

2822376

Assurance inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

A private organisation operates this home. This is a multi-building registration consisting of two children's homes overseen by one manager. The homes provide care for up to three children who have experienced childhood adversity.

There has been no registered manager in post since 10 June 2025. A new manager has been appointed to oversee the day-to-day running of the homes and is currently in the process of applying to register with Ofsted.

At the time of the inspection, three children were living in the homes. All children were happy to take part in the visit and share their views.

Inspection date: 28 October 2025

Date of last inspection: 7 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 inspectors 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 the following serious and widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance inspection:

- Help and protection of children.
- Leadership and management of the homes.

During the inspection, significant failings were found in relation to the help and protection of children and the leadership and management of the homes. As a result, children's overall experiences have been affected.

Children are not always provided with care that is suitable for their individual needs. For one child, restrictive practices continue to be used by staff, despite managers stating that these are no longer authorised. There is ongoing uncertainty among both staff and the management team regarding the care plan for this child. This has meant that staff and managers are not consistent in ensuring the child's care is suitable for their needs.

Staff do not respond to serious incidents effectively. For example, during an incident, staff did not increase checks as required when a child became unsettled. The child was then able to damage property, leave the building through a window and access medication and money without staff's knowledge. This placed the child at significant risk.

Staff's responses to incidents when children go missing from home are inconsistent. Agreed protocols are not always adhered to, and guidance from on-call managers has at times contradicted these protocols, leading to confusion and unsafe practices. In one case, conflicting instructions within the protocol itself heightened a child's vulnerability. These significant failings compromise safeguarding measures designed to keep children safe.

Risk management planning is ineffective. Leaders and managers do not ensure that plans are updated following significant incidents. Staff are not routinely spoken to or debriefed after incidents, leading to missed opportunities for reflection, learning and improvement. This failure significantly limits the home's capacity to keep children safe and promote their welfare.

Leaders and managers do not demonstrate the skills or capacity to identify and respond to signs that children may be at risk of harm. For example, concerns regarding the use of mobile phones and the risks of this to children have not been recognised or addressed. As a result, there is no clear guidance for staff on how to manage or mitigate these risks safely and consistently.

Leaders and managers do not have effective oversight of behaviour management. The recording and review of physical interventions is poor. Records lack sufficient

detail and are not completed consistently or within appropriate timeframes. Following one incident, neither the child nor the staff involved received a debrief, despite a staff member being injured. There is no evidence of managerial oversight or evaluation to assess whether the intervention was necessary, proportionate, or what impact it had. This reflects a failure in leadership, oversight and safeguarding practice.

Managers fail to ensure that their staff have the qualifications, skills or experience required to meet the needs of the children in their care. They also lack a secure understanding of effective safeguarding practice. Inexperienced staff are frequently placed in charge of shifts without adequate guidance, supervision or managerial oversight. This results in poor and inconsistent decision-making that fails to safeguard children or promote their well-being.

The quality of recording is poor and lacks quality and accuracy. Reports are often incomplete and fail to contain critical information. Managers rarely identify or address these deficiencies, so have not addressed these shortfalls.

Leaders and managers have not taken effective action to address the requirements made at the last inspection. Improvement plans have not been implemented, and the same shortfalls remain evident. This lack of progress limits the ability to provide consistent care for children.

While there are notable shortfalls, some areas of progress for children have been identified. For instance, in one home, improvements to the physical environment have been made. Children have been encouraged to personalise their bedrooms, choosing colours and items that reflect their individual preferences.

There have been improvements regarding children's personal hygiene. Staff have supported children to follow daily routines and offered reminders when needed. As a result, children are beginning to take more responsibility for their self-care.

Staff support children's social development by encouraging them to take part in community activities and clubs of their choice. One child has joined a local football team, which has helped them to build confidence and start to develop positive relationships with peers.

Children are supported to maintain contact and spend time with their families. Staff understand that family are important to children and encourage them to keep in touch. For example, staff have helped one child reconnect with a family member after a significant period.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
07/04/2025	Full	Requires improvement to be 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 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; 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, the registered person must ensure that all risks are assessed and that children's plans are regularly reviewed and updated and clearly guide staff in managing risks, reducing harm and promoting children's well-being. Also, ensure that staff and managers are skilled and competent to support children safely when they go missing from the home. Missing-from-care protocols must be reviewed and updated to provide guidance that keeps children safe. Also, ensure that staff have the knowledge and skills to identify when children may be at risk of harm and take appropriate action to keep them safe.	16 November 2025

16 November 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 have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;

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;

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)(c)(d)(e)(f)(h))

In particular, the registered person must ensure that all staff are skilled and competent to meet children's needs. They must provide effective training and ensure that it is embedded into practice to improve the care and safety of children. They must review monitoring systems to ensure that they are robust and effective to support management oversight of children's care.

In addition, the registered person should review all incidents effectively and take action to ensure children's safety and welfare are promoted. Staff should also have opportunities to learn and reflect.

Furthermore, the registered person should ensure that staff have the necessary skills to complete accurate and

sufficiently detailed records. Incident records must be scrutinised by leaders to promote the safety and well-being of children.	
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— understand and apply the home’s statement of purpose; ensure that staff— 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)(a)(b)(ix) In particular, the registered person must ensure that internal placement plans contain full and accurate information regarding each child and that all staff are familiar with the details of these plans. The manager must also ensure that plans are regularly reviewed and updated.	1 December 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— 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;	1 December 2025

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 (3)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(b)(i)(ii)(c))	
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The registered person may only— employ an individual to work at the children's home; or if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home, if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). The requirements are that— full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3)(d)) This requirement was not reviewed and, as a result, has been restated.	1 December 2025

The registered person must ensure that all employees— undertake appropriate continuing professional development; receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience; and have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33 (4)(a)(b)(c)) This specifically relates to managers ensuring that staff receive supervision that enables them to reflect on their practice and that all staff receive an annual appraisal. This requirement was not reviewed and, as a result, has been restated.	1 December 2025
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*These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 2822376

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Responsible individual: Lorraine Gallagher

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Carl Wilton, Social Care Inspector

Amy Richards, Social Care Inspector

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