

2795987

Registered provider: The Hills Children's Homes Limited

Assurance inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home is owned and run by a private organisation. The home is registered to care for up to four children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

The home is currently being led by a manager who is not yet registered. There were two children living in the home at the time of the inspection. Both children were spoken with by the inspector.

The inspector was aware during this inspection of a current and ongoing investigation being led by the appropriate authorities. While Ofsted does not have the power to investigate incidents of this kind, actions taken by the setting in response to the incident were considered (where appropriate) alongside other evidence available at the time of the inspection to inform the inspector's judgements.

Inspection date: 17 June 2025

Date of last inspection: 8 April 2025

Judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Information about this inspection

At this inspection, the inspector evaluated:

- the care of children
- the safety of children
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers.

The inspector has looked closely at the experiences and progress of children, using the social care common inspection framework. This assurance 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'.

Findings from the inspection

We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance inspection.

At the last inspection, one recommendation and three requirements were raised. The manager has made progress towards meeting the requirements and recommendation, and there is a plan in place to meet these.

Children do well in education considering their starting points. Staff encourage and support children to go to school. Attendance for both children is improving. Staff support children to take part in regular activities. The children enjoy trampolining, playing football in the garden and reading books with staff.

Staff have completed safeguarding training. Team meetings and staff supervisions provide opportunity for staff to explore the children's safeguarding needs. Children's care plans do not include all their identified needs. Therefore, not all tasks relating to the care of children are carried out. For example, one child requires a blood test, which staff have not actioned, and one child who needs pictures to communicate does not have access to them.

Staff receive training to help children manage and express their feelings safely. Staff have clear plans that describe how to support children with their behaviour. These plans are up to date. However, staff do not always use the de-escalation strategies detailed within these plans. Children's records do not consistently include the child's voice, and the language used is not considerate of the child's needs and previous experiences.

Not all children's bedrooms are adequate and damage to the home is not promptly repaired. Due to broken bedroom furniture, one child has moved bedrooms to ensure their safety. However, the bedroom is not personalised and has no window and limited furniture.

Staff have implemented clear boundaries and routines for the children. This has improved children's sense of stability and security. Staff celebrate children's achievements. Each child has a book that staff write in daily with messages of positivity and praise. Children have opportunities to earn extra pocket money if they achieve incentives. Staff ensure that incentives for children are realistic. This means children experience a sense of achievement.

The manager has taken steps to improve staff morale and retention. Staff receive regular supervision and support to develop. Staff receive training in relation to children's needs. The manager has systems in place to evaluate and monitor the care provided to children. These systems have identified areas for improvement and lessons to be learned. This is raising standards of care. However, these systems are not yet fully embedded across all aspects of the service.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
08/04/2025	Full	Requires improvement to be good
11/12/2024	Full	Good

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 quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— protect and promote each child's welfare; treat each child with dignity and respect; provide personalised care that meets each child's needs, as recorded in the child's relevant plans, taking account of the child's background; help each child to understand and manage the impact of any experience of abuse or neglect; provide to children living in the home the physical necessities they need in order to live there comfortably; provide to children personal items that are appropriate for their age and understanding. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(i)(iii)(iv)(v)(vii)(viii)) In particular, ensure that children's bedrooms are furnished adequately and that damage is repaired without delay.	17 July 2025
The registered person must prepare and implement a policy ("the behaviour management policy") which sets out the measures of control, discipline and restraint which may be used in relation to children in the home.	9 September 2025

The registered person must ensure that within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes— details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure; within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person")— has spoken to the user about the measure; and has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure. (Regulation 35 (1)(b) (3)(a)(b)(vii)(i)(ii)(c)) In particular, ensure that staff follow the home's policy on de-escalating behaviour and that the manager evaluates the effectiveness of each intervention. In particular, ensure that records created are accurate and clear.	
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— 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;	9 September 2025

use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(f)(h))

In particular, the manager must ensure that children's care plans are in line with the local authority care plan, are individualised and include all relevant information.

In particular, the manager must ensure there are organised and effective recording systems to help improve monitoring and oversight of the home.

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. Staff should record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third-party information. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 2795987

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: The Hills Children's Homes Limited

Registered provider address: Coronation Court, Northampton NN4 8SZ

Responsible individual: Anthony Howell

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Laura Copus, Social Care Inspector

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