

2563216

Registered provider: North East Lincolnshire Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

A local authority operates and manages this home. This children's home is registered to provide care for up to four children with social and emotional difficulties. The home was registered in November 2019.

The registered manager has not been in day-to-day charge of the home since 30 July 2021. A new manager is in post, but is not yet registered with Ofsted.

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.

We last visited this setting on 3 September 2020 to carry out an assurance visit. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection dates: 3 to 4 August 2021

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **inadequate**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **inadequate**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **inadequate**

There are serious and widespread failures that mean children are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded.

Date of last inspection: not applicable

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: not applicable

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
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Not previously inspected		
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Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

Children's day-to-day experiences are poor. The relationships between the children in the home are controlling and abusive, and these impact significantly on their safety, health and well-being. Leaders, managers and staff fail to provide children with the safety and security that they need to help them to recover from their past traumas. The instability and the levels of violence in this home compound the children's trauma. As a result of this inspection, Ofsted has issued three compliance notices with regard to the safety and protection of children.

There is substantial damage in every room of the home. This means that children do not live in a comfortable or pleasant environment. The damage is a safety hazard for children. For example, there are broken light fittings with exposed sharp edges and a boarded-up bedroom window. Damaged and faulty fire doors mean that children are at risk of harm from fire. There are doors pulled off the kitchen cupboards, food and drink marks on the walls and mould in the bathroom. The home environment is unwelcoming and does not show children that they are valued, respected or cared for.

Children's routines are continually disrupted. Incidents of verbal and physical aggression between children predominantly occurs at bedtime. This impacts on children's sleep and ability to relax in the safety of their bedrooms.

Children are struggling to attend full-time education. Staff try to understand the barriers to children's learning and create education plans to encourage children's inclusion and engagement. Children's participation in planned and structured education is limited, and this continues to reduce. However, staff support children with other vocational activities. This has helped some children to gain employment, and this is a significant achievement that the children talk about with enthusiasm.

Children's physical health needs are met, and children are helped by staff to attend routine appointments. For some children, this means that they are now prescribed glasses to help with their sight. The concerns remain about the children's emotional well-being and the impact that the dynamics in the home have on their mental health.

Staff encourage children to engage in fun and social leisure activities. Due to the concerns with regard to the level of aggression and violence between children, the planned group holiday has been cancelled. Alternative activities have been organised to fill the summer holidays.

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

Children are not protected from harm. Relationships between the children in the home have become abusive. Children have become the victims and perpetrators of coercive control, and of verbal and physical abuse. During these times, children have harmed themselves, others and caused damage to the home. Senior leaders and managers were aware of the escalating concerns, but did not take necessary action to protect children. This failure means that children continue to be at risk of harm.

Children's safety plans and risk assessments are not routinely reviewed. These records also vary in quality and do not consistently provide the staff with the necessary guidance to prevent harm to children. Furthermore, staff cannot meet the competing needs of all children due to limited staffing resources. Currently, the manager has restricted any further admissions to the home because of the violence and aggression between children.

Children said that they find talking about incidents helpful. However, given the escalation of incidents of violence and aggression, there are limited discussions with the children about healthy and harmful relationships. The manager has oversight of incidents and is routinely escalating her concerns to other agencies. Nevertheless, she has not notified the regulator of all significant incidents. This has restricted Ofsted's insight into the incidents at this home and into the detrimental and long-lasting effect that these have on children.

Children continue to experience harm while decisions are made about their placement in the home. Since December 2020 and until she left the home in July 2021, the previous manager raised concerns about the group dynamics and the significant impact that these have on all children living in the home. Poor planning and a lack of adequate response from senior leaders means that children continue to experience harm while professionals make decisions about their care. In response to Ofsted's immediate concerns, decisions were taken during the inspection for a child to move from the home. This emergency action, while necessary, impacts further on the child's care experience.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

The registered manager has recently left her post. A new manager has been appointed and is in the process of applying to register with Ofsted.

Leaders and managers, including the registered manager and the responsible individual, failed to take sufficient action to improve the quality of care for children. Although the registered manager did escalate her concerns about the impact of children's relationships, and has requested the necessary repairs to the home, these issues were not resolved. As a result, children's progress is limited, and their care experiences are poor.

Staff support each other and find strength as a team. Witnessing the children hurting each other does impact on the staff. A member of staff said, 'It is awful to

see the impact on children; we are here to protect children and prevent harm.’ Despite the manager being new to the home, she has identified the strengths and the shortfalls within this home and is making plans for improvement. However, these plans are in their infancy and, at this time, the effectiveness of these is unknown.

There has been a number of staffing changes in the home, and this is detrimental to children’s progress and stability. Children said that they miss certain staff who have helped and supported them. Social workers and other professionals report that they are kept up to date about the children, but said that this communication does not reduce their concerns with regard to children’s outcomes and progress.

External monitoring is completed by the independent person. The reports of these visits lack relevant detail and reflection about the emerging and escalating concerns at this home. There remains a lack of consultation with other people, including children, about the quality of care provided by the home. The absence of good external monitoring means that managers are not held accountable for practice shortfalls. Furthermore, these reports do not provide Ofsted, or senior leaders in the local authority, with insight into the significant concerns for children living in this home.

A number of requirements made at the last full inspection have not been met, and additional shortfalls were identified at this full inspection.

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 positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that each child is encouraged to build and maintain positive relationships with others. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(b))	1 October 2021
*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 the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm; and that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(b)(d))	5 September 2021
*The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home.	5 September 2021

(Regulation 14 (1)(a))	
*After consultation with the fire and rescue authority, the registered person must— take adequate precautions against the risk of fire, including the provision of suitable fire equipment in the children’s home. (Regulation 25 (1)(a))	5 September 2021
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(e))	1 October 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))	1 October 2021

* These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

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: 2563216

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: North East Lincolnshire Council

Registered provider address: Civic Offices, Knoll Street, Cleethorpes, Lincolnshire
DN35 8LN

Responsible individual: Yvonne Shearwood

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Jennifer Fenlon, Social Care Inspector

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