

SC039087

Registered provider: Care Afloat Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is operated by a private organisation. Accommodation is provided on a narrowboat that travels the canal network.

The home is registered to care for one child who may experience emotional and behavioural difficulties.

At the time of inspection, one child was living in the home. The child spoke to the inspector about their experiences of living in the home.

The manager registered with Ofsted in November 2017.

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 December 2025

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: 5 November 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
05/11/2024	Full	Good
19/12/2023	Full	Good
19/07/2022	Full	Good
09/03/2020	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Since the last inspection, one child has been supported to move into a semi-independent provision and one child has been positively welcomed into the home. When supporting a child to move in or out, staff listen to the child's views, wishes and feelings and help them to prepare for change in the least-disruptive way possible.

Staff build trusting relationships with the child and ensure that they have multiple opportunities to share their views. Staff spend time getting to know the child, supporting their hobbies and interests and learning the best way to engage the child in meaningful work and discussions. The child also has access to a feedback app, which gives them another opportunity to share their views and say what is working well or how they would like things to change.

Staff have encouraged and supported the child to make significant progress in their education. The child is now attending and engaging in their schooling after a significant period of absence. One teacher said, 'Staff have been brilliant in terms of their support and helping to build [name of the child's] relationship with school staff after a long absence.'

Staff understand the importance of familial relationships and, where appropriate, ensure that the child can see and maintain positive relationships with people who are important to them. Staff regularly communicate with children's family members and invite them to spend time at the boat and with the child. Staff include family members in decision-making, where able, and keep family members updated with any significant changes impacting the child.

The home is in the form of a narrowboat and travels to pre-assessed locations across the canal network. The child says that they like living on the boat and that they very much like their bedroom. However, some communal areas of the boat look worn and tired and need to be decorated, furnished and maintained to a higher standard.

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

Staff know the child's risks well and know how to respond to keep the child safe. Staff's knowledge is supported by clear and up-to-date risk assessments that provide strategies for staff to follow. As a result, incidents in the home are well managed and staff's responses are consistently in line with the child's risk and behaviour management plans.

Responses to the child being missing from the home have improved and staff know what to do when a child is missing from their care. When a child has been missing, staff have continued to look for them and support them to return safely home. Other significant incidents are also well managed, and the child's views are always sought. However, the recordings of incidents are not always consistently detailed and they lack clarity.

There has been one incident of physical intervention used in the home, which was proportionate in keeping the child safe. The child was spoken to and their views clearly recorded. However, the recording of the actual intervention used is not detailed clearly enough to support thorough evaluation and effective review.

Consequences are rarely used, but they are fair and proportionate when given. Staff use incentives to promote positive behaviour and include the child in decision-making around what an incentive may be when a chosen target or goal is achieved.

The child's health needs are well known and understood by staff, who have received significant support and training around the child's additional health need. Staff have included the child in their training in an age-appropriate way, ensuring that the child is learning how to meet their own health needs and requirements. The child is encouraged to make healthy choices, learning about good nutrition and how this impacts their health. However, on one occasion, the manager did not notify Ofsted that the child was taken to hospital for medical intervention.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home has a registered manager who is suitably experienced and qualified. She is supported by a deputy manager and an experienced staff team who shares similar values and provides consistent nurture and care. The manager is present and available for both the child and staff, ensuring that there is an open and supportive culture in the home.

Staff say that the manager is approachable, knowledgeable and supportive. They say that they have lots of development opportunities and that learning is promoted in the home. Supervisions are regular, practice focused and reflective. Supervisions provide staff with an opportunity to develop their practice, focus on areas for learning and address any concerns that they might have. Supervisions are well recorded and targets are clear, actionable and regularly reviewed.

Team meetings are well attended. They are used to ensure that staff practice is consistent and provides the child with warm, nurturing care that effectively keeps them safe and enables them to progress. Staff are asked to contribute to the agenda and can provide feedback prior to a team meeting so that any concerns or gripes can be swiftly addressed as a team. This supports a cohesive and open environment.

The manager has effective systems in place that support consistent and reflective review of the home and any incidents that may occur. Managerial oversight of the home is used to improve and develop staff practice to ensure that the child receives a positive experience of living in the home. The manager uses her oversight to develop key areas for staff to work with the child, maintaining consistent progress across the most important aspects of the child's life and providing them with safe and nurturing care.

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 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— 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. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that any restraint is accurately and clearly recorded in full detail, allowing for effective review and evaluation.	12 February 2026

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff consistently record incidents in a clear and accurate manner. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

- The registered person should ensure that all serious incidents are notified to Ofsted via regulation 40. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 63, paragraph 14.10)
- The registered person should ensure that the home is maintained to a high standard and provides a warm, homely environment for children. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

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: SC039087

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Care Afloat Ltd

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

Responsible individual: Michael Fletcher

Registered manager: Claire Russell

Inspector

Justina Henry, Social Care Inspector

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