

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 4 children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

The manager was registered with Ofsted during October 2025.

There were 2 children living in the home at the time of the inspection. Both children were observed and 1 child was spoken to 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.

At the last inspection, one recommendation and 3 requirements were raised. The manager has met the recommendation and 2 requirements and is making progress towards the remaining requirement.

Inspection date: 22 January 2026

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 these inspections, the inspector evaluated:

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

Inspectors have 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 identified serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance inspection.

At the previous inspection, concerns were identified about a child's inadequate sleeping arrangements. The manager took action at the time to resolve this. However, the same concerns have since been repeated. This repeated failure shows that the previous actions were not sustained and that learning was not embedded. The manager has now taken further steps to prevent this poor care from recurring.

The manager was informed of serious concerns raised by professionals about the care and welfare of children in the home. The manager implemented plans to address these concerns without first taking action to understand them. These plans focus on protecting staff rather than improving the care children receive. The manager's lack of understanding of the concerns increases the risk that poor care will continue. In addition, the relevant safeguarding agencies have not been notified consistently of concerns. This failure undermines safeguarding procedures.

Staff use consequences to support children with their behaviour. Staff do not always record consequences clearly. Although the manager signs to confirm they have reviewed each consequence, they do not evaluate whether the consequence is appropriate or effective consistently. Staff do not demonstrate a strong understanding of how previous experiences shape children's behaviour. Therefore, staff sometimes tell children to manage their emotions rather than helping them to understand their feelings. Staff also apply boundaries inconsistently and do not always communicate expectations clearly.

The manager has not ensured that an independent person visits the home each month. Therefore, the safeguarding and welfare of children has not been reviewed each month by an independent person. This failure weakens the manager's oversight and reduces the external scrutiny needed to assure the quality of care provided to children.

The manager and staff have plans in place to ensure that children's needs are met in line with their placing authority plans.

Staff support children to access education. One child is making good progress in their learning. Another child requires additional support. Staff are working closely with the school to ensure that this child receives the help they need.

Staff support children to access healthcare when needed. This helps them to develop a good understanding of each child's health needs and how to meet them. The manager escalates concerns promptly when children do not receive the health services they are entitled to.

The manager and staff have developed trusting relationships with the children. Staff listen to children's wishes and feelings and act on them. For example, staff camped in the garden with the children after the children requested it. The manager also meets with the children regularly and spends time doing activities with them. Children enjoy spending time with the manager and staff.

The manager ensures that staff are safely recruited to care for children. The manager provides staff with opportunities to gain the qualifications required for their roles. Staff receive regular supervision that focuses on their wellbeing as well as the needs and safeguarding of children. The manager also delivers learning sessions to staff to support continuous improvement in practice.

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 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 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; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(iii)(v)(vi)(b)) In particular, ensure that concerns relating to the care provided to children are fully understood, and acted upon without delay.	28 February 2026
The registered person must prepare and implement a policy ("the behaviour management policy") which sets out— how appropriate behaviour is to be promoted in the children's home; and	16 April 2026

the measures of control, discipline and restraint which may be used in relation to children in the home.

The registered person must keep the behaviour management policy under review and, where appropriate, revise it.

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—

the name of the child;

details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of the measure;

the date, time and location of the use of the measure;

a description of the measure and its duration;

details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure;

the name of the person who used the measure ("the user"), and of any other person present when the measure was used;

the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and

a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of 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.

(Regulation 35 (1)(a)(b) (2) (3)(a)(i)(ii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii) (b)(i)(ii)(c))	
The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— encourage each child to take responsibility for the child's behaviour, in accordance with the child's age and understanding; communicate to each child expectations about the child's behaviour and ensure that the child understands those expectations in accordance with the child's age and understanding; understand how children's previous experiences and present emotions can be communicated through behaviour and have the competence and skills to interpret these and develop positive relationships with children. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(iii)(v)(ix)) In particular, ensure that expectations communicated to each child about behaviour are consistent, proportionate and restorative.	16 April 2026
The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month. When the independent person is carrying out a visit, the registered person must help the independent person— if they consent, to interview in private such of the children, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home as the independent person requires; and	28 February 2026

to inspect the premises of the home and such of the home's records (except for a child's case records, unless the child and the child's placing authority consent) as the independent person requires.

A visit by the independent person to the home may be unannounced.

The independent person must produce a report about a visit ("the independent person's report") which sets out, in particular, the independent person's opinion as to whether—

children are effectively safeguarded; and

the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being.

The independent person's report may recommend actions that the registered person may take in relation to the home and timescales within which the registered person must consider whether or not to take those actions.

If the independent person becomes aware of a potential conflict of interest (whether under regulation 43(3) or otherwise) after a visit to the home, the independent person must include in the independent person's report—

details of the conflict of interest; and

the reasons why the independent person did not notify the registered provider of the conflict of interest before the visit.

The independent person must provide a copy of the independent person's report to—

HMCI;

upon request, the local authority for the area in which the home is located;

the placing authorities of children;

the registered provider and, if applicable, the registered manager; and

the responsible individual (if one is nominated).
(Regulation 44 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3) (4)(a)(b) (5) (6)(a)(b) (7)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e))

*These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

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: Briar Hill Childrens Centre, Coronation Court,
Ashbrow Road, Northampton NN4 8SZ

Responsible individual: Marcel Reid

Registered manager: Peter Ogheneovo

Inspector

Laura Copus, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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