

SC064557

Registered provider: 4D Care Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately owned home is registered to provide education and residential care for up to 6 children who may have experienced neglect, abuse or trauma that has left them vulnerable.

There were 3 children living at the home at the time of inspection. The inspectors spoke to all of the children.

There is a school on the same site. The inspectors only inspected the social care provision on this site.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since 2009.

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 April 2026

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	inadequate
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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: 18 December 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: inadequate

Enforcement action since last inspection:

Following a full inspection in December 2025, Ofsted served compliance notices in relation to the protection of children and the leadership and management of the home. On 27 January 2026, Ofsted carried out a monitoring visit to review the provider's progress in meeting the steps set out in the compliance notices. At that visit, not all the steps in the compliance notices had been met, therefore compliance notices in relation to the protection of children and the leadership and management of the home were reissued.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/12/2025	Full	Inadequate
20/08/2024	Full	Good
28/02/2024	Full	Good
13/02/2023	Full	Good

Summary of findings

Progress has been made since the last inspection. However, development is required to ensure this is effective and embedded in practice. Not all steps in the compliance notices have been met, but due to sufficient progress these will not be reissued.

There are shortfalls in management oversight, particularly in identifying safeguarding concerns. An allegation made by a child was not fully explored. Further exploration is also required by managers following physical interventions.

Children are positive about the home and take part in a range of activities that they enjoy.

Inspection judgements

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

The overall judgement is impacted by shortfalls in leadership and management and the help and protection of children. The children all appear settled and have positive relationships with staff.

Consequences are not always proportionate. One child received a high-value financial consequence. This had been reviewed by a manager and no concerns identified. However, the consequence was disproportionate. During inspection, a senior manager confirmed the child would not have to pay that amount of money. Another child received a consequence following them buying hair dye, which was not permitted. The child had been supervised by a staff member when buying this product. This means the child received a consequence despite a staff member allowing the purchase.

Staff speak to children about their vulnerabilities. Staff mostly support children to understand the risks and possible outcomes of these. However, for one child with concerns for their emotional wellbeing, no additional support or guidance has been sought. This means it is unclear whether the child is being supported effectively and if staff have the skills to support their needs.

Staff support children's interests. One child attends a local music studio and has a drumkit in their bedroom. Another child visited a waterfall which they are interested in. An empty bedroom has been turned into a games room for the children to enjoy and they speak positively about this. Another bedroom has been turned into a dressing room for a child who enjoys fashion. This shows that staff adapt to meet children's interests and needs.

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

Physical interventions do not take place regularly. However, during one incident, a staff member blocked a child from leaving a room. This action was not recorded as a physical intervention. This means there is not a clear record of all physical interventions used. During this same incident, the record does not clearly detail why other less restrictive measures were not used. The child said they were going to harm themselves with a broken mug. There were multiple staff members present, and they restrained the child rather than removing the broken mug. The management oversight has not considered whether the restraint was the least restrictive option. This could mean children are being restrained when it is not proportionate or necessary.

Following the same restraint, the child made an allegation. The manager conducted some exploration about the allegation, but this is not fully documented. There is no recorded consideration about whether a referral to the local authority designated officer (LADO) was required. A retrospective LADO referral was made during the inspection, and this concern is now being investigated. The incident involved a senior manager. The registered manager completed the management oversight, but good practice would be for someone more senior to review incidents.

Records of incidents are not clearly recorded. One child is known to attempt to start fires. These attempts are not recorded as incidents. Therefore, it is difficult to determine how extensive this concern is. There has, however, been an improvement in fire safety and all actions from the fire risk assessment have now been completed.

A concern was raised about a child going into another child's bedroom. There was a 2-day delay in the staff member reporting this concern. However, one of the children no longer lives at the home, which meant the risk was lowered. Managers explored the concern but there is limited evidence to show how they explored this. This means it is not possible to tell whether this was fully explored and any learning identified. Following the concern, changes were made to waking night staff practice allowing better monitoring of children at night.

Staff supported a child when they made a disclosure. Appropriate actions were taken to support the child and refer this matter to the appropriate professionals. This is now subject to a police investigation which is ongoing. Disclosure and Barring Service referrals have been made appropriately for previous staff members who no longer work at the home but were named in the disclosure.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

Managers have not ensured that staff have completed relevant training to meet the needs of the children. One child is at risk of exploitation. Exploitation is covered within the safeguarding training, but staff have not completed specific training about this.

Another child struggles with their mental health and 4 staff have not completed the self-harm training, which incorporates mental health.

Two staff members have not completed their level 3 qualification within the required time frame. Managers have implemented an action plan for these qualifications to be completed and discuss these in supervision sessions. However, there are not always clear reasons recorded as to why there is a delay and staff are working at the home without the required qualification.

A new management evaluation form is used following incidents or safeguarding concerns. This is still being embedded to ensure that all concerns are fully identified and explored. However, the concern about an allegation not being fully explored and the least restrictive physical intervention option not being used were not identified by the manager.

Supervision sessions take place regularly and are detailed. The supervision sessions include discussions about safeguarding, the children and incidents. Staff have the opportunity to discuss their practice and any concerns. Two staff are out of timescale for their appraisals. The delay is due to the staff members not completing their part of the paperwork. While this is a minimal delay currently, managers have not provided a deadline to the staff members for when they need to submit their appraisal documents.

Three requirements have been met regarding fire safety, notifications to Ofsted and the quality of care report. Four requirements have been restated. This shows that while progress has been made, it is limited and not achieved in all areas.

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— help each child to understand how to keep safe; 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; and take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and 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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(ii)(iii)(v)(vi)(b)) This requirement has been restated.	12 June 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— 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;	12 June 2026

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)(b) (2)(c)(f)(h)) This requirement has been restated.	
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 any methods used, or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure; the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and 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 signed the record to confirm it is accurate. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(v)(vii)(b)(ii)) In particular, ensure that restraint records clearly detail the length of the restraint and that they have been reviewed to ensure the least restrictive method was used. This requirement has been restated.	12 June 2026
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The requirements are that— the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform;	12 June 2026

For the purposes of paragraph (3)(b), an individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification if, by the relevant date, the individual has attained—

the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (England) (“the Level 3 Diploma”); or

a qualification which the registered person considers to be equivalent to the Level 3 Diploma.

The relevant date is—

in the case of an individual who starts working in a care role in a home after 1st April 2014, the date which falls 2 years after the date on which the individual started working in a care role in a home. (Regulation 32 (1) (3)(b) (4)(a)(b) (5)(a))

This requirement has been restated.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that consequences used are proportionate and are evaluated to ensure they were effective. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 46, paragraph 9.38)
- The registered person should ensure that all staff have their performance and fitness to carry out their role formally appraised at least once annually. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 61, paragraph 13.5)

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: SC064557

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: 4D Care Ltd

Registered provider address: 8a New Road, Mepal, Ely, Cambridgeshire CB6 2AP

Responsible individual: Michael Coles

Registered manager: Andrew Bradley

Inspectors

Leanne Lyon, Social Care Inspector

Naomi Starbuck, Social Care Inspector

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