



The Regulation and
Quality Improvement
Authority

Children's Home Inspection Report
IN048848
2 October 2025

Information on legislation and standards underpinning inspections can be found on our website <https://www.rqia.org.uk/>

1.0 Service information

Service Type: Children's Home Provider Type: Independent Provider Located within: – South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust	Manager status: Registered
Brief description of how the service operates: This home is registered as a small children's home as defined in <u>The Minimum Standards for Children's Homes (Department of Health) (2023)</u> . The children living in this home have had adverse childhood experiences which has resulted in them requiring residential care.	

2.0 Inspection summary

An unannounced inspection took place on 2 October 2025 between 9.45 a.m. and 4.30 p.m. The inspection was conducted by two care inspectors.

The inspection assessed progress with all areas for improvement identified during the last care inspection and to determine if the home was delivering safe, effective and compassionate care and if the service was well led.

Three areas for improvement identified during the last care inspection were assessed as met; these were in relation to safe recruitment, the statement of purpose and competency assessments for staff.

Two new areas for improvement were identified in relation to staffing and restrictive practices.

The findings of this report will provide the management team with the necessary information to improve staff practice and children's experience.

3.0 How we inspect

RQIA's inspections form part of our ongoing assessment of the quality of services. Our reports reflect how they were performing at the time of our inspection, highlighting both good practice and any areas for improvement. It is the responsibility of the service provider to ensure compliance with legislation, standards and best practice, and to address any deficits identified during our inspections.

In preparation for this inspection, a range of information about the service was reviewed to help plan the inspection.

A range of documents were examined to determine that effective systems were in place to manage the home and deliver safe care.

RQIA inspectors seek to speak with children, their relatives/carers, visitors and staff for their opinion on the quality of care and their experience of living, visiting or working in this home.

Information was provided to children, relatives/carers, staff and other stakeholders on how they could provide feedback on the quality of care and support in this home. This included questionnaires and an electronic survey.

The findings of the inspection were discussed with the manager at the conclusion of the inspection.

4.0 What people told us about the service

The inspector spoke with children and staff on the day of inspection. Feedback was also received from children and staff via questionnaires.

Feedback from staff confirmed there was good support available from the management team, and an open culture, which supported staff to express their views on matters relating to the running of the home. Staff reported that the care provided to children was person centred and compassionate. Morale was high amongst the staff team, and they described a settled staff team who support each other. Staff acknowledged concerns related to staffing, which is discussed in greater detail in section 5.2.2.

The children provided positive feedback as regards the activities they were supported to take part in and reported that they liked living in the home. Interactions observed between staff and children indicated positive relationships existed between children and staff. Children were observed at ease, and relaxed in the presence of staff.

Feedback from children was also received via questionnaire responses. Children reported that staff helped them to feel safe; staff were there when they were needed; they were involved in decision making about their health and lifestyle; and, staff were aware of what was important to them.

Staff responses via questionnaires indicated that they were satisfied that children were safe and treated with compassion; that the care provided was effective and that the home was well led.

5.0 The inspection

5.1 What has this service done to meet any areas for improvement identified at or since last inspection?

Areas for improvement from the last inspection on 12 November 2025.		
Action required to ensure compliance with The Children's Homes Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005		Validation of compliance
Area for Improvement 1 Ref: Regulation 25(3)(f) Stated: First time	The registered person shall ensure governance arrangements with respect to staff recruitment are reviewed and improved. Records must be maintained to evidence safe recruitment of staff. Evidence of staff recruitment must be available for inspection.	Met
	Action taken as confirmed during the inspection: This area for improvement was met.	
Area for Improvement 2 Ref: Regulation 5 Stated: First time	The registered person shall review, and where appropriate revise the Statement of Purpose to ensure it accurately reflects the staffing arrangements within the home. The revised Statement of Purpose must be submitted to RQIA.	Met
	Action taken as confirmed during the inspection: This area for improvement was met.	
Action required to ensure compliance with The Minimum Standards for Children's Homes (Department of Health) (2023)		Validation of compliance
Area for Improvement 1 Ref: Standard 17.10 Stated: First time	The registered person shall ensure that an assessment of staff competency is undertaken as part of induction to ensure staff have the necessary knowledge, skills, and values required to meet the assessed need of the children in their care.	Met
	Action taken as confirmed during the inspection: This area for improvement was met.	

5.2 Inspection findings

5.2.1 How does the service ensure children are getting the right care at the right time?

Children's daily logs identified that the quality of recording was of a good standard and the detail reflected the children's lived experience. These records, along with feedback from staff and children, provided assurance that the staff team were committed to engaging with the children in a therapeutic manner. Discussions with staff confirmed they knew the children well, how they liked to be cared for, and the agreed strategies that promoted their safety and wellbeing.

Records were available to support and direct staff in their interventions with the children. Evidence was available that these records were regularly reviewed and updated and were reflective of the current risks and needs of the children.

Children's meetings occurred regularly and were facilitated by staff in the home. The meetings provided an opportunity for the children to raise any issues, express choices in regard to activities and influence the running of the home and delivery of care. Promoting children's involvement and active participation in these meetings is essential for supporting children to influence the way they are cared for and reinforce that their views and opinions matter.

Evidence was available that children in the home had regular visits from an independent social worker who held statutory case responsibility. These visits are integral to promoting children's safety and wellbeing, they aim to assess the quality of care children receive and ensure that children's needs are being met in accordance with their care plan. Records of these visits were not provided to the home on a consistent basis by the placing authority in line with best practice, however, evidence was available of the home taking action to address this issue.

5.2.2 How does the service ensure that safe staffing arrangements are in place?

Children thrive when they have access to consistent caregivers and when they have the opportunity to form stable and enduring relationships. There were a number of vacancies within the staff team and therefore a subsequent reliance on overtime, bank and management staff to ensure safe staffing levels and the required skill mix was maintained. Whilst this was a necessary measure, it was not a sustainable or reliable position and an area for improvement was identified.

Evidence was available to confirm that staff employed within the home were subject to safe and robust recruitment practices consistent with Schedule 2 of the Children's Homes Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005. This is an essential mechanism that supports managers to ensure safe staffing arrangements and safe care for children within the home.

Training records provided assurance robust arrangements were in place to monitor compliance with mandatory training requirements for the staff team in areas such as safeguarding, therapeutic crisis intervention and fire training, all of which support staff to deliver safe, effective care and support.

The manager confirmed that appropriate arrangements were in place to provide professional supervision to social work qualified staff and to support staff to achieve any requirements associated with maintaining professional registration.

Evidence was available that staff had completed a competency assessment as part of their induction. Assessing staff competence ensures that learning and development strategies can support high quality outcomes and experiences for children. This process also allows for any learning needs to be identified, which can then be addressed through additional training, mentoring or supervision.

5.2.3 Does the service ensure that the home environment meets the needs of the children?

The home was nicely decorated and presented as a comfortable, homely space for children to live; with soft furnishings and age appropriate items being utilised to create a welcoming environment. Children's bedrooms were decorated in line with their wishes and feelings and they were happy with the quality of the environment. A well maintained and welcoming outdoor space was also available to the children. The manager informed of plans in progress to make the outdoor space more secure and suitable to the needs of the children.

Fire records evidenced that fire safety checks and drills were completed regularly and consistently. The fire risk assessment was up to date and the associated action plan was in the process of being completed.

5.2.4 How does the service ensure that there are robust management and governance arrangements in place?

Deficits were identified in the restrictive practice arrangements within the home. Children's homes should support children to develop the skills they need to thrive and succeed as they mature and approach adulthood. Actions that restrict children should have clear justification based on a robust assessment of risk; with clear evidence that the restriction is proportionate; in place for the least amount of time; has a reduction plan in place (as appropriate); and is agreed with the multi-disciplinary team, in consultation with the child and relevant others. A robust review mechanism is also required which considers the effectiveness and impact of the restrictive practice. This has been identified as an area for improvement.

Team meetings occurred on a regular basis; they were well attended by staff and facilitated detailed discussions on pertinent issues relating to the home and children. Bringing staff together on a regular basis is essential to maintaining good communication, developing a shared vision and informs the detailed and complex decisions that need to be made on a day-to-day basis to meet the needs of the children.

Handover records are a key communication tool between staff members across shifts to ensure that important information is shared effectively. Review of records identified a good standard of recording practices to support the effective use of handover records as a robust tool for shift planning.

6.0 Quality Improvement Plan/Areas for Improvement

Areas for improvement have been identified where action is required to ensure compliance with **The Children's Homes Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005** and **The Minimum Standards for Children's Homes (Department of Health) (2023)**.

	Regulations	Standards
Total number of Areas for Improvement	1	1

Areas for improvement and details of the Quality Improvement Plan were discussed with the manager as part of the inspection process. The timescales for completion commence from the date of inspection.

Quality Improvement Plan	
Action required to ensure compliance with The Children's Homes Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005	
Area for improvement 1 Ref: Regulation 16 Stated: First time To be completed by: 27 November 2025	The registered person shall ensure robust processes are in place for the implementation and review of restrictive practices. Records should clearly evidence that: - it is implemented based on an assessed need or risk related to the individual child - it is the least restrictive option, and all other options have been exhausted - it has been agreed with the multi-disciplinary team, the child and/or their representative as appropriate - there is a timescale for review, which will involve review of its effectiveness and consider the need for a reduction plan, as necessary. Ref: 5.2.4.
	Response by registered person detailing the actions taken: This response contained service identifiable information and therefore has not been included in this report.
Action required to ensure compliance with The Minimum Standards for Children's Homes (Department of Health) (2023)	

Area for improvement 1 Ref: Standard 17 Stated: First time To be completed by: 27 November 2025	The registered person shall review the staffing arrangements within the home to ensure it is in line with the statement of purpose and sufficient to support and meet the needs of the children. Ref: 5.2.2.
	Response by registered person detailing the actions taken: We keep staffing arrangements under regular review to ensure they align with the home's Statement of Purpose and meet the needs of the children. Recruitment remains challenging in the current landscape, but we continue to actively recruit through internal processes, social media and jobs platforms, job fairs, professional networks, and an external recruitment agency. All applicants undergo a robust shortlisting and interview process to ensure only suitably skilled and values-driven staff are appointed. We also work with a long-standing group of trained bank staff who are well known to the home and the children, providing consistent and reliable cover during periods of absence or increased demand. Our core staff team may take on additional hours when appropriate, and overtime is monitored carefully to protect staff wellbeing. Through this combination of ongoing recruitment, trusted bank staff, and measured use of additional hours, we maintain safe and stable staffing arrangements that support high-quality care for the children.

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