

SC065780

Registered provider: Milestones Care Homes Limited

Assurance 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.

The manager registered with Ofsted in September 2024.

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

Inspection date: 25 February 2025

Date of last inspection: 23 April 2024

Judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Information about this inspection

At this inspection, the inspector evaluated:

- the care of children
- the safety of children
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers.

The inspector has looked closely at the experiences and progress of children, using the social care common inspection framework. This assurance 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'.

Findings from the inspection

We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance inspection.

The children live in a warm and welcoming environment that promotes a sense of stability and belonging. Photos of the children are displayed on the walls, and board games are available to play. This contributes to the homely environment. However, some parts of the home show signs of wear, and the front porch appears neglected.

Observations indicate that children have positive relationships with staff. The staff provide emotional support and encouragement, which creates a nurturing space where children feel comfortable expressing themselves. Children say that they feel listened to and accepted by staff. One social worker said that the child has 'so much support here' and they can be themselves.

Staff regularly discuss a wide range of topics with children. Topics are revisited to reinforce learning and provide ongoing support tailored to the children's individual needs. Staff regularly have meaningful conversations with children. This provides children with an opportunity to express their thoughts and talk about issues that matter to them. This is a real strength of the staff team.

Staff play an important role in helping children develop the skills needed to manage their emotions effectively. Positive behaviour is consistently promoted. Staff use effective de-escalation techniques, and physical intervention has not been used. This helps to create a positive environment where children can flourish.

Risks for each child have reduced while living in the home. Risk assessments are detailed and outline potential risks and mitigation strategies. They provide clear guidance on managing risks. Staff have taken appropriate actions in response to incidents. Their responses reflect the guidance provided in the children's risk assessments and behaviour support plans.

Incident records are detailed and capture essential information. The language used in the records has improved since the last inspection and is now more child friendly. There is management oversight of incidents. However, management's evaluation of what happened and the actions taken is brief. This does not facilitate effective learning from incidents to improve practice.

Searches of bedrooms are carried out sensitively by staff. All searches are recorded appropriately. The reasons for the search are clear, and there is management oversight.

Safer recruitment practice is not always followed for new staff working in the home. One new member of staff worked a full shift without having undergone all the

relevant checks. This does not help to maintain a safe and positive environment where children are protected from harm.

Regular fire drills take place, and the records detail who is present. The fire extinguishers have been serviced. However, the fire risk assessment has not been updated since the last inspection.

The home is managed by a suitably qualified registered manager. The manager knows the children extremely well and advocates for what is in their best interests. Staff describe the manager as 'supportive' and say they enjoy working in the home.

There have been some staff changes since the last inspection, and there is no deputy manager in post. The manager and staff work hard to cover the gaps in staff rosters; however, this means they are working long hours. The managerial arrangements during the period when the manager is not in the home are not fully embedded.

Since the last inspection, the manager and staff have completed training specific to the children's needs. For example, they have received training on topics such as self-harm, gender diversity, and smoking.

The manager is still not receiving regular supervision sessions. This means that she is not being provided with an opportunity to develop her knowledge, skills and competence through regular support with another professional so that the service can be improved. The manager has not had an appraisal in her new role.

Since the last inspection, the manager has worked hard to address the requirements and recommendations made. However, shortfalls remain in some areas, and these will be reviewed at the next inspection.

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

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 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. 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)) In particular, ensure that the home is decorated to a good standard throughout. All appliances must be maintained to a good standard, and any repair work must be carried out in a timely manner. This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	30 April 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 promotes their welfare.	30 April 2025

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; ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for 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; 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)(d)(f)(h)) In particular, ensure that there are appropriate managerial arrangements in place during periods when the registered manager is not in the home. In particular, ensure that there is effective management oversight to evaluate the quality of care being provided and identify areas of learning to make continuous improvements. This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	
If the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005(a) applies to the home— paragraph (1) does not apply; and the registered person must ensure that the requirements of that Order and any regulations made under it, except for article 23 (duties of employees), are complied with in respect of the home. (Regulation 25 (2)) In particular, ensure that there is an up-to-date fire risk assessment that is carried out by a suitably qualified person.	30 April 2025
The registered manager must undertake such continuing professional development as is necessary to ensure that the registered manager has the skills needed for managing the home. (Regulation 29 (4))	30 April 2025

In particular, ensure that the registered manager is provided with regular supervision and appraisals to ensure that they have the skills to provide clear and effective leadership to the staff team. This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The registered person may only— employ an individual to work at the children's home; or if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home, if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). The requirements are that— the individual is of integrity and good character; the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform; the individual is mentally and physically fit for the purposes of the work that the individual is to perform; and full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3)(a)(b)(c)(d)) In particular, ensure that all relevant checks are carried out before a member of staff starts working a full shift in the home.	30 April 2025

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: Elizabeth Griffin

Inspector

Dawn Walker, Social Care Regulatory Inspector

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