

2763401

Registered provider: Cornerways Homes

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is operated by a private organisation. It provides care for up to two children who experience social and emotional difficulties.

The previous registered manager left in August 2025. One child was living in the home at the time of the inspection.

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 October 2025

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 22 April 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
22/04/2024	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Since the last inspection, two children have moved in, and one child has moved on. The one child living at the home was seen during the inspection but did not wish to share their views.

The two children have had mixed experiences of living at the home. One child moved out having experienced an unsettled period. This was during a time of management and staff changes. The new managers have reflected on the instability at the time and taken appropriate action to ensure improved stability of staff and therefore staff's ability to meet the needs of the current child living at the home. The current child benefited from a suitably planned move into the home. They have received good care and are making progress in all aspects of their life.

Staff have built relationships with the child and spend time with them. Staff genuinely care for the child and speak warmly about them. As a result, the child has now developed bonds with staff and has achieved stability. This has given them a sense of belonging.

Staff have supported the child to re-engage in and attend education. Leaders and managers have advocated on behalf of the child to ensure that educational packages are in line with their identified needs. This child had missed a significant amount of learning before moving into the home. They have now achieved a 100% school attendance. This is a major step for this child. Staff are aspirational and support the child to identify their future goals and career options.

Staff and managers listen to the child. The child has a voice in the running of their home and has an input into their meal and activity planning. Staff support the child to safely participate in varied activities, such as go-karting and visits to the music studio while abiding by any placing authority or court ordered restrictions in place. Staff and managers take time to listen to the songs that the child has composed. This enables them to develop further insight into the child's emotions and experiences, as well as showing the child that they are interested in them.

Staff support the child to develop age-appropriate independence skills. Staff support the child to safely use knives in meal preparation and help them learn financial skills such as budgeting and basic banking tasks.

Staff have good relationships with children's families and facilitate family time. Staff welcome family visits into the home. Staff capture memorable experiences for the child and their family through a 'memory book'. This helps the child develop a positive sense of identity.

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

Staff keep the child safe. They have a good knowledge of the child's historical and current risks and work to reduce these. Staff and managers access the guidance of a therapeutic worker to help them develop strategies to support the child's emotional development. Staff support the child to engage with relevant professionals, such as youth offending officers and therapeutic workers.

Staff provide the child with clear routines and boundaries. The child has a structure to their day, which helps them to reduce their anxiety and settle. For example, previously, this child had an irregular sleeping pattern, and they now have a good sleep routine.

Children receive appropriate and coordinated responses from staff when they have gone missing from home. Staff follow the children if they leave the home without adult permission and help them to return home safely. Staff share information quickly with other relevant professionals, such as police and social workers. Leaders and managers request that social workers carry out return home interviews when children have gone missing and escalate any concerns.

Staff do not always model positive choices. On one occasion, a staff member brought alcohol for their personal use into the home. Staff did not quickly share this concern with managers, which caused delay. On another occasion, staff provided a child with an inappropriate toy, which resulted in police involvement. When concerns are raised, managers respond appropriately. They quickly notify relevant professionals such as local authority designated officers (LADOs) and children's social workers. Managers complete internal investigations as guided by the LADO, and any practice concerns are addressed with staff.

Staff rarely use physical intervention to manage children's behaviour or prevent harm. Records demonstrate that there is a clear and proportionate rationale for all incidents of restraint. Managers speak to children to understand their experiences following incidents. However, managers have not consistently spoken to staff quickly to identify any staff support needs or potential learning to reduce the risk of future restraint being needed.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Since the last inspection, there have been significant leadership changes. Three managers have left the home. The new manager, who was appointed in August 2025, has applied to register with Ofsted. The new manager has made improvements. They have taken action to address practice concerns and are ambitious for the child.

The home has a learning and reflective culture. For example, leaders and managers reflected on an ending for one child, who moved on from the home, to identify lessons learned. Leaders and managers also incorporate reflection when there are

staff practice concerns and address it through staff supervisions and team meetings. This helps to improve practice.

Leaders and managers have children's interests at heart. They advocate on behalf of children and challenge other professionals when they are not fulfilling their statutory responsibilities. For example, the manager has advocated on behalf of the child for them to spend time with their brothers and sisters.

Staff use therapeutically informed and kind language in children's records. Staff also regularly write to the child in the 'positives book' praising them. This helps the child to develop a positive self-image.

Staff report that they feel well supported by management and there is positive morale. Staff benefit from training and team meetings that are focused on staff development and children's needs. Staff have access to therapeutic workers for their own well-being and consult them with regards to strategies to support the child. This helps staff to understand the children's needs. However, staff have not been consistently supervised in line with the home's policy. Therefore, further opportunities for reflective practice and staff support have potentially been missed.

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— understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies; 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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(v)(vii)(b))	4 November 2025

Recommendations

- The registered person should keep records of restraint and review the use of control, discipline and restraint to identify effective practice and respond promptly where any issues or trends of concern emerge. In particular, the registered person should speak to the user of the measure and sign the record to confirm it is accurate within 48 hours of the use of the measure. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 49, paragraph 9.59)
- The registered person should have systems 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)

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: 2763401

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Cornerways Homes

Registered provider address: Cornerways Homes, 34 Bancroft, Hitchin SG5 1LA

Responsible individual: Melissa Mathews

Registered manager: post vacant

Inspector

Priscilla Koroka, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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