

2786408

Registered provider: City Social Care Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately owned children's home has been registered with Ofsted since 2024. The home provides care for up to 3 children who may have social and emotional difficulties.

During this inspection, 3 children were living at the home and spoke with the inspector.

The registered manager is suitably qualified.

The registered provider has recently appointed a new responsible individual, and Ofsted is currently checking this person has the relevant capacity, experience and skills to carry out the role.

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 April 2026

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: 14 May 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
14/05/2025	Full	Good

Summary of findings

Children experience good, consistent care in a nurturing and supportive home, where staff understand their individual needs and risks. Since the last inspection, positive changes in leadership and staffing have strengthened practice and created a stable environment. Progress is mixed for some children. However, there are strategies and interventions to address any areas of concern. There is evidence of effective multi-agency working and information-sharing. Staff are building trusting relationships to prioritise children's wellbeing and safety. Leaders provide clear oversight and advocate for children to ensure their needs remain central to all planning. While some recordings and procedures require further embedding, overall, children benefit from a safe, caring and well-managed home.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Since the last inspection, 3 children have moved into the home, and one child has since left after a short period. This was due to the complexity of their needs and the identification of a more suitable specialist home. Leaders have reflected carefully on this experience and have recognised both the challenges faced and the limits of what the setting could provide. The admission was well managed, and staff demonstrated commitment to the child, working intensively with external professionals and parents to try to meet their needs.

Admission arrangements for children moving into the home are well planned and managed. Children say that they feel involved in the process and have what they need to help them settle. One child who recently moved into the home has made small but meaningful progress from their education and health starting points, including achieving qualifications and attending a dental appointment after 3 previous unsuccessful attempts.

Education is actively promoted. When children experience a decline in school attendance, staff and managers respond proactively by working with external professionals and specialist agencies to identify barriers and put alternative arrangements in place. Children are encouraged to engage in learning through structured daily routines, with staff taking a reflective and curious approach to better understand individual needs.

Children experience warm and nurturing relationships with staff and leaders, who are committed to their care and wellbeing. New children are welcomed positively and begin to build trust and rapport with staff. This helps children to feel safe, understood and supported, and it promotes a sense of belonging.

For children placed at a distance from their home area, staff and leaders prioritise and support meaningful family time. Where travel presents a barrier, staff provide practical assistance, including transport for family members. One relative described staff as 'brilliant', highlighting regular updates, reassurance and prompt communication. This helps children to maintain important family relationships and supports their emotional wellbeing and sense of security.

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

Staff and managers demonstrate a clear understanding of children's individual needs and take appropriate action to keep them safe. All plans are detailed, regularly reviewed and inform day-to-day care. Children say that they feel safe.

Incidents of children going missing from the home have been reduced significantly during this inspection period. Individualised plans are in place with clear strategies to help staff identify triggers and reduce risks. There are also individual protocols to guide staff responses to missing-from-home incidents, and these are generally updated following episodes. However, while leaders are taking steps to improve the consistency of recording, on at least one occasion, a relevant report was not updated promptly. This has the potential to limit the timely sharing of key information needed to safeguard children effectively.

Children who were at risk of going missing from home and exploitation before moving into the home have experienced a reduction in these risks since their admission. As a result, children are safer, more settled and better able to engage in day-to-day routines and positive experiences. One child's social worker told the inspector that staff have adapted their approach to meet the child's needs and are providing them with a wide range of opportunities. They described the child's growing confidence as clear progress since their admission to the home.

There have been no incidents requiring restrictive physical intervention during this inspection period, and no allegations have been made against staff. One comment made by a child about a member of staff was treated seriously. Leaders responded promptly through appropriate fact-finding and multi-agency communication to establish whether there were any safeguarding concerns. Staff were also able to demonstrate a clear understanding of whistleblowing procedures.

There are clear policies in place for the safe storage of staff personal items in the home. However, these procedures are not always applied consistently when staff are outside the home. This requires strengthening to ensure that personal items are managed safely at all times and do not pose potential risks to children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Since the last inspection, there has been a change in leadership, which has had a positive impact on the staff team. The registered manager has been in post since

December 2024 and is now supported by an experienced responsible individual. The leadership team demonstrates a shared commitment to improving the quality of care and has a clear and consistent vision for the home. This has strengthened working relationships with staff, who told the inspector that they feel well supported and satisfied in their roles.

Recruitment processes are now robust, ensuring that all new staff are appropriately vetted and assessed as suitable before starting their roles. One newly appointed member of staff spoke positively about their experience, saying that the team works well together and is supportive. New appointments have strengthened the staff team and contribute to children being cared for by suitable and skilled adults who are able to meet their needs safely.

The manager is proactive in keeping children's needs at the centre of planning and decision-making. They appropriately challenge and escalate concerns with external agencies when children's plans are not progressing as they should. For example, the manager raised concerns when arrangements for one child's family time became inconsistent. This demonstrates confident leadership and a strong child-centred approach, which helps ensure that all professionals remain focused on what matters most for children.

Training arrangements have been reviewed since the last inspection, and a new training provider has been commissioned to better meet the needs of the home. All staff are suitably qualified or working towards the required qualification. In addition, relevant staff have completed mandatory training and receive bespoke specialist training to ensure they have the skills and knowledge needed to respond effectively to children's needs.

Team meetings are held regularly and provide valuable opportunities for reflection and shared learning. These forums support open and transparent discussions and contribute to a culture of learning and improvement. The manager has also introduced additional staff meetings and peer-nominated 'employee of the month' recognition. All staff receive regular supervision; however, appraisal arrangements are not yet fully embedded. Further development of the appraisal process will strengthen staff development, support recognition of performance and improve outcomes for children.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that all staff have their performance and fitness to carry out their role formally appraised at least once annually in line with the home's policy. ('Guide to the Children's Homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.5)
- The registered person is responsible for ensuring that all staff consistently follow the home's policies and procedures for the benefit of the children in the home's care. This specifically is with regard to the safe storage of all staff members' personal items, including vapes and smoking materials. The registered manager is responsible for updating their current policy to include when a member of staff is working in and outside of the home environment, including all vehicles. ('Guide to the Children's Homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.20)
- The registered person is responsible for ensuring that all staff consistently follow the home's procedures and have regard to the relevant police protocol for responding to missing-from-home incidents where the home is located. This specifically means that the Philomena Protocol is updated accordingly following any missing-from-home incident. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.29)

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: 2786408

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: City Social Care Services Limited

Registered provider address: 2 Riverside, Campbell Road, Stoke-on-Trent ST4 4RJ

Responsible individual:

Registered manager: Kirsten Porter

Inspector

Gill Rudkin, Social Care Inspector

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