

2819761

Registered provider: Estuary Residential Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is operated by a private provider. It provides care for up to three children with learning difficulties. There were two children living in the home at the time of the inspection. The manager registered with Ofsted in January 2025.

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 June 2025

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: 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: good

This was the home's first full inspection since it was registered in January 2025.

Staff know the children well and place them at the centre of their practice. Staff communicate with children depending on their individual needs and use a range of approaches for this to happen, such as putting in place visual aids. Both children have made progress with their communication skills. This is supporting them to participate in their daily lives.

Staff work well with education and healthcare professionals to ensure that the children's education and health needs are met. Feedback from professionals is positive. Recently, staff have worked with the child and adolescent mental health services to develop an appropriate support plan. Staff attend and participate in all education meetings and reviews. One child has recently started full-time education after being out of education for some time.

There are high levels of staffing in place to support each child's complex needs and behaviours. This means children always receive a high level of support.

Children make good progress and are supported to develop independence skills with the support of the staff. For one child, this has meant an increase in their mobility due to a reduction in the reliance on their wheelchair. For another child, they have learned how to make a sandwich and complete personal care tasks.

Irrespective of any disabilities they may have, children are making progress in spending time in the community. The staff offer lots of activities to enhance children's lives. They have recently enjoyed trips to the zoo and the beach. These experiences are captured in scrapbooks and the photos displayed in the home. This gives the children a sense of belonging.

Some areas of the home require attention. Not all areas are maintained to an acceptable standard of cleanliness. The walls in the communal areas are dirty and looked tired. Repairs, redecoration and more intensive cleaning are required to improve the quality of the home so that children live in a suitably clean, hygienic and welcoming environment.

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

Safeguarding arrangements within the home are effective. Safe care practices are implemented during personal care routines, ensuring that all children are treated with privacy and dignity. Parents report that staff provide a high standard of care and maintain their children's safety.

Individualised risk assessments are in place and are reviewed regularly. Owing to high staffing ratios, the likelihood of children going missing is low. Staff demonstrate a strong understanding of each child's specific risks and needs. However, leaders and managers have not ensured that all staff are fully aware of the roles and responsibilities of safeguarding professionals, including the function of the local authority designated officer.

Children's behaviour is managed appropriately. Staff are sensitive to signs of distress or anxiety and respond with understanding and support. Recently, staff have worked in collaboration with the learning disability mental health nurse to develop and apply tailored behaviour support strategies for an individual child. Restraint is only used as a last resort. However, there have been shortfalls in practice. On one occasion, staff did not complete a suitable debrief with a child following the use of restraint. On another occasion, leaders failed to appropriately review a restraint in which the registered manager was directly involved.

The manager has implemented effective fire safety measures within the home. Each child has a personalised emergency evacuation plan, outlining the specific support they would require in the event of a fire. All staff are appropriately trained in fire safety procedures, and regular fire drills are conducted involving the children.

Medication practices are generally safe and effective. However, there has been one recorded error. In response, the manager carried out a thorough investigation to determine the root cause. As a result, the involved staff members completed updated medication competency assessments and refresher training. A new protocol has since been introduced to strengthen the medication administration process.

Robust recruitment practices are in place. All staff undergo comprehensive vetting procedures before commencing employment at the home. This ensures that those caring for children are appropriately and safely recruited.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is suitably qualified and experienced. She is supported by a deputy manager. Both are dedicated and child centred. The registered manager has recognised the importance of developing the service. Staff say they enjoy working in the home and that there is a culture of positive teamwork and communication. They also spoke about the responsive and supportive nature of the management team.

The manager has introduced some new quality assurance systems. This ensures that she has effective monitoring systems. Additionally, the manager has started to complete an incident analysis where she is looking at patterns and trends to children's behaviour. The manager benefits from the external monitoring by the independent visitor. As a result, changes have been made to medication administration records and children's plans.

Monthly team meetings provide a good forum to share information about the children's plans and progress. All new staff undertake good-quality induction training. They familiarise themselves with policies, procedures and children's case records. New staff are given opportunities to shadow team members when they first join the team.

The staff have been able to grow and develop their practice because of the good-quality support and regular supervision that is provided. The management has high expectations of them. Consequently, the staff work well with children who have complex needs.

Feedback from parents was positive. They spoke about how the staff provide them with reassurance and said there is a family feel. Another parent said, 'The staff are so loving and nurturing; it's a wonderful placement.'

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 ensure that— 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 (3)(b)(i)(ii)(c)) In particular, the manager must ensure that an appropriate debrief with the child following a restraint takes place, and where the manager is involved in a restraint, that leaders have reviewed the restraint in a timely way.	4 August 2025
The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— meet the needs of each child; and enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home. (Regulation 6 (1)(2)(c)(i)(ii)) This specifically relates to ensuring the communal spaces in the home, such as the hallway, are repainted, including skirting boards, doors and walls. Additionally, replace the broken blind in	4 August 2025

the conservatory and complete repairs to the architrave in the bathroom doorway.	
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Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that all staff understand the roles and responsibilities of safeguarding professionals, including the role of the local authority designated officer. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 44, paragraph 9.6)

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: 2819761

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Estuary Residential Care Limited

Registered provider address: 52a Buena Vista Drive, Plymouth PL6 7JF

Responsible individual: Neil Johnstone

Registered manager: Mandy Richards

Inspector

Judith Birchall, Social Care Inspector

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