

SC006010

Registered provider: Care Afloat 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. It provides care for one child who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

At the time of this inspection, one child was living at the home.

The home has a registered manager.

Inspection dates: 4 and 5 February 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	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 26 February 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
26/02/2025	Full	Good
23/08/2023	Full	Good
11/05/2022	Full	Good
06/05/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

As part of the inspection, the inspector spoke with the child living at the home.

The home has a stable team of staff who provide a consistent approach to the care needs of the child. Staff have warm, caring relationships with the child. They take their time to help the child understand their emotions and experiences through informal discussions, play and humour.

Staff regularly encourage the child to participate in a wide range of activities at the home and in the community, including board games and football. The child was excited to share his passion for football, which he plays once a week with other children in the community. He has enjoyed a trip to his favourite football club and participated in litter picking in the community.

The child has regular contact with his family. Staff remain in communication with family members who live out of the area. They support the child in having face-to-face and telephone contact. Parents have provided positive feedback about family time and communication with the staff.

When children move out of the home, staff prepare them emotionally and practically for their move. They explore the child's feelings about moving and expectations of their new environment and provide practical support, such as budgeting and shopping.

The staff take a proactive approach to understand and meet the child's health needs. The child is registered with a GP, dentist and optician. Staff engage with specialist health services to further promote and meet the child's health needs.

Staff promote the child's education. They encourage the child to engage in home tuition with an independent teaching provider when the child is not in education.

The home is a warm and welcoming environment. It is well decorated with soft furnishings, and the child's bedroom is tailored to their preferences, with artwork and family photos on the walls. The manager has a plan to paint and refresh areas of the home and repair small holes at the top of the landing.

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

When a child is missing from the home, staff contact the police and professionals known to the child. They contact the child by telephone. However, staff do not make attempts to locate the child. This does not help the child to quickly return to the home.

Staff are creative in their approach to any incidents that occur. They use various strategies, such as distraction, humour and a sensory approach, to manage behaviours.

This helps the child manage their emotions with consideration to their age, development, and care needs.

Staff use physical intervention as a last resort to keep the child and others safe. When used, physical intervention is fair and proportionate. Staff maintain clear records following every incident of physical intervention. However, managers and leaders do not consistently offer staff the opportunity to debrief following any incidents of physical intervention.

Staff implement clear and consistent boundaries for the child. They use rewards and financial incentive star charts to help the child understand positive behaviours. Staff fairly apply consequences and have effective recording systems, which the manager regularly reviews.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is led by a suitably experienced manager. She knows the child and staff well and has a good understanding of the home's strengths and areas for development.

Staff receive training, and they have access to a wide variety of specialist training specific to the child's needs. The training offer supports staff development and helps to meet the needs of the child.

Staff regularly attend team meetings, where they engage in discussions on various topics relating to the child. Team meetings are an opportunity for staff to openly express their views and ideas about what has worked well. Guest speakers occasionally attend team meetings to support staff in understanding topics relating to the child.

Staff receive regular supervision sessions and appraisals, which are practice focused and driven by the child's plans. Induction activities are not always effective. New members of staff do not receive timely supervision, in line with the home's statement of purpose. Supervision records for new members of staff lack an understanding of progress in practice.

Managers and experienced staff members understand how to manage allegations and are aware of the role of the local authority designated officer (LADO). However, one new staff member was not familiar with the LADO's role or the actions to take in response to an allegation. This was raised as a recommendation at the last inspection and has been restated.

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))	27 March 2026
The registered person must— ensure that each employee completes an appropriate induction; ensure that each permanent appointment of an employee is subject to the satisfactory completion of a period of probation; and For the purposes of this regulation, "the appropriate person" is the registered person, an officer of HMCI, an officer of the local authority in whose area the home is located or a police officer. The registered person must ensure that all employees— undertake appropriate continuing professional development; receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (1)(a)(b) (3) (4)(a)(b))	27 March 2026

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that any new members of staff are aware of the role of the LADO. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 43, paragraph 9.10)
- The registered person should specify the procedures to be followed and the roles and responsibilities of staff when a child is missing from care or away from the home without permission, as well as how staff should support the child on their return to the home. Specifically, the registered person should ensure that staff are actively attempting to locate the child. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.28)

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: SC006010

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Care Afloat Limited

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

Responsible individual: Michael Fletcher

Registered manager: June Wilkie

Inspector

Vicky Byron, Social Care Inspector

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