

2824890

Registered provider: Guiding Light Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is privately run and provides care for up to three children who experience social and emotional difficulties.

The previous manager left in May 2025. A new manager has applied to register with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 25 and 26 November 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

There were three children living at the home at the time of this inspection. Two children were spoken to and provided positive feedback about the support they receive. There are strong relationships between the staff and the children.

Children are regularly asked for their views, including on decorating their bedrooms, menus and activities. Children personalise their bedrooms to suit their interests. Children take part in activities they enjoy, including going to theme parks, cat cafés and the cinema.

Staff support children's education. The children all have individual education plans. One child combines school and home learning. The school staff said that the child's attendance has improved since living at the home. Staff encourage children by supporting daily routines and encouraging their learning.

Two children experienced unplanned endings to living at the home. The children moved out of the home due to concerns about their safety and the impact on the other children. Senior managers undertook a review of these endings. However, these do not identify any lessons learned. This could mean other children experience unplanned endings due to similar reasons that have not been addressed.

Initial assessments carried out for new children being referred to the home have been strengthened. The manager reviews the referral documents and considers whether any additional training is required. However, the assessments do not consider any potential risks or strengths regarding the group dynamics. This means mitigations to manage risks are not identified or put in place.

Key-work sessions take place regularly. Staff speak to the child about a range of topics at these sessions. However, staff are not always curious during discussions with children following incidents. This could mean that opportunities to further discuss topics or educate children are missed.

Children's positive achievements are not clearly recorded. Staff give children rewards and praise. However, children's records do not detail these. This means that children's successes may not always be celebrated, and areas of progress may not be clear to identify.

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

Managers work well with other professionals. Where required, referrals to the local authority designated officer are made appropriately. Investigations into concerns about staff practice are carried out thoroughly.

Safer recruitment is followed for new members of staff. There is an induction process for new staff, which helps them to learn their roles. Temporary staff are occasionally used. The manager attempts to use the same staff when possible. This ensures that children are cared for by people they know and who understand them.

Staff understand children's risks. Children's care plans and risk assessments are detailed and provide strategies for staff to support children. For children who harm themselves, there is clear guidance for staff to follow. Staff ensure that appropriate actions are taken to try and prevent children harming themselves. If they do harm themselves, appropriate first aid or medical support is offered.

Room searches take place appropriately. However, the room search records do not always detail actions taken when items that children have been known to have are not found. This means it is not clear whether staff have fully explored whether children have items of risk.

There has only been one use of restraint. Staff use de-escalation skills to prevent incidents from escalating to when a restraint would be required. Although there was some management oversight of the whole incident, the report did not mention the restraint or whether this was proportionate and justified.

Staff understand the processes to follow when children go missing from home. Staff ensure that the police, professionals and families are informed and updated promptly. Staff search the local area to try and locate children and make frequent attempts to contact them. However, the recording of missing-from-home incidents does not always include the ongoing actions staff take. This means it is not possible to identify if staff remain proactive in trying to locate children until they return.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is experienced and aspirational for the children and staff. She is awaiting her interview to register with Ofsted. The manager knows the children well and understands their areas of progress and their individual needs.

There is a consistent staff team. Staff members talk positively about the support that they receive. They feel that managers are approachable and supportive. Professionals are positive about the support children receive. Social workers said that communication is effective and that children make progress.

Supervision sessions and team meetings take place in line with the home's policy. These discuss the individual children and use scenarios to support development. This supports staff to reflect as a group about the children to support consistency in how they work with them. Staff are appropriately trained for their roles. However, specific training in the needs of the children is not always provided. Whilst there have been no children with a formal diagnosis of autism, some children display traits of autism and are being assessed

therefore upskilling the staff to be aware of these traits and how to support around this would enhance the care provided.

Recording and reporting requires improvement. Some records contain differing information about the same events. It is not possible to fully ascertain what happens during incidents and what support staff provide. Managers are aware of this area of development and have plans to address it. However, currently, this means that there are not always clear records available for the children to fully understand their journey while living at the home.

Managers review all incidents and concerns. However, this does not always identify strong practice or lessons learned. This means that staff do not receive clear guidance about whether actions were appropriate or not. This could mean incidents are repeated due to a lack of learning from past incidents.

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; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; and take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(v)(vi)) In particular, ensure that appropriate actions are taken when there are concerns about children having items of risk, that staff are following children's missing-from-home protocols and that staff are curious following incidents and when talking to children about their risks.	30 January 2026
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.	30 January 2026

In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of 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; and use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(f)(h)) In particular, ensure that there is clear, evaluative oversight following incidents and placement endings that explores areas of concern and identifies learning that is then implemented.	
The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which— include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child; and are kept up to date. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)) In particular, ensure that clear, consistent records are kept that contain effective levels of detail.	30 January 2026

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that all incidents of control, discipline and restraint are subject to systems of regular scrutiny to ensure that their use is fair and proportionate. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.36)
- The registered person should ensure that there is a system for rewarding and celebrating positive behaviours, as well as recognising when children have handled situations well. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 47, paragraph 9.39)
- The registered person should ensure that staff can access appropriate facilities and resources to support their training needs. In particular, that staff complete training in courses relevant to children living at the home, such as training in how to care for

children with autism. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.11)

- The registered person should only accept placements for children where they are satisfied that the home can respond effectively to the child's assessed needs and where they have fully considered the impact that the placement will have on the existing group of children. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.4)

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: 2824890

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Guiding Light Care Limited

Registered provider address: 12 Willow Road, Bedford MK42 0QU

Responsible individual: Daniel Thompson

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Leanne Lyon, Social Care Inspector

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