

SC482548

Registered provider: Lioncare Ltd (operating as The Lioncare Group)

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is privately owned. It is registered to provide care for up to five children who experience social or emotional difficulties. At the time of the inspection, five children were living in the home. Two of these children were present during the previous inspection. Since then, three additional children have moved in, and all have now lived in the home for over a year. All children participated in the inspection.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since December 2023.

Inspection dates: 12 to 13 August 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: 23 April 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
23/04/2024	Full	Good
07/11/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
20/03/2023	Full	Good
10/08/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children enjoy a wide range of fun and meaningful experiences that help them grow and feel part of the home. They take part in both individual and group activities, including holidays to France and Disneyland Paris, as well as regular trips to leisure centres, swimming and theme parks like Alton Towers. For one child, going abroad felt too overwhelming. Staff worked closely with them to make sure they were involved in the decision and supported every step of the way. When it became clear the trip was not right for them, staff made sure they had other enjoyable activities planned so that they did not miss out. These experiences help children feel included, valued and connected to others in the home.

Children's views are generally understood and taken into account in day-to-day decisions, including choices around meals, activities and personalising their bedrooms. However, the recording of children's views in care plans is inconsistent.

Staff demonstrate a strong understanding of children's individual needs and respond to them with care and sensitivity. Children are supported to make decisions about their lives and the running of the home. While regular meetings are held to facilitate this, some children feel these are too frequent. Elements of the discussions are part of informal social interactions, such as conversations during mealtimes. There is limited evidence of children's involvement in shaping the structure and frequency of these meetings.

Children's emotional well-being is supported through nurturing relationships and child-focused engagement. Staff recognise the impact of adverse childhood experiences and respond with empathy and tailored support. They support children to process complex emotions in a safe and supportive environment.

Staff consistently champion children's achievements and demonstrate high aspirations for their academic and vocational success. Education is prioritised and carefully tailored to meet each child's individual needs and talents. All children are engaged in education, with one child sustaining attendance following a period of disengagement. Children's creative and vocational interests are actively nurtured, with one child's involvement in a community venture leading to an offer of paid employment.

Family relationships are supported in a way that reflects their importance to children's identity and emotional well-being. Staff facilitate time safely and sensitively, including complex arrangements. Family members report feeling well informed and express confidence in the care provided, highlighting the manager's commitment to building trusting relationships and advocating for children's needs.

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

Staff and managers take thoughtful action to keep children safe, both inside and outside the home. They understand their safeguarding responsibilities and make sure the right people and agencies are informed when concerns arise.

Children moving into the home are welcomed in ways that help them feel safe and settled. One child was supported through a buddy system and received a personalised welcome hamper, showing staff's awareness of how overwhelming a new environment can be and their commitment to making it feel nurturing.

When children move out of the home, decisions are made with care and concern for their well-being. One child's move followed escalating behaviours that the home could no longer manage safely. Staff worked with other professionals to make sure the child's move was handled with sensitivity and support.

The manager has ensured that effective policies are in place to support staff when children go missing from the home. This includes individual profiles that follow the Philomena protocol and link to social media where appropriate. When children return, they are met with care and nurture, with a strong focus on their safety. The manager provides clear oversight to make sure return home discussions take place, helping to understand and address any worries or risks. This process also recognises the value of external scrutiny in safeguarding practice.

Since the last inspection, there have been thirteen incidents of physical restraint involving three children, with one child involved in eleven of these. Their plan includes the use of floor holds by three staff members, a highly restrictive form of physical restraint. This is acknowledged and well understood by managers, who have sought expert guidance to ensure safe practice. Staff have access to detailed information and attend specific training to support safe and appropriate use. The manager closely scrutinises all physical interventions, assessing whether they are necessary and proportionate. They also reflect on whether earlier use of patience, acceptance, care and empathy could have prevented the need for restraint, identifying this in two incidents. These reflections have been used to inform learning and development within the home.

The manager ensures that safe employment processes are applied when staff do not meet expected standards and ensures relevant professionals are included and notified.

Staff support children through difficult moments with patience and care. Behaviour is managed in a way that reflects the home's nurturing approach, using positive relationships, parenting strategies and reward systems. For one child, receiving small toys each day helped them visibly see their achievement and the pride others have in them. They described the motivation and shared how the characters reminded them of the help and support available from the manager and staff.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager leads with passion and ambition for children and their outcomes. Their child-focused approach sets a strong example for the team, and there is a clear sense that staff genuinely care about the children and their welfare. This positive culture is reflected in everyday practice and helps create a nurturing environment.

Staff feel well supported in their roles. They receive regular supervision and annual appraisals and attend team meetings that focus on improving care for children. Meeting agendas show thoughtful planning, although more could be done to evidence how actions are followed up and how improvements are tracked over time.

Overall, the manager has effective systems in place to monitor practice, including the use of trackers. They receive advice and support from well-connected leaders, including the responsible individual and chief operating officer, who collectively have high aspirations for the children in the home. This helps identify areas for development and ensures that practice and incidents are reviewed with a focus on learning. Oversight of training ensures delivery and action if attendance by staff is not aligned to the expectations set out in the statement of purpose.

The manager understands the challenges linked to national workforce pressures and the impact this can have on children's stability. They are clear about the reasons behind staffing changes and high use of agency staffing and have taken steps to reduce disruption, including taking on key working responsibilities themselves. Safer recruitment practices are followed. There is commitment and effort taken to build a stable and consistent team.

The manager is committed to involving children in shaping and commenting on their plans. However, this is not yet happening consistently across the home. Some plans need to be reviewed for updates and ensure that there is consistency to language that cares. Important tools, such as body maps, are not currently recorded, but managers have already identified this gap and are taking steps to address it.

The manager ensures that children receive a copy of the children's guide before any moves into the home in order to support and reduce anxiety. The document is long and does not capture the ethos of nurture and care that is recognised as a strength of the staff. The potential to address this and to engage the children living in the home in rewriting the document was recognised during inspection discussions.

Partnership working is strong. Feedback from professionals highlights positive communication and relationships. Staff and managers support children to access advocacy and understand their rights, including helping them build relationships with independent visitors where appropriate.

Information about this inspection

The inspector has 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: SC482548

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Lioncare Ltd (operating as The Lioncare Group)

Registered provider address: Lioncare House, 58a Livingstone Road, Hove, Sussex BN3 3WL

Responsible individual: Matthew Vince

Registered manager: David Hollens

Inspector

Ashley Arkless, Social Care Inspector

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