

2769240

Registered provider: Welfare First Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

A private provider operates this children's home. The home is registered to care for 2 children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

At the time of this inspection, 2 children were living at the home. The inspector spoke with both children.

The manager registered with Ofsted in December 2025.

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 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: 30 October 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
30/10/2024	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Both children have lived in the home for a long time and benefit from positive, stable relationships with the staff, who know them well. Throughout the inspection, the staff were observed to be caring, understanding and patient with the children. This nurturing approach provides the children with a strong sense of safety and security in the home.

Children attend education and are making progress due to the help and support they receive from staff. One child, who previously would not attend school, is now progressing from a part-time to a full-time timetable. Staff also provide creative home learning to supplement part-time timetables, helping children to reduce gaps in their learning and develop life skills appropriate to their age. This approach is supporting one child as they prepare for greater independence.

Staff encourage children to take part in a wide range of activities, including cooking, baking, bike rides, swimming, trampolining, football and nature walks. Staff involve children in their activity planning and are creative in providing options linked to children's interests. This approach supports children to try new experiences and spend time outside of the home and be active.

Staff support the children's relationships with people who are important to them. Children can invite friends to their home and visit friends' homes. Staff facilitate regular family time for both children, even when this involves travelling long distances. This helps children maintain relationships with those important to them.

The home is warm and welcoming, and it is well decorated. Children's photos and certificates of achievement are proudly displayed in the home. The children's bedrooms are well furnished and personalised, and they take pride in looking after and organising their belongings.

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

Children identify staff as trusted adults and approach them with their concerns. Staff respond to children's concerns warmly and sensitively. Children say that the staff have helped them with their anger and keeping calm.

Staff have maintained consistent practice and good communication despite recent team changes, which helps children feel secure. However, managers do not always follow safer recruitment procedures. References are not always obtained before staff start working in the home. As a result, managers cannot always be assured of a staff member's integrity and good character before they start working with children.

Allegations and complaints are taken seriously, and managers thoroughly investigate concerns raised. Appropriate action is taken to address practice concerns, and children

are made aware of the outcomes of their complaint. This reassures children that they are being listened to. Social workers and lead professionals are updated. However, there are sometimes delays in sharing this information. This prevents key professionals from having timely oversight.

Staff have a good understanding of the children's individual risks and the strategies to support them. The children's risks are documented in risk assessments that guide staff in preventing and reducing harm. However, risk assessments are not always accurate or up to date. This means they do not consistently reflect children's current risks and vulnerabilities, which could lead to inconsistent practice.

The manager and staff consult with children when reviewing their individual risk assessments. This helps children to reflect on difficulties and learn to identify triggers and coping techniques.

Staff are trained in physical interventions. One physical intervention has taken place as a last resort to prevent harm to children and others. Reflection work is completed with children following physical interventions to ensure that they understand why the intervention was used and explore their feelings and alternative coping strategies. The manager reviews all incidents with staff to support their practice and ensure that agreed strategies are followed.

Staff respond effectively to missing-from-home episodes. They follow the agreed protocols and make every effort to locate children and encourage their safe return. Children are welcomed when they return to the home, and staff check they are safe and well. This helps children feel cared for and valued. However, children do not always receive a return home interview after being missing from home. This means they do not have the opportunity to share any concerns with someone independent of the home.

Significant incidents are managed well, with staff responding appropriately and sensitively to the children. Managers review each incident and work with other professionals to reduce risks. Staff complete follow-up work sensitively, helping children identify risks to themselves and others. Managers also seek specialist services, such as fire safety, guidance on substance misuse and mental health support, ensuring that children receive the right help.

Staff engage children on topics such as internet safety, relationships, racism, equality and diversity. This helps children to recognise risks, keep themselves safe and develop tolerance and understanding.

Consequences are not always proportionate to the behaviours displayed or restorative in nature. The evaluation of these measures does not consider how effective they have been. As a result, consequences do not always help children reflect on their actions or develop personal responsibility.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home has a new manager who is suitably experienced. As the home's previous responsible individual, she has a good understanding of the organisation's policies and procedures and recording and reporting systems. The manager is committed and motivated to improve outcomes for children.

Leaders and managers have effective monitoring systems in place. The use of daily checks ensures that all reports and plans have evidence of management oversight. They make good use of internal and independent reports and carry out weekly audits. These detailed audits help leaders understand children's progress and identify actions to address emerging challenges. As a result, children receive consistently good-quality care.

The manager completes and updates all statutory documentation. However, the home's statement of purpose has not been shared with the regulator when updated. As a result, the regulator does not have up-to-date information about changes to the home's care and support.

One staff member's safeguarding children training has lapsed, and the waking night staff have not completed training specific to the individual needs of the children. This does not ensure that staff have the necessary training to understand and meet the children's needs should they need to support them during the night.

Team meetings are held monthly and are well attended by the staff team. The manager uses these meetings to update staff on changes to children's support plans and strategies. They also address any issues in reporting and recording to ensure that staff understand what is expected of them. The manager recognises and reinforces positive practice, which helps staff feel valued and supports good team morale.

Induction programmes for new starters are detailed, and learning is supported by experienced staff members. This ensures that staff are aware of key information and processes to aid their role before directly working with children.

Staff receive regular supervision and annual appraisals. Supervision sessions are supportive and focus on wellbeing, professional development, planning for children and guidance on support strategies. Staff benefit from individualised development plans that promote their progression. Staff say they feel fully supported, and the manager pushes them to succeed and trusts in their abilities.

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
<p>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i))</p> <p>Specifically, leaders and managers must ensure that risk assessments provide an accurate and up-to-date reflection of children's current risks and vulnerabilities, as well as the strategies in place to support them. Staff must understand what they need to do to keep children safe.</p>	27 February 2026
<p>The leadership and management standard requires the registered person to—</p> <p>ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 13 (2)(c))</p> <p>Specifically, leaders and managers must ensure that staff complete mandatory training promptly to maintain the children's welfare. In addition to this, the registered person must ensure that all staff, including night staff, have completed training to meet the child's individual needs.</p>	27 February 2026
<p>The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety.</p> <p>The requirements are that—</p>	27 February 2026

<p>full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1) (3)(d))</p> <p>Specifically, leaders and managers must ensure that they follow safer recruitment practices, including requesting and verifying references from previous employers prior to staff starting employment.</p>	
<p>The registered person must compile in relation to the children's home a statement ("the statement of purpose") which covers the matters listed in Schedule 1.</p> <p>The registered person must—</p> <p>keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and</p> <p>notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision. (Regulation 16 (1) (3)(a)(b))</p>	<p>27 February 2026</p>

Recommendations

- The registered person should have a system in place so that all serious events are notified, within 24 hours, to the appropriate people. This includes notifying the regulator when children are missing for long periods. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 63, paragraph 14.3)
- The registered person should ensure that when a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from the home without permission, the responsible local authority provides an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.3)
- The registered person should ensure that any consequences used to address poor behaviour should be restorative in nature to help children recognise the impact of their behaviour on themselves, other children, the staff caring for them and the wider community. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.38)

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: 2769240

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Welfare First Ltd

Registered provider address: 31 Kibble Grove, Brierfield, Nelson BB9 5EW

Responsible individual: Kirsty Morrison

Registered manager: Shazia Noreen

Inspector

Renée Sims, Social Care Inspector

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