

1258627

Registered provider: Doncaster Children's Services Trust Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

A local authority operates this home. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to four children with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home provides medium- to long-term care for children aged from 11 to 17 years.

The manager has been registered at the home since July 2017.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 May 2021

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: 29 January 2020

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
29/01/2020	Full	Good
13/11/2018	Full	Good
29/01/2018	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children have lived at the home for long periods of time. The children are provided with a high standard of care from a stable and nurturing staff team. The children's hobbies and interests are promoted because of the support they receive from the staff. This is helping them to develop new interests, which encourages their self-esteem to grow.

Children have close relationships with the staff, which helps them to feel safe and secure living at the home. Social workers and independent reviewing officers speak positively about staff and value the care they provide to the children. One social worker said, 'I can't fault them. They have a collaborative approach and have helped [name of child] to get to where he wants to be.'

Children attend their appointments and, when needed, have specialist support in place to help with their physical and emotional well-being. The staff have established working relationships with the child and adolescent mental health services, substance misuse services and a crime prevention team. As a result, children receive the help they need to live a positive lifestyle.

All children attend school or further education and are making progress. Some children have been supported to find part-time work alongside their formal learning. Staff help children to explore their career prospects, which enables them to focus on their future aspirations.

Children express their wishes and feelings about the care and help that staff provide. Daily conversations with staff focus on the children's individual needs and giving them guidance and support on matters that are important to them. One child said, 'It's like a little family here, I wouldn't change anything.'

The relationships staff have with families enable children to remain connected with those who are important to them. This supports the children's sense of identity.

The home is decorated to a high standard and is clean throughout. Staff have created a comfortable space for children to live in. Children use the garden to good effect. For example, they can enjoy playing games, including football and trampolining, and have their friends over to spend time relaxing together.

The staff provide children with opportunities to develop important life skills. This enables them to prepare to leave the home as they transition through to adulthood. For example, they are supported to understand how to safely administer their own medication without staff supervision, learn cooking skills, and communicate with people more confidently. Children are learning the skills needed to confidently move on from the home.

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

Children are better protected as a result of living at this home. For some children, previous incidents, such as missing from home, concerns of exploitation, and violence and aggression, have reduced or ceased. Children reflect about their behaviour with staff through qualitative key work. This helps them to cope in better ways with difficult emotions.

Staff understand the effect the COVID-19 lockdown period has had on the children's needs. They recognise the children's triggers and signs of emotional deregulation. This enables them to respond in ways that reduce the risk of behaviour escalating and becoming unsafe for children or staff.

Physical intervention in the home is rarely needed. When an incident has occurred, staff use restorative practice effectively to support children to reflect on the situation. This is helping children to develop an awareness and understanding of the impact their behaviour has on others.

Children individualised and well-documented risk assessments which are reviewed and updated following an incident. This helps to ensure that staff have up-to-date strategies to follow to reduce the risk of harm for children.

Children do not regularly go missing from the home. Missing-from-home protocols provide clear direction to staff about what action they should take should an incident occur. However, on one occasion, when a child left the home during the night, staff did not follow the child's protocol. This increased the risk of harm to the child while he was absent from the home.

Allegations are responded to quickly and effectively, and appropriate action is taken to ensure that children are better protected.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager has a wealth of experience and is established in her role. The manager is actively involved in the running of the home and knows the progress that the children make. The deputy manager and the staff team have been able to continue the good level of care provided to the children when the manager was absent from the home.

The staff team is long-standing, which provides stability and consistency of care. Children have lived in the home for a considerable time and have grown up in the care of the same staff. This helps children to identify with the home and make progress from their starting point. One child said, 'I love being here, staff have helped me.'

Members of staff feel valued by their manager. One staff member said, 'It's a great place to work, we are a very supportive team.' Regular supervision takes place to

support their practice. Training has continued in a variety of formats to ensure continued staff development. Staff are provided with an environment where they can develop and sustain the skills needed to care for the children effectively.

The manager has quality assurance systems to help her evaluate the strengths and development needs of the home. However, monitoring has not identified some shortfalls in social media and child exploitation training. This could result in staff having limited knowledge on how to keep children safe.

Leaders are committed to continuous monitoring and evaluation of the service. The independent visitor regularly talks to children about their experience of living at the home. However, parents are rarely consulted as part of this monitoring process. This limits the scrutiny and evaluation of the service provided to the children.

Children take part in important decisions at the home. One child recently took part in the recruitment of the new deputy manager. The child was able to ask questions that were important to him. As a result, children feel empowered by being involved in decisions about how the home is run.

The manager and staff team are valued by their fellow professionals. Feedback to the inspectors consistently recognised the positive care and help the manager and staff provide for children. One independent reviewing officer said, 'The manager and staff provide excellent care.'

The manager and staff are strong advocates for the children and support them to have their voice heard. On one occasion, a child was supported to share her views about a care planning decision she did not agree with. This helps to ensure that children's wishes and feelings are acknowledged.

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, 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— 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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(v)(vi)) This relates to staff's understanding and implementation of children's risk assessments, and their role in relation to keeping children safe, particularly with regards to when they go missing from the home.	10 June 2021
The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month. When the independent person is carrying out a visit, the registered person must help the independent person— if they consent, to interview in private such of the children, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home as the independent person requires. (Regulation 44 (1) (2)(a)) This particularly refers to the registered provider ensuring that, as part of the regulation 44 visit to the home, the independent visitor regularly consults with parents.	10 June 2021

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff can access appropriate facilities and resources to support their training needs and should understand the key role they play in the training and development of staff in the home. In particular, the manager should ensure that training on keeping children safe is kept under review so all staff have up-to-date knowledge needed on social media safety, exploitation, and behaviour support. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.11)

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: 1258627

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Doncaster Children's Services Trust Limited

Registered provider address: Colonnades House, Duke Street, Doncaster, South Yorkshire DN1 1ER

Responsible individual: James Thomas

Registered manager: Angela Currie

Inspectors

Aaron Mcloughlin, Social Care Inspector
Gemma McDonnell, Social Care Inspector

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