

2780235

Registered provider: HMO NE Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned and managed by a private company. It provides care for up to two children who experience social and emotional difficulties.

At the time of the inspection, one child was living at the home.

The manager has applied to register with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 9 and 10 July 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: 28 October 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
28/10/2024	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The child living at the home spoke with the inspector.

Children's experiences of living in the home have varied. One child found living out of their local area difficult, went missing for lengthy periods, and experienced inconsistent boundaries in the home. In contrast, another child has experienced a well-planned introduction to the home and staff. This has helped them settle with ease, and they are developing positive and trusting relationships with staff.

Staff work well with education professionals to support children. Children who find it difficult to participate in learning are encouraged to engage. Staff attend multi-agency meetings to better understand the child's needs and exchange information about their development. This shows the child that everyone is working well together to achieve what is best for them.

Staff have important conversations with the child to help them explore their emotions and how their feelings affect them. Staff encourage the child to discuss their family and social relationships, and they talk about topics such as online safety. Key-work sessions are well recorded and take place regularly. The language used in the child's records is sensitive, demonstrating the positive relationships between the child and the staff.

Staff understand the child's health needs and ensure that they attend appointments. The child's records indicate that they have had their health assessment. Staff are proactive in ensuring that the child's needs are met. Safety measures are in place for the storage of medication. A medication error was promptly identified by the manager; however, the child was not affected.

Independence work is actively explored and developed with the child, and they are making great progress and are proud of their achievements. The child said that they have some close relationships with staff and enjoy their time in the home. Staff listen to the child and encourage them to express their views. It is evident that the child's voice is important and that they are heard and responded to.

The child's essential records are not up to date. Although there are requests to the child's social worker for information, such as care plans and review minutes, the home's escalation procedures are ineffective in ensuring that staff have access to all the necessary information to support the child.

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

The child has been missing from the home on a few occasions. When such an incident occurs, staff follow the child's safety plan and promptly notify agencies such as the police. On the child's return to the home, arrangements are made for them to have an

independent return home interview. This ensures that the child can talk to someone other than the staff about why they went missing and that lessons can be learned to prevent this from reoccurring.

There are plans that outline the child's known needs and how staff should provide support. However, the plans are difficult to read, as they often contain old information and strategies for staff to follow. The safety planning fails to demonstrate the steps taken to mitigate risks and enable the child to spend safe time with their peers in the community. There is a lack of escalation by managers to ensure that the child's risks are assessed and that support is provided.

There have been no physical interventions for any of the children who have lived at the home. Staff receive training to be able to intervene and keep children and others safe. The staff are also trained to de-escalate situations. Although there have been issues regarding how boundaries are implemented, there is more consistency in staff's practice and management oversight.

Positive behaviours are promoted by staff. Praise and rewards for the child are regularly recorded. In addition, incentives are used to help the child understand the progress they are making and to reward them for their efforts. This approach ensures that the child can see that staff are proud of their achievements.

Negative consequences in the home are documented sporadically, but they may be repeated and prolonged. As a result, the total number of consequences imposed is not consistently or accurately recorded. Managers oversee disciplinary measures and occasionally offer reparation, but there is a lack of consistent evaluation to assess their effectiveness. Consequently, one child experienced repeated consequences without any review of their impact or consideration of alternative approaches.

Allegations are well managed. When staff raise concerns about practice in the home, an internal investigation takes place promptly, and actions are identified to make improvements.

Safer recruitment practice is not fully embedded. Systems are in place for safer recruitment of permanent staff; however, gaps in employment are not fully explored. Furthermore, the manager receives insufficient information when using agency workers. Therefore, there are shortfalls in the safer recruitment of adults who come to work with children at the home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home has experienced changes in management and staff since the last inspection. Leaders and managers have taken steps to review the practices in the home. An internal investigation has been carried out, which has led to identifying lessons learned and areas for improvement following a difficult and unsettled period at the home.

There have been improvements in the manager's oversight of the home. This is because systems in place are effective and ensure that they have oversight of the running of the home. Monitoring systems help the manager to identify areas for improvement and develop practice.

The supervision of staff has improved. Staff receive regular supervision with an opportunity to reflect on practice with a manager who is trained to carry out a supervisory role. However, there are no mechanisms in place for agency staff to receive supervision.

Staff receive well-planned inductions into the home. They complete mandatory training before working with children. In addition, managers identify when staff require training to support them in meeting children's specific needs.

The recruitment and retention of staff in the home remain a challenge. Managers are trying to recruit for vacant posts to ensure that there are enough permanent members of staff with the necessary skills in the home should another child move in.

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
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff— seek to involve each child's placing authority effectively in the child's care, in accordance with the child's relevant plans; seek to secure the input and services required to meet each child's needs; if the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority's or a relevant person's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 5 (a)(b)(c))	28 August 2025
The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which— include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child; are kept up to date. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b))	28 August 2025
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).	28 August 2025

The requirements are that—

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

full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2.
(Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3)(b)(d))

Recommendations

- The registered person should have systems in place so that all staff, including agency and bank staff, receive supervision from an appropriately qualified and experienced professional, allowing them to reflect on their practice. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2)
- The registered person should ensure that all incidents of control, discipline and restraint are subject to systems of regular scrutiny to make sure that their use is fair and effective. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.36)

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: 2780235

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: HMO NE Ltd

Registered provider address: Hallgate House, 9 Grange Terrace, Sunderland SR2 7DF

Responsible individual: Angela Riddell

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Joanne Wallis, Social Care Inspector

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