

# 2823861

Registered provider: Empower Residential Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

The home is owned and managed by a private provider and provides care for up to two children who may have social and emotional difficulties. At the time of this inspection, one child was living in the home and was spoken to by the inspector.

This home and the manager was registered with Ofsted in March 2025.

### Inspection dates: 16 and 17 September 2025

|                                                                                           |             |
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| <b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people,</b> taking into account | <b>good</b> |
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|                                                             |                                 |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| How well children and young people are helped and protected | requires improvement to be 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:** not applicable

## Inspection judgements

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

The child is happy and making good progress in all areas. They are cared for by a dedicated staff team who appreciate the child's individual personality. Staff build trusting relationships and speak affectionately about the child.

Staff take time to understand the child's specific communication needs and use a variety of creative methods to effectively engage the child in day-to-day decision-making that affects them. The child is supported to talk openly about their feelings and worries, which is helping them to better understand their emotions and behaviours. Conversations with the child, both ad hoc and planned, cover a variety of sensitive topics.

Staff understand the importance of education and support the child to regularly attend school. The child has been supported by staff to achieve 100% attendance. School staff commented on the 'huge improvement' in the child's communication, behaviour and engagement. Staff support the child with a wide range of age-appropriate social and recreational activities which complement their education.

The child is supported by staff to maintain healthy routines, including with sleep and self-care. Staff have sensitively supported the child to become independent with their own self-care. There is careful consideration in meeting the child's dietary preferences while encouraging variety and healthy choices. The child is encouraged to get involved with making meals and developing their cooking skills.

Staff have gone above and beyond to support the child to enjoy regular and meaningful time with their family. They have taken time to build trusting relationships with family members, which has helped to develop a consistent network of adults around the child.

The home environment is welcoming and homely, with photos and pictures on the walls to celebrate memories and special occasions. There are ample spaces for eating together, playing and relaxing. The child's bedroom is personalised to their individual tastes and the child's pet hamster lives in its cage in the living room. Memory books capture special days and memories in photos so that the child can look back and remember their positive experiences.

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

Professional curiosity is not always used effectively by managers and staff to explore the child's behaviour when there are potential safeguarding concerns. More could be done to better understand the child's behaviours to prevent repeat incidents. Leaders and managers do not always ensure robust oversight of incidents and there is a lack of consistent action to address some concerns.

Staff have not always ensured that the environment is free of potential risks to the child. There have been a number of incidents where staff's lack of attentiveness to health and safety within the home has presented as a risk to the child. No harm has been experienced by the child but more needs to be done to ensure that these incidents are not repeated.

Staff use a variety of de-escalation techniques to support the child when they are experiencing distress, however, the effectiveness of these interventions is not always clear. Restraint has been used on several occasions as a last resort. Records of incidents do not always accurately reflect the action taken by staff.

Approaches to risk are well managed and plans for staff to use to minimise risk are clear and concise. Leaders and managers create plans which consider past events but do not unnecessarily label the child's behaviours. The child is safely encouraged to take age-appropriate risks and challenge themselves with outdoor activities. This approach creates a sense achievement for the child and helps with the development of their self-esteem.

Leaders and managers take a proportionate approach to the use of restrictions to protect the child from harm. When restrictions have been used, there are clear plans for reducing their use.

Allegations are managed appropriately and there is a thorough response to concerns raised about practice.

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

The home is managed by a dedicated registered manager who has been in post since the home opened. Staff say that they enjoy their jobs and speak positively about the support of leaders and managers.

Leaders and managers have taken action to reduce the reliance on temporary staff and have invested in supporting the retention of a stable staff team. Staff talk positively about these changes and the positive impact this has had on the child's feelings of stability. New staff are beginning to get to know the child well and demonstrate commitment and compassion in their roles.

Leaders and managers ensure that staff are up to date with mandatory training. They organise bespoke training to support staff to respond to the individual needs of the child. New members of staff receive comprehensive training and support over a six-month induction period.

Leaders and managers understand the importance of building relationships with the multi-agency network. Professionals speak positively about the communication between themselves and the manager and praise the progress the child is making.

Supervision sessions for staff and team meetings are of good quality and take place regularly. Staff are encouraged to reflect on their practice and learn from one another.

Some of the language used in children's records is labelling and blaming of the child's emotions and behaviours. Records do not always include the voice of the child and at times child-focused language is not used.

## 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        |
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| <p>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>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;</p> <p>help each child to understand how to keep safe;</p> <p>have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm;</p> <p>understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person;</p> <p>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;</p> <p>that the effectiveness of the home's child protection policies is monitored regularly.</p> <p>(Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(v)(b)(e))</p> <p>In particular, the registered person must ensure that staff are supported to identify and respond to behaviours which may require intervention. In addition, they must ensure that staff are clear on their responsibilities to maintain a safe environment.</p> | 30 October 2025 |

## **Recommendation**

- The registered person should ensure that children are encouraged by staff to see the home's records as living documents, supporting them to view and contribute to the record on a regular basis in a way that reflects their voice. In particular, the registered person should ensure records include the views of the child. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 58, paragraph 11.19)

## **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:** 2823861

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

**Registered provider:** Empower Residential Ltd

**Registered provider address:** Empower Support Services, Prockters Farm, West Monkton, Taunton TA2 8QN

**Responsible individual:** Simon Morton

**Registered manager:** Kerry Hurley

## Inspector

Stacey Pellow, Social Care Inspector

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