

SC005751

Registered provider: Care Afloat Limited

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. The home provides care for one child who may have social and emotional difficulties.

At the time of this inspection, the home was caring for one child. Inspectors spoke to the child at the time of the inspection.

The manager registered with Ofsted in February 2022. The inspection was led by the deputy manager of the home, who obtained consent from the responsible individual.

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 January 2026

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	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 29 January 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
29/01/2025	Full	Good
10/10/2023	Full	Good
04/05/2022	Full	Good
23/02/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Staff know the child well. They have built warm, trusting relationships with the child and are able to work through any challenges in a positive way. The positive relationships have supported the child in making progress while living at the home, and the child reported that staff go 'above and beyond' to care for them.

Staff promote and understand the child's achievements and future aspirations. Staff support the child to attend education provision and vocational activities as part of their curriculum. Staff respond swiftly to any challenges the child experiences in the school setting to ensure minimal disruption to education and to support continued progress.

The child is in good health. Staff ensure that the child regularly attends health appointments such as GP, opticians and dentist. Leaders and staff are proactive in obtaining health reports when the outcomes are unknown. This allows staff to consider any additional health and support needs that may be required.

Staff obtain the views, wishes and feelings of the child. They are creative in engaging the child in discussions, in a way that suits the child. This gives the child the opportunity to be included in day-to-day decisions about their care and what is expected of them.

There have been improvements made to maintain the home environment. There are areas in the home that require further maintenance, and the manager has a plan to continue with the upkeep and maintenance of the home. However, there are areas in the home that are not clean. This was a concern at the last inspection and there has not been consistency with the cleaning routines set.

The child does not have access to all areas of the home. The utility room is locked and therefore not accessible to the child. This can have an impact on meeting the child's individual needs, including their independence skills.

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

Staff take appropriate action in response to any missing-from-home episodes. They take swift action and a well-coordinated approach is adopted. Staff take proactive action to locate the child and ensure a safe return home. This supports the child to feel cared for and safe, while developing a sense of belonging.

Risk assessments are detailed documents that are regularly reviewed by staff and senior leaders. The assessments clearly categorise each risk and provide trigger and early warning indicators for staff to consider. There is clear guidance for staff to follow in response to each risk. This helps staff to understand and reduce risks.

When physical intervention is required, it is used proportionately and only to ensure the safety of the child or others. Staff complete debriefs after each incident and offer the child the opportunity to participate. This supports the child to understand the reason for the restraint and provides a period of reflection. Staff also maintain clear and comprehensive records of each intervention, including those that are less restrictive.

Staff do not consistently record consequences in sufficient detail, including the duration of the consequence applied. Records lack senior leaders' evaluation and oversight. This limits the ability to determine whether the consequence was fair and proportionate and reduces opportunities to reflect on and improve practice.

Senior leaders do not always respond appropriately to safeguarding concerns. When allegations have been made, senior leaders have conducted investigations, without consulting and obtaining the views of the local authority designated officer (LADO). This practice can pose further risks to the child and undermines safeguarding procedures designed to protect them.

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

There is a consistent and stable staff team in place. The staff have worked at the home for a significant period of time and know the child well. Staff report positively about their roles and their relationships with senior leaders. This stability supports the child to feel secure in their care and has helped to establish good routines and boundaries.

Team meetings take place regularly and are well attended by staff. These meetings provide an opportunity to discuss a variety of topics specific to the child's needs, risks and behaviours. They also enable staff to actively engage in discussions, with new ways of working considered jointly by staff and senior leaders. This open forum supports staff to share their views while ensuring that the child's needs remain central to decision-making.

Staff regularly participate in a wide range of training specific to the child's needs. Senior leaders have a clear understanding of the training requirements of each staff member, and there are effective systems in place to monitor training completion and ongoing development.

There is effective monitoring of fire safety in the home. Weekly fire drills take place and there is effective recording of each event. Staff support the child to understand what is expected of them in the event of a fire. This supports the child to feel safe.

Staff supervisions do not take place regularly. When staff do receive supervision, it is practice focused and considers the emotional wellbeing of staff and training and development. However, there are gaps in supervision timeliness, and the distribution of supervision records is not effective. Staff do not receive annual appraisals. This means that staff and senior leaders do not evaluate practice or consider future goals and aspirations.

Leaders and staff do not consistently notify the regulator of serious incidents as required. This lack of timely reporting compromises the regulator's ability to have oversight of the care provided to the child.

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— The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there; a child protection enquiry involving a child is instigated; or concludes (in which case, the notification must include the outcome of the child protection enquiry); or there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. A notification made under this regulation— must include details of— the matter; the other persons, bodies or organisations (if any) who or which have been notified; and any actions taken by the registered person as a result of the matter; must be made or confirmed in writing. In this regulation, references to the PPO include a person appointed by, or working on behalf of, the PPO for the purposes of an investigation under paragraph (2). (Regulation 40 (4)(c)(d)(i)(ii)(e) (5)(a)(i)(iii)(b) (6))	28 February 2026

Specifically, the registered person must ensure that staff and senior leaders notify HMCI of any safeguarding allegations made against staff.	
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; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies; 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; that the effectiveness of the home's child protection policies is monitored regularly. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(v)(vi)(vii)(b)(e)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that consultations are held with the LADO when allegations are made.	28 February 2026
The registered person must prepare and implement a policy ("the behaviour management policy") which sets out—	28 March 2026

how appropriate behaviour is to be promoted in the children's home; and

the measures of control, discipline and restraint which may be used in relation to children in the home.

The registered person must keep the behaviour management policy under review and, where appropriate, revise it.

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;

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 (1)(a)(b) (2) (3)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(b)(i)(ii)(c)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that there is clear recording of consequences imposed, including their duration and management oversight to ensure effective evaluation of each consequence imposed.	
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— 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)(a) (2)(c)(i)(ii)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that the home is kept clean in all areas and there is a consistent approach to cleaning regimes, which is maintained by staff.	28 March 2026
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))	28 March 2026

Specifically, the registered person must ensure that all staff have regular supervision and that supervision records are shared with staff and recorded in a timely manner.

Additionally, all staff must have an annual appraisal that considers their personal and professional development.

This requirement was raised at the last inspection and is restated.

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that the child can access all shared areas of the home, just as they would a family home. Specifically, the utility room needs to be accessible to the child. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.10)

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: SC005751

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Care Afloat Limited

Registered provider address: 158-160 Birkrig, Digmoor Parade, Skelmersdale, Lancashire WN8 9HP

Responsible individual: Michael Fletcher

Registered manager: Claire Russell

Inspector

Vicky Byron, Social Care Inspector

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