

2816350

Registered provider: Stevens Children's Homes LTD

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is registered to provide care for up to three children who may experience social and emotional difficulties. There were two children living at the home at the time of the inspection. The home is run by a private organisation.

The home was registered in March 2025.

The registered manager resigned his registration on 7 July 2025.

Inspection dates: 2 and 3 July 2025

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account

requires improvement to be good

How well children and young people are helped and protected

requires improvement to be good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers

requires improvement to be good

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: not previously inspected

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: not applicable

Inspection judgements

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

Staff are trying hard to create a safe and consistent culture in the home. However, the unexpected departures of both the registered manager and deputy manager have made this a challenge. Staff do not have clear guidance on what to do to take care of children, and this is impacting on their day-to-day responses and providing some inconsistent practices. This inconsistency relates to both the primary care of children in terms of simple things, such as day-to-day routines, and supporting children to keep their rooms in a reasonable state of cleanliness.

Views and wishes of children are not well understood or addressed. Staff have a variety of systems, such as one-to-one sessions with identified staff members and children's meetings. However, these are not being used effectively, and as a result, when children do request things, they are not always responded to.

Despite the lack of leadership and direction, children have positive relationships with staff. Children talk with great affection about the impact that staff have had on their lives. They feel as though they have been welcomed into the home and that it is like a home from home.

Children who have previously struggled with education have been supported to sit their exams. Children are proud of this achievement and recognise the support that has been given to them by staff to help them do this.

There are a variety of activities available to the children. Despite the efforts of staff, children have struggled to engage with a lot of the activities on offer. When children have engaged, this has included trips to theme parks, pool centres and meals out with staff. Children talk positively of this and enjoy these experiences when they attend.

Children's moves into the home are well planned and thoughtfully considered to ensure that children's individual needs are understood and to ensure they are compatible with children already living in the home.

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

Children regularly go missing or are late returning to the home. Staff and leaders work with external agencies to share information when children go missing. However, children are not regularly consulted with on return to check where they have been, and leaders do not check the outcome of independent missing interviews with external professionals. This means that there are missed opportunities for staff to seek all the information they need to better understand how to intervene to help children become safer.

Staff have developed positive relationships with children and have helped children make progress in relation to risks they may face in terms of being involved in offending behaviour. However, due to the lack of direction from leaders, practice in relation to behaviour management does not give the children the consistency that they need to ensure that they thrive and develop to their full potential.

Staff do not monitor the environment to ensure its safety. Weekly health and safety checks are not happening consistently. In addition fire evacuation drills have not involved all children living in the home.

Leaders ensure staff are safely recruited by taking appropriate checks with previous employers and relevant agencies. However, the information in respect of employment checks is fragmented and this impedes leaders and managers ability to have good oversight.

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

As previously mentioned, since the home opened, both the registered manager and the deputy manager have left. This has had a detrimental impact on the home's ability to create a positive culture and clear expectations of staff. As a result, staff have spent several months without the support or direction they need to understand how to provide care that gives children the best chance to make progress.

Since the managers left, the responsible individual has taken an active role in the home and is working closely with an interim manager. This has had a positive impact, in that staff report feeling more supported and directed. However, leaders and managers have yet to fully improve systems and practice to ensure that children are making good progress.

Records of events relating to children are fragmented and, in some cases, not captured at all so relevant information is not accessible to leaders and managers in a way that keeps them fully informed of what is happening for children.

Staff have not had supervision in line with the home's policy. There has only been one supervision session for all staff in the three months since the home opened. This

lack of one-to-one supervision means that staff are not supported to reflect on their practice to learn and develop in order to set standards for care practice. It also means that there are reduced opportunities for managers to understand the realities and pressure faced by staff, many of whom have been working long hours in stressful situations.

Other systems that could potentially support staff with this, such as team meetings, have not taken place regularly and are not well attended by staff. This is another missed opportunity for leaders to truly understand the impact of what is happening day to day in the home.

However, despite the challenges above, staff are confident there has been a positive impact since the change in management. Both the interim manager and the responsible individual had begun to identify some of the gaps highlighted in this report and have started to make some practical changes to meet some of the areas that have been identified.

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— ensure that staff— understand and apply the home's statement of purpose; protect and promote each child's welfare; provide personalised care that meets each child's needs, as recorded in the child's relevant plans, taking account of the child's background; make decisions about the day-to-day arrangements for each child, in accordance with the child's relevant plans, which give the child an appropriate degree of freedom and choice. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(i)(ii)(iv)(ix))	31 August 2025
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—	31 August 2025

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; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(vi)) In particular, ensure that staff have a clear, well-informed and consistent approach to understanding how to help children to become safer.	
The children's views, wishes and feelings standard is that children receive care from staff who— develop positive relationships with them; engage with them; and take their views, wishes and feelings into account in relation to matters affecting the children's care and welfare and their lives. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff— ascertain and consider each child's views, wishes and feelings, and balance these against what they judge to be in the child's best interests when making decisions about the child's care and welfare; help each child to express views, wishes and feelings; help each child to understand how the child's views, wishes and feelings have been taken into account and give the child reasons for decisions in relation to the child; regularly consult children, and seek their feedback, about the quality of the home's care. (Regulation 7 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv))	31 August 2025

After consultation with the fire and rescue authority, the registered person must— ensure, by means of fire drills and practices at suitable intervals, that persons working at the home and, so far as reasonably practicable, children are aware of the procedure to be followed in case of fire. (Regulation 25 (1)(d))	31 August 2025
The registered person must ensure that all employees— receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(b))	31 August 2025
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— 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 work as a team where appropriate; ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child; 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; 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; and	31 August 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)(a)(b)(d)(e)(f)(g)(ii)(h))

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that the home is a nurturing and supportive environment that meets the needs of the children. Staff should ensure this by supporting children to keep their bedrooms clean. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should maintain good oversight to ensure that recruitment of staff safeguards children and minimises potential risks to them. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)

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: 2816350

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Stevens Children's Homes LTD

Registered provider address: 84 High Street, Garlinge, Margate CT9 5LP

Responsible individual: Chanelle Stevens

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Mark Newington, Social Care Inspector

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