

2775561

Registered provider: Zen Care and Education Limited

Assurance inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned and managed by a small private provider. It offers care for up to 4 children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

At the time of this inspection, three children were living at the home. One child spoke with the inspector.

The manager registered with Ofsted in December 2024.

Inspection date: 29 January 2026

Date of last inspection: 19 August 2025

Judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Information about this inspection

At this inspection, the inspector evaluated:

- the care of children
- the safety of children
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers.

The inspector has looked closely at the experiences and progress of children, using the social care common inspection framework. This assurance 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'.

Findings from the inspection

We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance inspection.

One child has moved from the home since the last inspection, and another child has recently moved in. Staff work hard to develop positive relationships with children and provide them with predictable and supportive care.

The registered manager has strengthened children's risk assessments. These assessments now provide clear guidance for staff to ensure that children's safety and well-being are consistently promoted. The manager has also improved the assessment processes for children moving into the home. These assessments take into account the impact on children who are already living in the home when a new child moves in.

When barriers to children accessing education are identified, the manager and staff work closely with education providers to address them. This approach ensures that tailored support packages are developed to enable children to engage effectively in learning. For one child, this support has enabled a return to school after a significant period out of education. All three children are now engaging in learning that meets their individual needs.

Staff manage behavioural incidents effectively and use de-escalation strategies tailored to each child's behaviour support plan. Staff use key-work sessions and direct discussions with children to help them understand the effects of negative behaviour. In addition, staff use rewards and incentives to encourage and reinforce positive behaviour.

One incident in the home resulted in the manager taking one child to a holiday home provision ahead of their planned move to another home. The manager identified that the dynamics between the children had become unsustainable. The manager took immediate action to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all children. Although the action taken was appropriate, the manager did not inform the regulator of this incident. She acknowledged the error was an oversight and accepted that it was a serious event that should have been reported.

When children are reported missing, staff follow clear procedures to help ensure that they are located and return home as quickly and safely as possible. The manager advocated for one child after identifying that limited family time was a trigger for incidents. A safety plan has now been agreed with the child's placing authority to allow additional family time. As a result, there has been a significant reduction of incidents where the child has been missing from the home.

The manager has made improvements to the home environment. The communal areas have been decorated, and the home is furnished to a good standard. The

pathway to the property has been resurfaced and is no longer a hazard. Despite this, the manager has not identified ligature risks due to unsecured blinds in the home.

The manager has overseen maintenance on the fire doors in the home, and most door props have been removed. However, the manager has identified that some doors remain noncompliant. A further maintenance programme is planned, although the works have yet to be addressed. As a result, the requirement is restated.

There have been several changes in staffing at the home since the last inspection. The team is now more stable with both qualified and unqualified staff. The culture of the team is positive. However, one staff member has not attained their qualification within the required time frame.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
19/08/2025	Full	Requires improvement to be good
03/12/2024	Full	Good

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
If the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005(1) applies to the home— and the registered person must ensure that the requirements of that Order and any regulations made under it, except for article 23 (duties of employees), are complied with in respect of the home. (Regulation 25 (2)) Specifically, ensure that staff do not prop open any designated fire doors and that fire doors are compliant. This requirement was raised at the last inspection and is restated.	12 March 2026
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(e)) The registered person must ensure that all serious incidents are reported to Ofsted.	12 March 2026
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The registered person may only— employ an individual to work at the children's home; or if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home, if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3).	12 March 2026

The requirements are that—

the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform;

For the purposes of paragraph (3)(b), an individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification if, by the relevant date, the individual has attained—

the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (England) (“the Level 3 Diploma”);

or

a qualification which the registered person considers to be equivalent to the Level 3 Diploma.

The relevant date is—

in the case of an individual who starts working in a care role in a home after 1st April 2014, the date which falls 2 years after the date on which the individual started working in a care role in a home; or

in the case of an individual who was working in a care role in a home on 1st April 2014, 1st April 2016.

(Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3)(b) (4)(a)(b) (5)(a)(b))

In particular, the registered person must ensure that all staff working at the home in a care role have attained their relevant qualification within the necessary time frame.

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that the home environment complies with relevant health and safety legislation, which includes ensuring that any ligature points are secured. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 15, paragraph 3.9)

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 2775561

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Zen Care and Education Limited

Registered provider address: Trafford House, Chester Road, Manchester M32 0RS

Responsible individual: Victoria Moran

Registered manager: Anna Kaczmarek

Inspector

Carrie Mayes, Social Care Inspector

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