

SC020151

Registered provider: Country Care Childrens Homes Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to eight children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

Children live across two homes. One is a large farmhouse in a rural location, and the other is in a local town.

The home is run by a suitably qualified manager who has been registered with Ofsted since November 2024.

At the time of the inspection, three children were living in the main house and one child was living in the other home. The inspector met and gathered feedback from three children.

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 December 2024

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: 27 February 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
27/02/2024	Full	Good
29/06/2022	Full	Outstanding
12/05/2021	Full	Outstanding
10/12/2019	Interim	Declined in effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The overall experiences and progress of children living in this home are good. Children benefit from living in a safe, secure and well-maintained environment that protects them from harm. The homes are spacious, appropriately furnished and provide ample space for children to relax and play. One home has a large outdoor area, including a swing set, which children enjoy. While the homes are welcoming, they lack personalised touches, such as displaying children's artwork or photographs. Children are supported to personalise their bedrooms according to their individual preferences.

Staff know the children exceptionally well and have strong, positive relationships with them. They prioritise building and maintaining these relationships, and demonstrate a reflective and child-centred approach to care. Even when challenges arise, staff remain focused on repairing relationships and fostering a positive, forward-looking atmosphere.

Children are happy and well cared for. Observations of interactions between staff and children, as well as feedback from the children themselves, highlight the nurturing and supportive environment provided by the staff team. Children describe having good relationships with staff, and it is evident that they feel safe and comfortable in their surroundings.

Staff are proactive in supporting children to maintain relationships with people who are important to them. This includes promoting and facilitating positive time with family members. Staff go above and beyond to ensure that family time is meaningful and well supported.

Since the last inspection, one child successfully moved back to live with their parent. This was a well-planned and managed transition, resulting in a highly positive outcome for the child and their family. Another child left the home in an unplanned manner following notice being served. Although this move was not ideal, staff worked closely with the local authority to try to support the child during this process. The welfare and well-being of all children remain at the forefront of practice. Staff are mindful of the needs and feelings of other children in the home, ensuring that their experiences and progress are not adversely affected.

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

The home provides a generally safe and supportive environment for children, with a clear focus on their welfare and protection. Staff understand the importance of safeguarding and demonstrate a commitment to managing risk effectively.

The home has experienced a challenging period, during which there have been multiple incidents involving assaults on staff by children. There have also been occasions where physical restraint has been used. These incidents are managed in line with the home's

behaviour management policy, and the use of restraint is risk assessed and appears proportionate. All staff are appropriately trained in the use of physical restraint, ensuring that they can act safely and appropriately during such situations.

However, children's views following incidents of physical restraint are not consistently recorded. This means that the child's voice is not fully captured in these records, limiting the opportunity to learn from their experiences. Additionally, some incident records lack detail. The manager recognises this shortfall and has taken steps to address it, including creating plans for further training to improve the quality of recording.

The home has a clear and effective approach to managing missing-from-home episodes. When children go missing, staff act swiftly and appropriately. They actively search for the children and notify relevant professionals. Following such incidents, staff take time to reflect with the children and among themselves, focusing on what occurred and identifying ways to support children more effectively in the future.

The quality of individual risk assessments is variable. While some risk assessments are thorough and provide a detailed understanding of children's needs, others require improvement. For example, one child's risk assessment was not updated following their involvement in a serious incident, and another assessment lacked key information that would have supported staff in managing specific risks.

Staff's understanding of localised risks requires further development. Staff do not fully identify potential risks to children in the local area, and there is no evidence of consultation with external agencies to inform the locality risk assessment document.

Despite these areas for improvement, the staff team demonstrates a strong commitment to protecting children and reflecting on practice to ensure their safety and well-being. Plans are in place to address identified weaknesses and strengthen safeguarding practices further.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is led by a passionate and committed manager who demonstrates a strong dedication to the children and the staff team. The manager is approachable and makes herself consistently available, which contributes to the smooth running of the home. She has a clear understanding of the team's strengths and areas for development, with robust plans in place to upskill staff and support their professional growth.

Staff's feedback about the leadership and management of the home is overwhelmingly positive. Staff feel well supported in their roles and demonstrate a thorough understanding of children's care, educational needs and risk management. They speak with enthusiasm about their work, showing genuine care for the children.

Professionals and family members also speak highly of the leadership and staff team. One professional described the home as 'the best residential home I have ever worked with'. Family members echoed this praise, describing the staff and manager as

approachable and committed to the children's well-being. One parent commented, 'I really appreciate all the staff; they have been great. They update me every time, they always get back to me and I can't thank them enough.'

The staff team is encouraged to reflect on their practice and learn from incidents, which is a clear strength of the home. Reflective practice is embedded within the team, ensuring that staff continually strive to improve outcomes for children. Staff benefit from regular team discussions, handovers and therapeutic input, which enhance their ability to meet children's complex needs.

However, there are shortfalls in the supervision of staff. While the home offers strong support through team meetings and therapeutic consultation, staff are not consistently supervised in line with the home's policy. One staff member experienced significant gaps in supervision, during which they would have benefited from additional support. The manager recognises the need to ensure that all staff receive individualised and timely supervision to complement the wider support already in place.

Despite this, leaders and managers are reflective and committed to addressing these shortfalls. Their strong focus on children's well-being and staff development ensures that the home continues to deliver good-quality care and positive outcomes for children.

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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)) This specifically relates to ensuring that risk assessments are updated in line with the needs of the child.	12 February 2025
The registered person must ensure that all employees— receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(b))	12 February 2025
The registered person must review the appropriateness and suitability of the location of the premises used for the purposes of the children's home at least once in each calendar year taking into account the requirement in regulation 12(2)(c) (the protection of children standard). When conducting the review, the registered person must consult, and take into account the views of, each relevant person. (Regulation 46 (1) (2))	12 February 2025

Recommendations

- The registered person must ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. Staff should record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third-party information. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)
- The registered person should ensure that any child who has been restrained is given the opportunity express their feelings about their experience of the restraint as soon as is practicable, ideally within 24 hours of the restraint incident, taking the age of the child and the circumstances of the restraint into account. In some cases, children may need longer to work through their feelings, so a record that the child has talked about their feelings should be made no longer than five days after the incident of restraint (regulation 35(3)(c)). Children should be encouraged to add their views and comments to the record of restraint. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 50, paragraph 9.60)

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: SC020151

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Country Care Childrens Homes Ltd

Registered provider address: The Meadows, Beech Lane, Dove Holes, Buxton, Derbyshire SK17 8DJ

Responsible individual: Rachel Dowle

Registered manager: Rachel Wain

Inspector

Lauren Barwell, Social Care Regulatory Inspector

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