

# 2806196

Registered provider: Kent County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This children's home specialises in accommodating and supporting up to 22 unaccompanied asylum-seeking children aged under 16 years who are awaiting transfer under the National Transfer Scheme (NTS).

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

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since October 2024. This is the first inspection since the home was registered in October 2024.

### Inspection dates: 20 and 21 May 2025

|                                                                                           |             |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| <b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people,</b> taking into account | <b>good</b> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|

|                                                             |      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| How well children and young people are helped and protected | good |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|------|

|                                           |      |
|-------------------------------------------|------|
| The effectiveness of leaders and managers | good |
|-------------------------------------------|------|

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

**Date of last inspection:** not previously inspected

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** not applicable

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good**

The service supports unaccompanied asylum-seeking children to be safely looked after while applications are made with the NTS to find their permanent home. Despite children only living in the home for a short period, usually around 10 days, every effort is made to develop positive relationships. Staff take a genuine interest in children's hobbies, likes and interests and ensure that their time in the home is filled with the chance to experience these.

Staff work tirelessly to help children to have a sense of belonging. Considering the short nature of placement, this is a significant outcome. Children are welcomed equally to the home and the UK at the same time, and staff are highly conscious of how important this is. Considering the level of upheaval and challenge that children have experienced in their journey to the home, steps are taken to ensure that children feel welcomed and taken care of.

Staff prioritise the educational needs of children. There is a teacher on site for five days a week. There is a specific 10-day rolling curriculum to support children to engage in education, learn the basics of English and Maths, and understand social norms and British values. Children talk positively about this and are pleased to have such an opportunity so quickly.

English is not the first language for any of the children; therefore, staff rely on translators, bilingual staff and translation tools to communicate. Children are aware of this and respond well using whatever option is available. Interpreters are always available to be booked or called, if needed, and are always in attendance during meetings. Children enjoy living in the home and are clear that staff do all they can to meet their needs. They have experienced a wide range of activities, such as feeding chickens, going to the beach, playing pool and football, and joining a boxing club.

In addition to the on-site teacher. There is a team of social workers, and relevant external professionals from organisations such as the refugee council, regularly visit. With this high level of support, children's moves are exceptionally well planned. Although minimal information is known about children when they move in, this is all shared with relevant staff and their needs are continually assessed so that any specific needs and potential risks are known.

During children's stay, staff and professionals work together to ensure that planned moves from the home are conducted in a way that children understand. This includes them having opportunities to meet new carers, detailed explanations of where they will be living and the opportunity to ask any questions.

Children's views are important, and they have a variety of ways of sharing them. There are weekly meetings, individual one-to-one sessions with staff and social workers and

input from key external agencies, such as the refugee council and education departments. Alongside this, there is a variety of surveys and opportunities for written feedback, to overcome any language challenges. This has had a positive impact on children being able to have a voice and give input in respect of their likes and dislikes, activities and meal choices. They also give input into significant decisions, such as where they are moving to.

Staff have formed positive working relationships with external health services. All children are registered with a GP within the first few days. Any missing immunisations are given, and any additional support that is needed is provided, such as appointments with a doctor, dentist or optician. However, there have been two errors when administering medication. While the first one prompted a change in procedure, the second one was not fully investigated to allow leaders to assure themselves that lessons had truly been learned.

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

Staff demonstrate a good understanding of the potential risks that children face; this includes risks that are unique to being an asylum-seeking child. Extensive work is done in the local community to ensure safety and understanding for the children. This has resulted in children being welcomed by neighbours.

Risks for individual children are well known and begin to be understood prior to children moving in. Detailed plans, written by leaders and social workers, are shared with staff to ensure that clear safety plans are in place for each child.

Consistent care and boundaries, combined with a high staffing ratio, have meant that missing episodes are very few. When incidents have occurred of children leaving the home without permission, there has been an immediate response from staff, ensuring that children return quickly and safely. When this, or any other incident, occurs, translators are used to ensure that children are fully supported to be able to discuss what has happened.

When incidents have taken place, the staff response has been consistent. Any disagreements between children are immediately responded to, with staff supporting children to make appropriate reparation. Staff are alert to the potential tensions that can be present when having children live together with a range of cultures, languages and religions. They intervene effectively to help children learn to live together.

If there are emerging or historical concerns for children, relevant referrals are made immediately. External safeguarding professionals work well with staff to ensure that safeguarding meetings can be coordinated to agree and develop safety plans. These plans are kept under constant review, and this ensures that staff are always working with the most up-to-date guidance.

## **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

Leaders have a clear vision of what they are trying to achieve. The manager has been reflective and learned from some initial challenges of opening a new children's home to provide short-term care for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.

Due to the short-term nature of stays, leaders are developing ways to understand the progress that is being made and the longer-term impact of the service on children's outcomes once they leave the home.

All staff receive regular supervision. This allows staff to consider their own well-being and development needs, and provides an opportunity for feedback on their practice. Clear actions are set. However, these are not routinely reviewed. This potentially hinders progress and means that managers cannot be sure that agreed actions have been taken.

Leaders are praised by staff for being available, supportive and inspirational in their advice and guidance. The registered manager is always available to staff and children. He notices when staff need additional support and provides this by modelling good practice and providing coaching. Staff are unanimous in how significant this has been. One member of staff commented, 'Feel like I am meant to be here as it is so rewarding. To be able to see the children thrive is such a joy.'

As already identified, the home has been set up in a way that relies on multi-agency working. Social workers and education leads speak positively of the impact that the care of staff is having on children, in terms of how well they provide care that identifies and meets children's needs.

## 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 registered person must make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the children's home. (Regulation 23 (1)) | 31 July 2025 |

### Recommendations

- It is good practice for a note of the content and/or outcomes of supervision sessions to be kept and to ensure that both the person giving the supervision and staff member have a copy of the record. ('Guide to the Children's Home Regulations, including the quality standards,' page 61, paragraph 13.4)

### 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:** 2806196

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider address:** Kent County Council, Sessions House, County Road, Maidstone ME14 1XQ

**Responsible individual:** Alison Vening

**Registered manager:** Ian Williams

## Inspector

Mark Newington, Social Care Inspector

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