

SC020151

Registered provider: Country Care Childrens Homes Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is registered to provide care 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 manager registered with Ofsted in 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 two children and gathered feedback from them.

Inspection dates: 22 and 23 July 2025

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: 10 December 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
10/12/2024	Full	Good
27/02/2024	Full	Good
29/06/2022	Full	Outstanding
12/05/2021	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

Children benefit from living in a home that is spacious and furnished to a reasonable standard. Personalisation of bedrooms is encouraged, and one child was supported by staff to purchase items such as posters, cushions and a rug. This child said they were happy to have had a say in decorating their room. However, the home lacks visual displays of children's photos or achievements, which does not fully promote a homely and inclusive environment.

Children report that they feel safe and have positive relationships with staff. One child commented, 'I love it here,' and spoke warmly of the support they receive. While these relationships are a strength of the home, the wider experiences of children are inconsistent.

Children's admissions to the home are not always well planned or risk assessed. Three children were admitted in quick succession without a clear assessment of the potential impact on residing children or each other. In one instance, there was insufficient consideration of the risks associated with admitting a male child to an all-female home. This resulted in a serious safeguarding incident in which two children were not adequately protected. These shortfalls in planning and assessment compromise children's safety and well-being.

Staff undertake independence work with children, including supporting them to complete qualifications related to skills, such as budgeting and cooking. This helps to prepare children for adulthood. One child is due to move to a semi-independent placement in line with their wishes and is being supported well in this transition.

Children's experiences of moving on from the home are mixed. Some children have transitioned positively into semi-independence or have returned to family care. However, for others, the endings have been less well managed. One child left the home in crisis without a suitable placement being identified until the final day of their notice period. Although this child was able to say goodbye to staff, the planning was reactive rather than proactive. Another child was unable to return to the home to collect their belongings following an arrest, due to bail conditions. As a result, they were moved out of area and away from important people in their life. The move was unplanned and abrupt, offering no opportunity for a meaningful goodbye. This lack of closure represented an undignified end to their placement and is likely to have had a significant emotional impact on the child.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

Risk assessments require improvement. While they are in place for all children, they often lack the necessary detail to guide staff in how to respond to known and emerging risks. There is insufficient clarity regarding the specific actions staff must take to safeguard children in particular situations. This has led to inconsistency in staff responses and a lack of accountability when safeguarding concerns arise. For example, where a known risk about nighttime movement exists, staff have failed to record when door alarms have been triggered, resulting in a lack of oversight and monitoring of children potentially entering each other's bedrooms.

In addition to this, key interactions that occur at night between staff and children are not routinely recorded. These unrecorded conversations could include valuable information that may help identify concerns or highlight changes in behaviour. The absence of detailed night logs reflects a missed opportunity to assess potential safeguarding issues and provide joined-up care. This lack of thorough documentation undermines the home's ability to maintain consistent safeguarding practices and compromises children's welfare.

Incident reports are routinely completed; however, they demonstrate that staff do not always follow risk assessments or escalate concerns appropriately. For example, a child returned to the home intoxicated on more than one occasion, but staff did not seek medical advice, contrary to expectations outlined in their risk assessment. There have also been occasions when children have shared safeguarding information with staff, and no clear or timely action has been taken. This inconsistent response suggests that staff do not always recognise the seriousness of disclosures or take the necessary steps to protect children effectively.

Physical interventions are rare and used only when necessary. When they do occur, they are managed appropriately, with comprehensive recording and reflective debriefs. This helps to ensure that such interventions are proportionate and used safely. The staff team demonstrates a calm and measured approach when managing behaviour, which reduces the need for physical intervention.

One child has experienced a period of significant crisis, during which there was a high number of missing-from-home episodes. Throughout this challenging time, staff responded with commitment and professionalism. They consistently followed agreed procedures, including notifying the police, informing relevant professionals and actively searching for the child. There is strong evidence of collaborative working with external agencies, demonstrating a coordinated and child-focused approach. Despite their efforts to support and stabilise the situation, the child ultimately had to move for their own safety.

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

The manager is clearly committed to achieving positive outcomes for children and brings a long-standing history of working at the home. Although she has only recently become registered, her passion and knowledge of the home are evident. However, there remain areas of development in her leadership practice. In particular, the processes around assessing the suitability of new admissions have not been sufficiently robust. This has led to placements being made without fully considering the impact on the existing group of children, which has contributed to incidents that could have been avoided with more careful planning.

Staff speak positively about the manager and their roles. They report feeling well supported and say they enjoy coming to work. Staff demonstrate clear commitment to the children in their care and express a strong sense of purpose in the work they do. While this positive culture is evident, it is not consistently underpinned by strong oversight or development systems from the leadership team.

The home has established effective links with external professionals. Communication with social workers and other agencies is generally strong. Professionals describe the manager and staff as knowledgeable, approachable and responsive. One social worker spoke positively of the collaborative approach the team had taken to support a child during a period of crisis. This professional engagement contributes to multi-agency planning, although stronger internal systems would further enhance the quality of care.

Management oversight of key incidents is inconsistent. A lack of follow-up following a serious incident between children, where a staff statement has yet to be provided several weeks later, demonstrates shortfalls in monitoring and accountability. This undermines the home's ability to fully evaluate incidents and learn from them. In addition, concerns about individual staff practice, including deficiencies in recording and reporting, have not been adequately addressed by leaders, which may have contributed to safeguarding risks not being identified or escalated in a timely way.

Support systems for staff require improvement, particularly in relation to supervision and oversight. Supervision sessions are not being held consistently, especially for newer or less-experienced staff, and where they do occur, there is limited evidence of meaningful reflection or learning. This lack of structured support and guidance has contributed directly to poor practice and safeguarding incidents. While team meetings are held regularly, they do not consistently evidence reflective practice or facilitate learning from serious events. These shortfalls hinder staff development, weaken accountability, and ultimately compromise the quality and safety of care provided to 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 relates to ensuring that risk assessments are up to date and reflect all current risks for the child.	24 September 2025
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b)) This specifically relates to ensuring that children who come to live at the home are adequately risk assessed against the needs of the children already living in the home, and that when a child leaves the home this is a positive experience for them.	24 September 2025
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	24 September 2025

promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home’s statement of purpose; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(h)) This relates to ensuring there is adequate oversight of the home to ensure it is meeting the needs of each child and that there are clear systems in place to monitor and review the quality of care the home is providing.	
The registered person must ensure that all employees— receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(b)) This specifically relates to ensuring that all staff members receive regular supervision to support learning and development.	24 September 2025

Recommendation

- The registered person should 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)

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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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

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