

SC431192

Registered provider: Independent Living Services (North West) Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is privately owned and is registered to provide care for up to 4 children with social and emotional difficulties.

The manager registered with Ofsted in April 2025.

There were 3 children living at the home at the time of this inspection. All 3 children spoke with the inspector to share their experiences of living at the home.

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 January 2026

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: 14 January 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
14/01/2025	Full	Good
08/10/2024	Full	Inadequate
03/07/2024	Full	Inadequate
26/06/2023	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children make good progress from their starting points because of the care and support that they receive from staff. Since moving into the home, children have been able to trust staff and build positive, stable relationships. Professionals speak highly of the home and staff's understanding of the children's needs.

Children are supported to access education, although their engagement with education varies. When children do not attend school, staff ensure that there are education plans in place. One child is now attending tuition regularly and progressing well.

Although some children remain reluctant to attend health appointments, staff continue to encourage healthy routines and support both physical and emotional wellbeing. This is achieved by staff rescheduling missed appointments, consulting with nurses to explore alternative ways to meet health needs and by carrying out direct work that focuses on the importance of health care.

Children are regularly consulted and feel comfortable sharing their wishes and feelings. Their views influence daily life at the home. Children also know how to make a complaint, if this is necessary.

Staff complete independence work with children, supporting them to stay safe, manage personal care, look after their environment and take part in daily routines.

Staff help children maintain important relationships with family and friends. When challenges arise, safety plans support safe and positive contact and relationships.

Children say that they feel safe, cared for, understood and valued. Where some children aspire to independent living, all children expressed a desire to continue living in the home until this is achieved.

Children develop a sense of belonging and stability. They enjoy a range of positive experiences, supported by tools such as a vision board that helps them share and achieve their goals.

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

Staff have a good understanding of each child's individual needs and associated risks. Children say that they feel safe and cared for by staff who show genuine concern for their wellbeing.

Risk assessments are up to date and clearly outline each child's risks and vulnerabilities and the actions staff must take to manage these. Strategies are in place to reduce harm,

and there is evidence that risks are either reducing or being managed well in line with children's individual circumstances.

There have been several missing-from-home incidents. Managers monitoring identified that staff were not always reporting the child missing to the police in line with plans. The manager took prompt action to address this with staff, which has resulted in staff taking timely action to report children missing in subsequent missing-from-home incidents.

Staff respond proactively to incidents. They work with children through planned and reactive key-work sessions, sometimes involving external agencies. This helps children understand risk and develop safer behaviours.

Children are supported to take appropriate risks based on their level of understanding. This is reflected in their safety plans, activities and independence work.

Children receive praise and encouragement from a staff team that uses therapeutic approaches in its care of children. This helps children to identify and learn alternative strategies for managing their emotions and reducing their risk-taking behaviour, with staff providing them with consistent support and guidance.

There have been 3 complaints in total. One was from a child about an external agency and 2 related to staff. Each complaint is investigated promptly and fairly, using a multi-agency approach to make sure children remain supported and protected throughout. Outcomes are shared with the relevant agencies, and in every case the children involved were consulted and satisfied with the conclusions.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager encourages staff to be ambitious in their professional development and in the quality of care provided to children. Staff report that the manager leads by example and has brought significant positive change to the home, improving the standard of care provided to children.

The manager knows each child well and has a good understanding of their individual needs and risks. Children's progress is understood, monitored and celebrated. This creates an environment where achievements are recognised and children feel valued and proud of what they achieve.

Children's needs are central to care planning. Their views and progress are reflected in risk assessments, safety plans and staff discussions, including team meetings. This contributes to a nurturing, family-focused environment for children.

Staff receive regular supervision and have access to relevant training. Supervision is used flexibly to provide additional support when required and focuses on reflection, development and career progression. This helps staff to respond effectively to children's needs.

The manager and staff maintain strong relationships with other agencies. They advocate for children and challenge when external responses do not meet children's needs. The staff team is stable and has remained consistent since the manager's registration. Staff speak positively about the manager's leadership, support and experience.

Through regular oversight and auditing, the manager has a clear understanding of the quality of care provided to children. Any shortfalls are promptly addressed through supervision, team meetings or training.

The reports completed by the independent person are not routinely submitted to Ofsted. The manager expressed concern about this during the inspection. A requirement has been raised in relation to this shortfall.

Children's files are well maintained, up to date and contain all relevant information. The manager reviews these regularly to ensure that children's progress is monitored and that children remain central to the home's ethos and practice, in line with the statement of purpose.

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 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))	27 February 2026

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff consistently follow all identified risk management plans, including the required reporting times and actions to take when a child goes missing (Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards, page 42, paragraph 9.5).
- The registered person should ensure that when a child returns to the home after being missing from care or being away without permission, the responsible local authority must offer them an independent return home interview. The home should use any information from this interview to help assess risks and to plan arrangements that protect the child (Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards, page 45, paragraph 9.30).

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: SC431192

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Independent Living Services (North West) Limited

Registered provider address: Suite 4 Ena Works, Volunteer Street, St. Helens, Merseyside WA10 2AY

Responsible individual: Emma Thornton

Registered manager: Kirsty McArthur

Inspector

Paul McKay-Smith, Social Care Inspector

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