

2784666

Registered provider: Elm Housing Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is operated by a private provider. It offers care for up to three children who experience social and emotional difficulties.

At the time of this inspection, three children were living at the home.

The home and manager registered with Ofsted in July 2024.

Inspection dates: 22 and 23 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: 18 February 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/02/2025	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The inspector spoke with two of the children as part of the inspection.

Children who have lived in the home for some time are making significant progress from their starting points.

Some children have moved in and out of the home quickly after notice being served. The team recognises that the complex needs of these children could not be met, and there were concerns for the safety of children and staff.

Children who have not previously participated in education have been able to make significant progress in their studies. Children are supported in planning for their future. One child, who did not wish to attend further education, has been helped to seek suitable employment. Another child is being helped to acquire the skills they need to pursue their chosen career. The education, health and care plan on file for one child is significantly out of date, and the manager has been unable to secure educational support for the child.

One child is clear that they do not wish to live at the home and want to move. Despite efforts to engage the child in activities, there has been a lack of structure and routine that has affected the child's experience of living at the home. The provider is developing plans to support children in formal programmes, such as the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, to boost their confidence and sense of achievement.

Children's health needs are well met. Staff help children understand their health needs and make appropriate referrals to support their health and well-being, such as for child and adolescent mental health services and substance misuse services. The support from staff and specialists has led to improvements in children's mental health. The home employs a clinical psychologist who develops plans for each child after three months, providing tailored guidance to meet their needs. The psychologist provides advice to staff in team meetings and on a one-to-one basis to support and strengthen practice.

One child's health plan was not updated to reflect the recent surgery they underwent. The manager corrected this during the inspection, including the necessary aftercare appointments.

The home environment is pleasant, and children are given the opportunity to personalise their bedrooms. During the inspection, one child's bedroom needed work to repair damaged decoration to make it a more comfortable space. The manager took action during the inspection to address this.

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

Leaders and managers carry out a thorough assessment of each child's needs, vulnerabilities and risks when considering new admissions to the home. Records demonstrate robust consideration of the needs, backgrounds and risk-taking behaviours of the children already living in the home, ensuring careful evaluation of the potential group dynamics.

Risk assessments for children are comprehensive, and they include clear strategies for staff to follow to support children who engage in risk-taking behaviours. The manager places strong emphasis on the importance of building positive relationships with children and promoting the use of therapeutic parenting techniques.

Risks for the children living in the home for some time have reduced significantly. Children show insight into their previous behaviours and the positive changes they have been helped to make. However, one child who recently moved into the home continues to engage in risk-taking behaviours, and the other children say that the child's aggressive behaviour is affecting them and staff.

There have been incidents of aggression and children going missing from the home. Staff follow the procedures in place to manage incidents of aggression well and to try to locate children when they are missing. They work effectively with professionals and families to support children in returning home safely. Staff carry out follow-up work with children to help them understand the risks they are taking.

Staff frequently use consequences in response to children's behaviour. The measures used are often financial rather than reparative. The manager does not monitor these to consider their fairness or effectiveness. However, the manager discussed this with the children during this inspection to ascertain their views and identify how the team can be more child focused.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager has positive relationships with children. One child commented on how they wanted to be able to spend more time with the manager.

The manager sets high standards and leads by example. He has high aspirations for what children can achieve and invests considerable time and effort in supporting and developing the staff team.

The manager advocates well for children to help keep them safe, even when this means they cannot remain in the home's care. The manager has escalated concerns about children's risk-taking behaviours to placing authorities, resulting in measures being implemented to help keep them safe.

The responsible individual is working with other agencies to develop partnerships and plans that will help support better outcomes for children.

Supervision sessions and team meetings take place regularly. Timely sessions have taken place to help staff reflect individually and as a team following challenges at the home. The manager responds effectively to incidents and staff feedback to promote improvements in practice and increased staff confidence.

The company's psychologist provides support to the staff. They support the team with training and reflective sessions to ensure that there is effective use of therapeutic strategies in line with children's needs.

During this inspection, staff were observed carrying personal mobile phones. No inappropriate use of these phones was noted. However, this practice does not comply with the company's policy.

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 education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— help each child to achieve the child's education and training targets, as recorded in the child's relevant plans; support each child's learning and development, including helping the child to develop independent study skills and, where appropriate, helping the child to complete independent study; understand the barriers to learning that each child may face and take appropriate action to help the child to overcome any such barriers; help each child to understand the importance and value of education, learning, training and employment; promote opportunities for each child to learn informally; maintain regular contact with each child's education and training provider, including engaging with the provider and the placing authority to support the child's education and training and to maximise the child's achievement; raise any need for further assessment or specialist provision in relation to a child with the child's education or training provider and the child's placing authority; help a child who is excluded from school, or who is of compulsory school age but not attending school, to access educational and training support throughout the period of	30 November 2025

exclusion or non-attendance and to return to school as soon as possible;

help each child who is above compulsory school age to participate in further education, training or employment and to prepare for future care, education or employment;

help each child to attend education or training in accordance with the expectations in the child's relevant plans; and

that each child has access to appropriate equipment, facilities and resources to support the child's learning.

(Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(ix)(x)(b))

Specifically, leaders and managers must ensure that there are up-to-date assessments and plans to support the understanding of children's educational needs. Where formal education is not yet in place, staff should encourage children to participate in learning activities that provide structure and support the development of their self-esteem to prepare them for the next steps.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that all children are provided with a personal space that is homely and welcoming. Children should also be given a choice about how their personal space is decorated. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 16, paragraph 3.19)
- The registered person should ensure that any consequences used to address poor behaviour are restorative in nature and that they are reviewed to ensure that they are fair and effective. Children should be helped to recognise the impact of their behaviour on themselves, other children, the staff caring for them and the wider community. In some cases, it will be important for children to make reparation in some form to anyone hurt by their behaviour, and the staff in the home should be skilled to support the child in understanding this and carrying it out. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.38)
- The registered person should ensure that all staff consistently follow the home's policy around the use of personal mobile phones for the benefit of the children in the home's care. ('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: 2784666

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Elm Housing Limited

Registered provider address: Turner & Brown, 105 Garstang Road, Preston PR1 1LD

Responsible individual: Adam Leigh

Registered manager: John Hay

Inspector

Andrea Foreman, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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