

2775501

Registered provider: Dimensions Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned by a private company and is registered to provide care for up to three children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

The manager registered with Ofsted in May 2025 and is working towards a level 5 qualification. The manager was present during the inspection.

Inspection dates: 27 May, 28 May and 2 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: 3 September 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
03/09/2024	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. Weak leadership and management of the home means that children are not safe. There are immediate risks to the safety and well-being of the children living at the home. The provider has put restrictions on children coming to live at the home due to this significant concern.

Children's moves into the home have not been well assessed. Staff do not have the information or guidance they require to care for children appropriately. This is because managers have failed to understand and evaluate children's risks, needs and vulnerabilities before they have moved into the home. They have also failed to consider how children who already live at the home can live safely with new children who move in. As a result, some children have faced unplanned moves out of the house and significant police involvement. Serious incidents have resulted in harm to some children.

Children's complaints are not taken seriously. 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. As a result, children do not feel heard or valued.

Children do not have access to all areas of the home. For example, the kitchen door has been locked to prevent children from preparing food and drinks. Staff routinely lock doors in the home, restricting children's freedom and movement as a behaviour management strategy. Two children made complaints to staff about these restrictions which were not addressed by staff or the manager. Furthermore, this situation poses an additional fire risk, which places children at further risk of harm.

Staff have provided some opportunities for children to express themselves. For example, children have been encouraged to explore their feelings and experiences through writing lyrics and engaging with music. This has offered a creative outlet and, at times, has helped children to regulate their emotions. However, these strategies are not embedded in a wider, consistent approach to emotional support, and their impact is not routinely evaluated.

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

Significant safeguarding incidents occur, during which children are at risk and experience harm. The manager and staff do not demonstrate that they have the skills and experience to keep children safe. Staff and managers do not always report, record or respond to incidents appropriately. For example, two children left the home late at night to meet with unknown males, which put them at significant risk of harm. Staff were able to support the children to come home safely. However, the support for the children following this incident was poor. Staff did not act to reduce risk for these children, and

their lack of professional curiosity and lack of reflection failed to safeguard them going forward.

There are serious shortfalls in the assessment and management of risk for children living in the home. Contextual safeguarding risks for children are not well understood by staff; they fail to understand the significance of early indicators of risk and so do not act effectively when children's vulnerabilities escalate, and they are at higher risk of harm due to domestic abuse, sexual and criminal exploitation, and alcohol misuse. During this inspection period, four children have experienced frequent and serious episodes of going missing from the home, during which they have been at significant risk of harm. The risk assessments and safety plans in place for these children are inadequate. Although some updates have been made, they lack sufficient detail and do not reflect the escalation of risks or the need for dynamic changes in support and protection. As a result, staff do not have access to up-to-date guidance on known risks or how to manage them effectively.

Children remain inadequately protected from harm due to systemic failings in staff practice and management oversight. Staff have not put in place safe or effective behaviour management approaches and have instead resorted to reactive responses, including police involvement. This has resulted in two children being arrested and reflects poor safeguarding decisions, which puts children at continued risk of being unnecessarily criminalised. Staff have consistently failed to act as nurturing and responsible parental figures, leaving children unsupported during periods of distress and conflict. The continued practice of locking fire doors as a behaviour control measure, which remains unchallenged by managers, restricts children's liberty and presents a serious fire safety risk. Children have also been exposed to escalating violence, damage within the home environment and inappropriate staff conduct, all of which have created an atmosphere of fear and emotional insecurity.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

Leadership and management arrangements at the home are ineffective in ensuring the safety and well-being of children. Oversight of serious incidents is inadequate, and there is a lack of robust systems to monitor staff practice and decision-making. Leaders fail to ensure that staff consistently assess risks or respond appropriately to children's vulnerabilities. As a result, safeguarding measures are not reliably implemented, and children have experienced significant harm. Failure to take effective action to improve the quality of care in the home has compromised children's safety, experiences and progress. As a result, three compliance notices have been issued under regulation 12, regulation 13 and regulation 21.

A new manager was appointed following the last inspection and registered with Ofsted in May 2025. She had previously worked in the home as the deputy manager and was familiar with the staff and children.

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. Senior leaders have failed to offer adequate support and challenge to the new manager. Board directors have completed an investigation into what has happened and are devising plans to bring about improvement.

There are significant gaps in the manager's understanding of the home's strengths and weaknesses. Leaders have not identified this shortfall or provided the manager with the support and challenge needed to improve her practice and maintain effective oversight. For example, the manager was unaware of local multi-agency teams that could support children at risk of exploitation. As a result, children have not received the specialist help they need, and staff have not been supported to understand these risks or to work collaboratively to safeguard children. The manager does not have effective systems in place to review the quality of care or to evaluate children's experiences. Consequently, she does not identify potential risks or take action to address poor practice. This places children at continued risk of harm.

The registered manager does not consistently notify Ofsted following serious incidents. This failure to share critical information compromises the regulator's ability to monitor the safety and quality of care provided within the home. As a result, thematic oversight is weakened, and opportunities to identify patterns or areas for improvement are missed. The absence of timely notification also undermines the broader safeguarding framework, leaving children and the local authority without a necessary protective safety net.

Senior leaders have failed to provide adequate support and oversight, despite being aware of persistent weaknesses within the home. The staff team lacks experience, with only three out of 10 members holding the required qualification for working in residential childcare. Neither the manager nor the staff consistently demonstrate the skills or competence necessary to meet the complex needs of vulnerable children. This failure has directly contributed to poor experiences and outcomes for children.

Staff have not received training that equips them to meet the specific and complex needs of children. Children living at the home have engaged in self-harm, including the use of ligatures. The manager has failed to recognise the need for staff to undertake specialist training in these areas. As a result, staff are not sufficiently skilled to provide appropriate support or to reduce risks effectively.

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; 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 effective action is taken following any safeguarding concerns, that children's plans are kept up to date and that staff are given clear direction to support children.	5 October 2025

*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— 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 have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; 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. 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)(c)(f)(h)) The registered person must ensure that they have effective oversight of all incidents and take action to address any concerns. Additionally, they must ensure that staff have the relevant skills and abilities to meet the needs of the children living in the home.	5 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. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—	5 October 2025

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 provides a homely and nurturing environment in which children can thrive.	
Subject to paragraph (6), the registered person must establish a procedure for considering complaints made by or on behalf of children. The registered person must ensure that a record is made of any complaint, the action taken in response, and the outcome of any investigation. The registered person must supply to HMCI, at HMCI's request, a statement containing a summary of any complaints made during the preceding twelve months and the action that was taken in response to each complaint. (Regulation 39 (1) (3) (5)) The registered person must ensure that when children make a complaint that this is taken seriously and undertake an investigation as required within their policies. Children must be included in these investigations and outcomes must be made known to them.	5 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	5 October 2025

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)(iii)(iv)) The registered person must ensure that children have access to all areas of the home.	
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 HMCI without delay.	5 October 2025
After consultation with the fire and rescue authority, the registered person must— take adequate precautions against the risk of fire, including the provision of suitable fire equipment in the children's home. (Regulation 25 (1)(a)) The registered person must ensure the home is a safe place for children to live and ensure that no doors are locked within the home.	5 October 2025

* 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: 2775501

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: Laura Williams

Registered manager: Rachel Cater

Inspectors

Julia Thompson, Social Care Inspector
Hayley Booth, Social Care Inspector

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