

SC008274

Registered provider: Searchlight Care Services Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is operated by a private company. It is registered to provide care for one child who has lived through adverse childhood experiences.

The manager has been in post since October 2022 and registered with Ofsted in May 2023. She has the relevant experience and qualifications for the role.

At the time of the inspection, one child was living in the home. The child was present during the inspection and spoke with the inspector.

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 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: 12 August 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12/08/2024	Full	Good
12/09/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
28/03/2023	Full	Good
01/06/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

At the time of the inspection, the same child was living in the home. Staff provide care that is nurturing and therapeutic. This practice has enabled the child to build trusting and positive relationships with them. The child said: 'I call staff my family, and I like living here; they look after me.'

The child is making progress from their starting point. Since the last inspection, the manager has been proactive in advocating for the child and securing a suitable education placement. The child is now achieving well academically, with good attendance. This stability in education contributes to improved confidence and positive social interactions with peers. The child has developed meaningful friendships, which staff support by arranging opportunities for them to spend time with peers at home. This nurturing approach helps to create a homely, family-like environment.

Leaders and staff demonstrate a clear understanding of deprivation of liberty orders. There is a strong, effective multi-agency approach in place, with professionals working collaboratively to plan to reduce restrictions in a careful and considered manner. The child remains central to all care planning, and their views are actively sought, listened to, and acted upon. Plans are reviewed regularly through multi-agency meetings to ensure a consistent and coordinated approach. The child attends their review meetings, which supports them to remain informed and involved in decisions about their care. Staff encourage the child's interests, and they participate in weekly horse-riding lessons, which they enjoy. This hobby is recognised as playing an important role in supporting the child's emotional well-being and stability.

The child's health needs are well met, and they are in good general health. They are supported to attend routine primary care appointments. Staff promote the child's emotional wellbeing effectively, using therapeutic practices and strategies. For example, staff can now identify a decline in the child's emotional wellbeing and have created a self-care box, which the child uses successfully to distract themselves. In addition, external services are in place, offering individualised support through a clinical therapist. This helps staff to understand the child's emotional needs and develop effective ways to support the child. Furthermore, the child attends weekly therapy sessions and, as a result, is increasingly able to regulate their emotions and recognise when they need further support.

The home environment is welcoming and homely and most areas are decorated to a high standard. The child's bedroom is personalised and well maintained. However, the bathroom is poorly maintained and poses some risks to the child, such as exposed sharp edges on the tiling and visible mould on the ceiling. Leaders and managers acted immediately during the inspection to reduce these risks. Nevertheless, the bathroom remains old and dated and is not maintained to the same standard as the rest of the home.

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

Staff have a clear understanding of the child's needs and associated risks. They help the child to develop their understanding of risks through interactive discussions; they use resources to maintain engagement and support learning. As a result, the child's awareness of risk has improved, incidents have decreased from their initial level, and plans are in place to promote greater independence. Effective systems for behaviour management are in place, such as reward schemes. However, when natural consequences are applied, these are not always reviewed by the manager, and on some occasions, responses are not proportionate.

There have not been any allegations made about staff since the last inspection. When the child informed staff of historic allegations, staff responded sensitively and provided the child with the space to share their concerns. Information is recorded and shared with relevant professionals to explore and investigate. Outcomes of investigations are shared with the child to reassure them that their concerns have been acted upon.

Since the last inspection, the child experienced a brief but challenging period, linked to their emotional needs and heightened emotions. This raised concerns about the child's safety. During these incidents, staff responded appropriately and sought support from external services. Relevant professionals are informed promptly, and staff maintain a calm and therapeutic approach to exploring emotional wellbeing. However, there are occasions when the child's wellbeing is not monitored effectively after an incident throughout the night. Additionally, there is no effective review process after incidents, which limits opportunities to learn and improve practice and prevent recurrence. These shortfalls in practice and lapse in supervision are not promptly identified or addressed by the manager.

Physical intervention is used by staff on some occasions to keep the child safe. Holds used by staff are appropriate. On occasions, staff have requested police assistance to help them to manage the safety concern. While the child is given an opportunity to discuss the incident, reflective learning is not consistently undertaken by leaders and staff. These are missed opportunities to develop effective strategies to respond to the child's needs.

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

The home is managed by an experienced and qualified manager who is supported by a qualified and knowledgeable deputy manager. Staff say they feel supported in their roles and highlight teamwork as an area of strength, which helps provide consistent care to the child.

Professionals said that staff understand the child well and praise the commitment to working with other professionals and the managers effective communication. One professional said: 'This is an excellent home. [Name of child] has made great progress with the support provided by staff in the home.'

Staff receive a variety of training, and most have completed the organisation's mandatory training. Specialist training is provided by external professionals who have specific knowledge; for example the clinical therapist has delivered trauma-informed training. Managers and leaders have not ensured that staff receive support and training to understand the child's diagnosed health condition.

Staff and the manager are now receiving regular supervision and have annual appraisals. However, these are of poor quality and do not focus on their development. This limits their ability to improve the quality of care to children.

Managers' and leader's oversight is not always effective. Monitoring systems do not always identify areas for development. The registered manager has not met the previous requirements from the last inspection. Leadership and management roles and responsibilities are not clearly defined. As a result, the responsible individual does not have full oversight of the home, which limits their ability to provide effective leadership and accountability.

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— 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; 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 premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(iii)(v)(b)(c)(d)) This relates specifically to the registered manager's responsibility to ensure that day-to-day care is arranged to keep children safe through effective risk assessment, supervision and safe routines. The premises must also be regularly assessed and maintained to remove avoidable hazards and ensure a safe, child-friendly environment.	29 March 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	29 March 2026

promotes their welfare. 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; 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)) This relates to ensuring that staff receive training aligned to children’s needs; that the registered manager promptly reviews incidents to identify learning; and that strong monitoring systems are in place to oversee the quality of care and maintenance of the home. In addition, that - supervision and appraisals for both staff and the registered manager are of a good quality to support ongoing development.	
An individual may only carry on a children’s home if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (5). A responsible individual must— satisfy the requirements in paragraph (5)(a) to (c); and have the capacity, experience and skills to supervise the management of the home, or the homes, in respect of which the responsible individual is nominated. (Regulation 26 (1)(7)(b))	26 April 2026

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure any restrictions applied to a child following behavioural incidents are reviewed and proportionate. Any consequences used to address poor behaviour should be restorative in nature, to help children recognise the impact of their behaviour on themselves, other children, the staff caring for them and the wider community. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’ page 46, paragraph 9.38)

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: SC008274

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Searchlight Care Services Ltd

Registered provider address: Marcus House, Parkhall Road, Longton, Stoke-on-Trent
ST3 5XA

Responsible individual: Denver Underwood

Registered manager: Linzi Reeves

Inspector

Joanne Humphreys, Social Care Inspector

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