

SC065780

Registered provider: Milestones Care Homes Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned and managed by a private company. It provides care for up to three children who may experience social and/or emotional difficulties.

At the time of this inspection, three children were living at the home.

The manager has been in post since 8 September 2025. She is in the process of applying to register with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 16 and 17 September 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: 23 April 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
23/04/2024	Full	Requires improvement to be good
03/05/2023	Full	Good
26/07/2022	Full	Good
05/01/2022	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

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

One child living at the home spoke to the inspector.

Since the last inspection, no children have moved into or out of the home. This has provided a level of stability and consistency for children. Additionally, despite recent changes in the management structure, there has been a stable staff team. A professional said, 'Core members have always been the same. They know [name of child] inside and out.'

Children have personalised their bedrooms, and their achievements and photos are proudly displayed throughout the home. This provides children with a strong sense of belonging. However, the overall maintenance of the property remains a concern. For instance, the flooring on the ground level is chipped, and the walls need repair and attention.

Children receive support for their physical and emotional health. They are encouraged to engage with external agencies that offer professional guidance to promote emotional well-being. However, there has been a delay in obtaining medical advice for a child who has not consistently taken their prescribed medication.

All the children regularly attend education provisions. This is supported by staff who have discussions with school staff regarding any concerns. One teacher reported that staff are proactive and responsive to the child's needs. Staff show interest in children's education and provide positive praise for any awards they receive.

Staff encourage children to spend time with their friends, families and others who are important to them, as outlined in their plans. A social worker said, '[Name of child] is supported to connect with friends.' This helps children maintain important relationships and supports their sense of identity.

Children participate in extra-curricular activities. Staff have identified activities and groups that are of interest to children in the local community. One child has joined a local football team, and another attends a local youth club. Children have also previously been involved in looked-after children participation events. This helps children to develop confidence in social settings.

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

Children can identify someone to speak to if they have any concerns. One child said they know how to make a complaint. Children have developed relationships with key core

staff members. One staff member stated, 'We know the children's personalities and their risks. We always stop to think about their circumstances.'

On one occasion, a child's whereabouts were unknown. Due to staffing arrangements at the time, there were also delays in the staff's efforts to search for and locate the child. Furthermore, staff do not have clear guidance to follow if a child goes missing. This is a missed opportunity to minimise risks.

Staff carry out room searches when there is an identified need. However, children's risks are not always considered when ensuring that the home environment is safe. For example, cords were present on blinds, despite children having ligature risks in the home. Action was taken during the inspection to remove them.

A social worker expressed that safety planning around children spending time with friends is positive. The social worker said this is managed well by staff. Staff will call children and their friends' parents to check on the children's welfare and well-being. This ensures that children are safe.

Staff have worked with external agencies to identify the best responses to a child when they are upset. A social worker said, 'Staff took this information on board, and, as a result, the child felt heard.' The manager has requested further bespoke training from the agency for relevant staff. However, for some staff, mandatory training has expired in key areas. The manager is aware of this shortfall.

Safer recruitment procedures are not consistently adhered to, which compromises the manager's ability to ensure that individuals are suitable to work with children. As a result, children's safety may be placed at risk.

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

The manager has been in post for a short length of time. The manager is new to the role but is dedicated to improving the quality of care that children receive. Staff said that they are adapting to the change in management. A staff member said, 'Good changes are happening.' However, these changes are not embedded in practice.

When incidents have occurred, there has not always been thorough management oversight. Opportunities to reflect on staff practice have been missed. This limits the ability to evaluate the quality of care that children receive. Additionally, there has been a lack of feedback received from staff, external professionals and children in the quality of care report.

Supervision sessions and team meetings were being held regularly. However, staff did not receive supervision in the short period when no manager was in post. New supervision and team meeting tools have been developed but are not currently used in practice. This affects the support that staff receive and limits the manager's ability to monitor staff's skills and ensure that they have a full understanding of children's needs.

When a significant incident occurs, appropriate action is taken to keep children safe. The manager notifies the local authority and parents where appropriate. However, a clear system is not in place to ensure that the regulator is always notified. This limits the regulators oversight and prevents full transparency.

Leaders are aware of the shortfalls and have arrangements in place to improve the leadership and management of the home. There is a support plan in place for the newly recruited manager. This includes support from another manager employed by the provider. A consultant has also been commissioned to provide support.

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; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and 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)(i)(v)(vi)(d)) The registered person must ensure that staff have clear guidance to follow when a child's whereabouts are unknown. Staff must actively search known areas without delay. The registered person must ensure that children's risks are considered in respect of the home environment. The registered person must fully explore the need for risk assessments following recruitment processes identifying any previous concerns.	1 October 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—	1 October 2025

helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and 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; demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on— research and developments in relation to the ways in which the needs of children are best met; and feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received; and 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)(g)(i)(ii)(h)) The registered person must ensure that staff have appropriate supervision and training. In particular, the registered person must ensure that they have effective monitoring systems in place. The registered person must ensure that there is appropriate staffing to meet children's needs.	
The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential.	1 October 2025

In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— meet the needs of each child; and enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(i)(ii)) The registered person must ensure that the home is decorated to a good standard throughout. This requirement was raised at the last inspection and is restated.	
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— a child is involved in or subject to, or is suspected of being involved in or subject to, sexual exploitation; an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious; there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there; a child protection enquiry involving a child— is instigated; or concludes (in which case, the notification must include the outcome of the child protection enquiry); or there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. A notification made under this regulation— must include details of— the matter;	1 October 2025

the other persons, bodies or organisations (if any) who or which have been notified; and

any actions taken by the registered person as a result of the matter; and

must be made or confirmed in writing.

(Regulation 40 (4)(a)(b)(c)(d)(i)(ii)(e) (5)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(b))

The registered person must notify the regulator of any serious incidents that occur.

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: SC065780

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Milestones Care Homes Limited

Registered provider address: 5 Fletcher Close, Wirral, Cheshire CH49 5PH

Responsible individual: Mark Armstrong

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Kitty Wiper, Social Care Inspector

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