

SC386258

Registered provider: Consensus Support Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately run home provides care for up to 11 children with autism and learning disabilities.

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

The manager is suitably qualified and has been registered with Ofsted since 2015.

Inspection dates: 25 and 26 June 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: 3 December 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
03/12/2024	Full	Requires improvement to be good
04/10/2023	Full	Good
14/02/2023	Full	Good
02/02/2022	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The inspectors spent time with all the children. This included individual discussions and participation in children's group activities and daily routines.

Since the last inspection, no children have moved in. Currently, there are detailed plans for three children to move onto adult services. Their moves are being supported by staff at a pace that is comfortable for each child.

Children have positive experiences and make measured progress from their starting points. Staff provide individualised care to meet children's needs. Parents highlighted the positive difference the staff's support has made to children's social and emotional development.

Staff support children's education and attainment well. Each child has an educational provision, and most children attend school full time. One child attends part-time alternative provision, and one child has online learning at the home. Staff maintain consistent and familiar routines to support children's good attendance. Staff ensure there are effective levels of communication with school staff to ensure any gaps in learning are reduced.

Staff regularly review children's placement plans. Children's daily routines, preferences and health needs are carefully considered. Children's parents and social workers have identified the strength in the support provided by staff to help children with their complex health needs.

Staff ensure that children's views and wishes are explored and captured. Children can influence their daily routines and activities through one-to-one feedback sessions with staff. Four of the children have advocates. For children who do not currently have an advocate, these services are being explored. The manager is liaising with social workers and challenging advocacy providers when there are delays in these services being provided.

Children take part in a wide range of activities that meet their interests. These include visits to London city attractions and football stadiums. One child attends weekly rock-climbing sessions and other children go swimming. Staff ensure that important cultural events and birthdays are celebrated with children.

The home is generally well decorated and appointed to meet children's individual needs. Bedrooms are personalised to reflect children's preferences. Leaders and managers ensure regular maintenance keeps the home in good decorative condition. However, they have not considered keeping a hoist and a nursing point call switch in a child's bedroom that the child does not need.

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

Staff are nurturing and dedicated to children's care. Children provided good feedback about staff and said that they enjoy spending time with them. Staff have a deep understanding of children's additional learning needs and vulnerabilities. The strength of their relationships with children are an important protective factor in children's safety.

Parents and social workers said that there are good levels of communication and collaborative working with staff. They feel that the staff prioritise children's best interests and safety.

Children's risk assessments and behaviour support strategies are detailed, regularly updated and followed by staff. This has provided staff with a range of personalised strategies to support children when they are distressed. As a result, children learn how to manage their emotions over time.

Staff are alert to any markings or bruising found on children. These concerns are reported to leaders and managers who review and explore the potential cause and share these findings with social workers. This process supports a multi-agency approach to safeguard children.

Staff have a good awareness of potential triggers to children's anxiety and use de-escalation strategies to respond to difficult incidents. When physical interventions have been necessary, these are proportionate and used to reduce the risk of harm. However, the debriefs with the staff are minimal or absent. Children's views are not consistently obtained using their preferred communication systems. This can hinder the effectiveness of the manager's review and learning from these interventions.

There are appropriate safeguarding procedures. Staff have attended safeguarding training. However, on one occasion, two staff members did not report safeguarding concerns in line with these procedures. This has meant that leaders and managers have been unable to take immediate action to provide the necessary safeguards. Leaders and managers are investigating this. However, further work is needed to increase staff's confidence in following the established procedures.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

A qualified and highly experienced manager is supported by a skilled deputy manager and a team of senior support staff. Leaders and managers are energised and child focused. Their commitment to provide good-quality experiences for children is reflected in the care.

Staff speak highly of leaders and managers and say that they are well supported. Staff are flexible and motivated about their work. There are high levels of staff retention. This means that the children experience stability and receive good continuity of care.

Staff team meetings prioritise the needs of children and are well attended. Staff receive regular and in-depth supervision sessions to reflect on their practice. Staff's annual appraisals include insightful feedback on their performance. There are ample opportunities for staff to reflect on their practice and consider their professional development opportunities.

Leaders and managers monitoring systems are generally effective. Previous issues in the electronic recording system have been resolved. Children's case records are detailed and clear. Leaders and managers have recently improved their day-to-day analysis and review. This includes monitoring children's progress in accordance with their unified quality-of-life goals.

Staff attend well-developed training that equips them with the skills and understanding to meet the children's individual needs.

Visits by an independent person provide an appropriate level of objectivity to influence improvements in care. However, recently the independent person has not contacted parents frequently enough. The independent person visits when most of the children are at school and therefore only a small proportion of children's views are sought. Consequently, the additional safeguards intended by this form of monitoring are not always met.

Leaders and manager's six-monthly review of the quality of care was not submitted to Ofsted within the timescales required. This has reduced Ofsted's oversight of the home. Furthermore, the review does not consider and evaluate the views of staff, parents or professionals. The lack of stakeholder consultation can limit the scope of leaders and manager's understanding of the strengths and developmental areas for the home.

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— are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(vii)) This is specifically regarding staff reporting safeguarding concerns without delay.	08 August 2025
The registered person must ensure that— 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 spoken to the user about the measure; and within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(b)(i) (c))	08 August 2025
The registered person must— supply to HMCI a copy of the quality of care review report within 28 days of the date on which the quality of care review is completed; and The system referred to in paragraph (2) must provide for ascertaining and considering the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff. (Regulation 45 (4)(a) (5))	08 August 2025

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that there is a nurturing and homely environment. Specifically, they should consider removing mobility fixtures and nursing call points if they are not required by a child. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should make best use of information from independent monitoring to ensure continuous improvement. The independent person's consultations with children should be more inclusive and parent discussions should be more frequent. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph 10.24)

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: SC386258

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Consensus Support Services Limited

Registered provider address: 3 The Courtyards Phoenix Square, Wyncolls Road,
Colchester CO4 9PE

Responsible individual: Kasia Brzyszc

Registered manager: Patricia Haley

Inspectors

Mark Anderton, Social Care Inspector
Priscilla Koroka, Social Care Inspector

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