

2775570

Registered provider: Cornerways Homes

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately run home provides care for up to one child with emotional and social difficulties. There was one child living in the home at the time of the inspection.

A manager is in post and Ofsted has received their application to register.

Inspection dates: 27 and 28 May 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: 10 February 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
10/02/2025	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

There is one child living at the home. They moved in shortly after the home was last inspected. No children have moved out. The child spoke with the inspector, showed them around the home and spoke positively about living in the home. The inspector also received feedback from the child's parent, who said, 'I can always hear [name of child] laughing and joking with staff members. [Name of child] seems to have a good relationship with staff; I can tell they are comfortable.'

Staff promote the child's leisure time and interests. Staff have supported and helped the child to pursue personal interests, such as football, skateboarding and playing guitar. The child also enjoys activities such as bowling and trampolining. This has helped the child's well-being and identity and has been an important factor in the child feeling valued and cared for.

The child's wishes and feelings are listened to and captured effectively. Staff and managers regularly speak to the child about their wishes and feelings and take them into account. The manager ensures that feedback and views are routinely recorded. The director also wrote to the child to gather their wishes and feelings. The child has not made any complaints, but the home has a complaints procedure in place, and the child knows that they can raise a complaint or a concern if they wish.

Staff encourage and promote education. Although the child is not in full-time education, alternative provision has been organised. This is tailored to support the child's needs. The manager has pursued a full-time education placement and has advocated strongly for this to happen.

The child is supported to attend all medical appointments and maintain healthy routines and lifestyles. For example, staff quickly identified that the child would benefit from a review of medication, and this has had a positive impact on the child.

Staff and leaders work with other professionals to support the child's well-being and emotional needs. This has included sourcing specialist mental health services, and an in-house psychotherapist visits to support the child regularly. Medication is managed effectively, with detailed and accurate records kept. Staff receive therapeutic training, and a therapeutic approach is now being introduced and embedded effectively to help staff support the child.

The home is modern, well laid out and furnished to a good standard. The property was clean and tidy during the inspection. Any damage is repaired quickly. The child's bedroom is large with an en-suite, and they have decorated their room to their taste. The child has been enabled to have guinea pigs, which staff also assist the child to look after.

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

Staff have positive relationships with the child. They know them well and are developing an understanding of their strengths and vulnerabilities. Staff speak regularly with the child and have meaningful conversations to help and support them to make good choices. Staff have also written to children and apologised when they have realised there has been a shortfall.

Staff are aided by risk assessments and behaviour support plans, which are detailed and individualised. Plans and assessments identify behavioural triggers, preventative measures and de-escalation responses. Input from the in-house psychotherapist informs these plans. Arrangements such as phone and device use are made between the child and adults, and a written agreement is signed by the child and staff to provide clarity and fairness.

Staff support the child to help them achieve the goals in their care plan. Targets include a variety of aims, for example to improve education engagement or to make good choices. These plans and aims are reviewed monthly. The manager has also developed an independence checklist that monitors the child's progress and helps focus staff on supporting the child to build their independence skills.

Staff respond well to specific risks. There is a consistent approach across staff and managers. Managers have developed a safety plan that helps support the child effectively in times of crisis. Staff have developed an awareness of some of the child's triggers and look out for signs or warnings when the child may need support. These measures are becoming effective in reducing risk.

The home's location assessment is well developed. Staff and managers have established effective working relationships with a network of professionals and agencies. The manager has been responsive in engaging with the local community and other agencies and professionals. Feedback from a range of professionals about the child's care has been positive.

When the child has gone missing from the home, staff follow key procedures, such as contacting the police. However, records did not include details of preceding events or how the staff had tried to prevent missing-from-home events occurring. Although the child was spoken to after each missing episode, the records do not include debriefs or management evaluations.

Most incidents are handled well. However, staff have not responded effectively to some incidents, particularly in the first two months of the child moving in. There was an initial failure to assess the needs of the child against the skills and experience of the staff team. This contributed to these early struggles. This included staff actions that did not de-escalate situations, restraint holds that were not successful and staff having to call police out as they could not successfully respond to the child's needs. Managers have learned from this and put more effective measures in place, including additional training and workshops. Support from the in-house psychotherapist has

also helped staff to use a therapeutic response to support the child. This has improved staff effectiveness in supporting the child when incidents occur.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager has been in post since the end of 2024. They have submitted their application to register with Ofsted.

The registered manager is suitably qualified, competent and committed to supporting staff and children. They have good expectations and aspirations for the home and have shown insight and reflection on where practice can improve. They are also well supported by the responsible individual who was present throughout the inspection and is equally engaging and committed to supporting the child living at the home.

Staff speak positively about their roles, and they speak passionately about supporting the child and any future children. Staff also speak positively about leaders and managers and highlight a strong culture of teamwork.

Staff receive regular supervision and speak positively about this being effective. The manager has an 'open door' culture with staff that encourages ad-hoc discussions when needed. Team meetings take place regularly to help ensure that all staff are informed about events and are able to express their views. Additional training and workshops have also taken place, which include inputs from the in-house psychotherapist.

The manager generally makes effective use of monitoring and reviewing, for example responding to recommendations from the regulation 44 visitor or carrying out regular health and safety checks. The responsible individual also provides regular monitoring and scrutiny. This monitoring has identified patterns and trends, which helps to ensure a good quality of care throughout the home.

The home has seen a relatively high staff turnover. The manager and responsible individual have worked to improve the staff culture and build a positive ethos at the home. However, there have been concerns about staff conduct and practice for some staff among the small team. The manager's response to the concerns once they became aware has been robust and diligent. However, they have not reviewed the recruitment procedures or training to identify any improvements that could be made to reduce the likelihood of these concerns occurring.

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 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; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to 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. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(e)(f)) Ensure that referral information is fully evaluated so that children's needs are assessed properly against the resources available, including staff experience and staff training, so that the home can likely meet the needs of each child when they move into the home.	30 June 2025

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that records detail circumstances for all individual incidents when children go missing from the home (regulation 36 (schedule 3(14))), including information on the child's whereabouts. This information should be shared with the placing authority and, where appropriate, with the child's parents. Evaluation of missing-from-home incidents should be undertaken to identify any gaps in training, skills or knowledge for staff or to record and retain evidence of what worked well. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.31)
- The registered person should ensure that all staff consistently follow the home's policies and procedures for the benefit of the children in the home's care. In particular, review the recruitment procedures and training to identify any improvements that could be made to ensure that staff appointed are of integrity and good character and are mentally and physically fit for the role. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.20)

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: 2775570

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

Daniel Rankin, Social Care Inspector

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