

SC397293

Registered provider: Derby City Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home provides care for children with autism and learning disabilities.

At the time of this inspection, four children were living at the home. One child had recently moved out of the home.

The home has been without a registered manager since April 2025.

Inspectors were aware during this inspection that serious child protection concerns were being investigated by the appropriate authorities. While Ofsted does not have the power to investigate concerns of this kind, actions taken by the setting in response to the concerns were considered alongside other evidence available at the time of the inspection to inform inspectors' judgement.

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 September 2025

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	inadequate
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	inadequate
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	inadequate
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There are serious and/or widespread failures that mean children are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded and the care and experiences of children and young people are poor and they are not making progress.

Date of last inspection: 25 February 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
25/02/2025	Full	Good
13/12/2023	Full	Good
21/03/2023	Full	Good
19/05/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

Concerns about safeguarding practice at this home have led to an inadequate judgement. Given the current concerns, Ofsted has issued a notice restricting accommodation to ensure that no further children are cared for at the home. Ofsted has also issued compliance notices under regulations 6, 10, 12 and 13.

Children live in a home that is not maintained to a satisfactory standard. Children's bedrooms are not warm or welcoming spaces. They are not personalised or reflective of children's interests. One child's bedroom had an unhygienic smell; another had an ineffective window covering to block out light. Paint in the home is marked and gives spaces a worn and unclean feel. Several areas, including the large garden and shared bath, need repair. Children have not therefore been able to access these areas for several months. A smaller side garden has not been well maintained; sensory equipment had weeds growing from it; and the outdoor space only had one broken chair available for children. This is not an enjoyable space for children to spend time.

Care planning for children is not robust and lacks the required detail to plan effectively for children's moves to the home. Pre-admission risk assessments do not appropriately consider how children can safely live together or the skills staff require to meet their identified needs. As a result, difficult dynamics between children developed, and on one occasion a child pushed another child. Managers have recognised that two children's moves to the home were inappropriate and have planned for them to move out. For one child, this meant returning to a home that they had moved from only six months earlier. This represents significant change and inconsistency for children.

Children have limited opportunities for fun and exploration outside the home. Staff do not appropriately plan for children's weeks, and children therefore experience repetitive activities, such as going to the park or for drives with staff. Not all children have consistent opportunities to develop their interests or hobbies at clubs in the community. Staff do not feel confident trying new things alongside children and are not aspirational for children's experiences while living at the home.

Children's plans and documentation lack consistency. The quality of plans varies, and some lack required detail. Not all children have a clear plan that outlines their personal care needs and how staff should address them. Staff often rely on verbal instructions from colleagues about how to care for children in this way. Staff do not always record who has supported children with their personal care or how the assistance was experienced by children. Consequently, managers cannot ensure that staff provide care in accordance with their expectations. This has the potential to allow for poor or unsafe practice to become embedded.

Several children at the home do not communicate verbally. Plans do not identify children's preferred methods of communication. Staff utilise a pictorial communication

system with children, but they have not had training to use it effectively. This prevents children with disabilities from actively and meaningfully participating in decisions about their lives.

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

Children at the home engage in self-injurious behaviour. Staff are not curious about what informs children's behaviours and do not record or reflect on incidences of this nature. Staff do not use body maps effectively or regularly. Therefore, the manager and staff are unable to determine whether children's injuries are caused by themselves or others. Records do not reflect how staff have supported children when they are distressed and likely to self-injure, nor do they detail the first aid offered. Patterns and triggers for these behaviours are not understood or built into children's care plans. As a result, children continue to self-injure, and this behaviour is not declining.

There have been attempts to implement monitoring systems for one child's behaviour and health. However, they are not well understood by staff or used consistently. Consequently, they do not meaningfully contribute to care planning for this child or any required adaptations to staff practice.

Inadequate record-keeping prevents the manager from having good oversight of incidents and progress for children. When children have accidents, they are not always recorded. Involved professionals said that children are sometimes separated in the home for their safety, but no physical or restrictive interventions are recorded. Therefore, it is not possible to know that staff act in a way that ensures children's safety and promotes their well-being.

Staff cannot recognise when something more serious has occurred in the home that requires greater recording detail or oversight beyond what is written in daily logs. As a result, it is not possible to understand the specific actions of staff or how children experience their care. Serious incidents that have occurred have not been notified to the regulator. Ofsted cannot be assured that staff act in a way that is in line with children's plans and risk assessments.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

The home has not had a registered manager or deputy manager for several months. This has had a significant effect on the oversight of the home and guidance given to staff, particularly since the last inspection. Staff raised that there have been significant changes to staffing, with several agency staff being used who do not know the children well. Staff said that senior managers have not always communicated messages about the home's operations effectively. Therefore, staff morale is low.

Interim managers have said that there has been a culture among previous managers and staff that lacks transparency. Staff are not always confident about challenging each other's practices or managerial decisions that alter the operation of the home. Staff have

not received regular or good-quality supervision. This raises concerns about there being a closed culture in the home.

Leaders and managers have not used internal monitoring or auditing systems to improve the experiences of children. There has been no identifiable progress since the last inspection. Leaders and managers are aware of the shortfalls. However, despite this awareness, action taken so far has been insufficient to effect change.

An independent visitor has not consistently visited the home, as required. This means that there has not been independent oversight of children's care, particularly during a period when there had been significant changes to the management at the home.

Professionals and family members spoken to voiced serious concerns about the care offered to children. A professional said, 'The children are telling us in their behaviour how unhappy they have been; things are not as they should be.'

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; 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; manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other; 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; are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies; 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; that the effectiveness of the home's child protection policies is monitored regularly. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(viii)(b)(e))	19 October 2025

In particular, ensure that it is understood how children have sustained any bruising or injuries. Clear records must be kept of any physical intervention used with children. There must be a system for recording and reviewing children's self-injurious behaviours and accidents. Staff must understand when a more serious incident has occurred and record it effectively. Managers must have oversight to ensure staff compliance with safeguarding procedures in the home.	
*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; promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose; 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; feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(f)(ii)(h)) In particular, ensure that there are accountable management arrangements at the home. The care delivered in the home must align with the home's statement of purpose. Managers must develop processes to evaluate the quality of care at the home. Staff must receive regular and good-quality supervision.	19 October 2025
*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;	19 October 2025

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—

understand and apply the home's statement of purpose;

ensure that staff—

understand and apply the home's statement of purpose;

protect and promote each child's welfare;

treat each child with dignity and respect;

provide to children living in the home the physical necessities they need in order to live there comfortably;

provide to children personal items that are appropriate for their age and understanding;

make decisions about the day-to-day arrangements for each child, in accordance with the child's relevant plans, which give the child an appropriate degree of freedom and choice;

ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to—

meet the needs of each child;

enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home.
(Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(i)(ii)(iii)(vii)(viii)(ix)(c)(i)(ii))

In particular, ensure that steps are taken to significantly improve the condition of the home's bedrooms and garden spaces. Children must be offered and encouraged to engage in a wide range of activities. Children's preferred communication methods must be understood and used to understand their views. Staff must be trained in children's preferred communication methods.

This requirement is restated from the last inspection.

*The health and well-being standard is that—

the health and well-being needs of children are met;

19 October 2025

children receive advice, services and support in relation to their health and well-being; children are helped to lead healthy lifestyles. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff help each child to— achieve the health and well-being outcomes that are recorded in the child’s relevant plans; understand the child’s health and well-being needs and the options that are available in relation to the child’s health and well-being, in a way that is appropriate to the child’s age and understanding; understand and develop skills to promote the child’s well-being. (Regulation 10 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iv)) In particular, ensure that children have clear plans that detail their health and personal care needs. Clear records must be kept of which staff provide this care and how it is experienced by children. Records must be kept about how staff monitor and treat children’s injuries. The manager must monitor and review triggers for the children’s self-injurious behaviours.	
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	19 October 2025

there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(a)(b)(c)(d)(i)(ii)(e)) In particular, ensure that the manager identifies and notifies Ofsted when serious incidents occur at the home.	
The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month. The independent person must provide a copy of the independent person's report to— HMCI. (Regulation 44 (1) (7)(a)) In particular, ensure that an independent visitor report is received by HMCI every month.	19 October 2025

* These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

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: SC397293

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Derby City Council

Registered provider address: The Council House, Corporation Street, Derby DE1 2FS

Responsible individual: Sharon Green

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Louise Copping, Social Care Inspector
Thirza Smith, Social Care Inspector

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