Feedback was rarely gained from families or professionals. This limits the value of external scrutiny. However, a new independent visitor has been hired.

Professional feedback was mixed. Some professionals recognised positive aspects of the care provided. However, others raised concerns of delays in information sharing and inconsistencies in records and information shared with them.

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
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; 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; that the effectiveness of the home's child protection policies is monitored regularly. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(b))	16 October 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. 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;	16 October 2026

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. (Regulation 13(1)(a)(2)(a)(c)(d))

In particular, ensure that staffing arrangements are sufficient to meet children's assessed needs and vulnerabilities, and that children receive the level of supervision and support necessary to keep them safe.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that children are offered a wide range of activities, both inside and outside of the home, and are actively encouraged and supported to participate in them. Where children are reluctant to engage, staff should take proactive steps to understand the barriers, support children to access leisure, cultural and community-based opportunities and encourage them to develop positive relationships and interests. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 31, paragraph 6.5)
- The registered person should ensure that the independent person undertakes more frequent consultation with family members and professionals as part of monitoring activities. Consideration should be given to undertaking some visits on an unannounced basis to strengthen independent oversight of the home. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph 10.24)
- The registered person should ensure that systems are in place so that all staff, including the manager, receive supervision of their practice from an appropriately qualified and experienced professional, which allows them to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2)
- The registered should ensure that children understand how to make a complaint in line with the home's complaints procedure. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 24, paragraph 4.22)

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: 2744303

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Ancora Children's Homes Limited

Registered provider address: 8 Madeira Avenue, Leigh on Sea, Essex SS9 3EB

Responsible individual: Wendy Edward-Tsuro

Registered manager: Emmanuela Emehige

Inspector

Thembie Mzila, Social Care Inspector

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