

2784702

Registered provider: Surrey County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned and operated by a local authority. It provides care for up to 4 children who experience social and emotional difficulties.

At the time of this inspection, 4 children were living at the home.

The post for a registered manager has been vacant since January 2026. The current manager is applying for registration.

Inspection dates: 28 and 29 April 2026

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: 16 September 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
16/09/2025	Full	Requires improvement to be good
03/12/2024	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Summary of findings

The quality of care, safeguarding practices and management oversight are inconsistent in the home. Staff respond appropriately during incidents and understand children's risks. However, follow-up actions, lessons learned from incidents, and updates to risk assessments are not reliably sufficient. The environment is not homely or personalised, and planned maintenance improvements are yet to be addressed. Although there are signs of very recent improvements, these shortfalls mean that children's experiences, safety and progress are not consistently good.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

The differing needs of the children at the home and the dynamics of the group are not being fully addressed, which is affecting children's day-to-day experiences and progress.

The home does not feel homely or personalised for the children who live there. Several areas lack warmth and individual touches. Although improvements are planned, they have not been addressed since the last inspection, leaving children without a welcoming environment.

Care plans accurately reflect children's needs and behaviours. However, there have been delays in care planning when children first move into the home. Care plans are not always updated when circumstances or risks change. This means that plans do not always provide staff with up-to-date guidance on how to support the children effectively.

Staff promote children's education and learning. Children in the home have historically struggled to engage in education. However, all the children are now engaged in education. The home's positive multi-agency work and proactive support from staff have contributed to an increase in attendance for all children. As a result, children are beginning to experience greater stability and improved daily routines.

Staff support children in developing their friendships. They encourage children to spend time in the community and develop friendships outside of the home. Staff ensure that children can enjoy these opportunities safely. This has helped one child build confidence and has strengthened their peer relationships.

Children are encouraged to participate in a range of activities and clubs that reflect their individual interests. Staff support children in exploring and attending activities, such as athletics, football and cadets. These opportunities contribute to the children's sense of identity and belonging and promote their physical and emotional wellbeing.

Staff develop positive and respectful relationships with children's families and understand the importance of children maintaining meaningful connections with family members

when such contact is safe and appropriate. One social worker noted that staff work alongside the local authority to promote the children's family time and always provide support if possible.

For one child, the staff have worked closely with the local authority and the child's mother to support a planned return home. This coordinated approach has helped the child feel prepared and supported during a significant transition. The child's mother said, 'The staff listen to what I've got to say. I feel they are supporting the plan for my child to return to me.'

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

The use of physical intervention is not common. Staff use it only as a last resort to safeguard children. The interventions are proportionate and focused on reducing risk. However, management oversight of these incidents is inconsistent and not always recorded. Debriefs with staff do not always take place, and follow-up actions from incidents are not carried out. This weakens the home's systems for monitoring practice, supporting staff and helping children reflect and learn from incidents.

Staff know what to do when children go missing. They respond promptly, follow agreed procedures and make timely notifications. Staff work well with other agencies to help locate children and ensure their safe return. Actions taken by staff during incidents are appropriate. However, follow-up practice is less consistent. Children do not always receive a debrief. Return home interviews are not recorded on the child's record to support learning and reflection from incidents. Managerial oversight of missing-from-home incidents is not robust enough to ensure that learning is captured or used to reduce further risk. There is no clear evidence that key-work sessions following missing-from-home incidents have taken place.

Risk assessments are not always in place. There are delays in carrying out risk assessments when new children move into the home. This means staff do not always have clear guidance regarding children's needs and risks. Children's risk assessments are not consistently updated following serious incidents. This limits staff's ability to respond to emerging risks and weakens the home's overall safeguarding arrangements.

Safer recruitment processes are appropriate and ensure that staff are properly checked and vetted. Leaders ensure that the necessary employment checks are carried out, and they assure themselves that staff have the skills, experience and suitability required to care for children safely.

Staff and managers have a clear understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities and of children's individual vulnerabilities. As a result, staff take prompt and effective action when there are concerns that children may not be safe, such as if they self-harm or if physical intervention is necessary to keep them safe. However, lack of management oversight and learning from incidents limits the staff's and managers' ability to improve practice and help children and staff reflect and learn from incidents to reduce risks.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

The home is led by a newly formed management team. The manager is inexperienced in this role but is receiving strong support from an experienced responsible individual. This oversight is helping the manager develop their leadership skills and begin to establish clear expectations for the staff team, following a period of workforce instability.

Staff say that the recent change of management, alongside the appointment of a new deputy manager, has had a positive impact on the home. Staff now report feeling well supported. However, these changes are new, and the positive culture that the new management team has implemented is yet to be embedded fully.

A high turnover of staff has affected the stability of the team. This turnover, plus a reliance on agency staff, has sometimes affected team cohesion and continuity of care for children.

The manager is establishing a trauma-informed approach across the home. Some aspects of practice are beginning to reflect this. However, not all staff have fully embedded or consistently understood the approach.

The senior leadership team is passionate about improving children's lives. It demonstrates clear ambition for what children can achieve and has begun to implement higher standards across the home. Although this work is still in development, the drive and commitment are already influencing practice in a positive direction.

The new leadership team has a realistic understanding of the home's strengths and weaknesses, and leaders are determined to make the changes that are required. They are realistic about the steps ahead and have started to prioritise improvements that will enhance consistency in children's lives.

Although one recently appointed member of staff commented positively on the quality of induction, supervision and training, staff supervision is irregular, and bank staff receive no supervision. Probation reviews are not taking place in accordance with the home's policy. These gaps mean that staff do not benefit from regular guidance, reflection or accountability. Managers miss opportunities to identify practice issues, provide support and ensure that staff are working safely and effectively. As a result, the quality and consistency of care provided to children are weakened.

Staff receive a range of training to carry out their roles. This training is relevant to the children's needs. Progress with training and qualifications is monitored effectively. The manager has implemented regular team meetings to share practice and embed learning for staff, often involving educational talks from external sources.

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; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(v)) In particular, ensure that written risk assessments and safety plans provide clear, current guidance to staff and that the outcomes of child protection investigations are sought promptly. This requirement was raised at the last inspection and is restated.	1 July 2026
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—	1 July 2026

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; demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on— feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received. (Regulation 13 (2)(a)(c)(g)(ii)) In particular, ensure that all staff receive supervision and reviews of probation in line with company policy and that discussions with staff and children involved in physical interventions are held in line with regulations.	
The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— 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 (c)(i)(ii)) In particular, ensure that there is prompt attention to maintenance and repair.	1 July 2026

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: 2784702

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Surrey County Council

Registered provider address: Woodhatch Place, 11 Cockshot Hill, Reigate RH2 8EF

Responsible individual: Sharon Newton

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Ben Wilson, Social Care Inspector
Jacob Robson, Social Care Inspector

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