

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 owns and manages this children's home. The home provides care for up to four children with social and emotional difficulties. The home was registered with Ofsted in November 2019.

The manager was registered with Ofsted in October 2021

Inspection dates: 24 and 25 May 2022

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

Date of last inspection: 18 November 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/11/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good
03/08/2021	Full	Inadequate

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

Children have mixed experiences of living in this home. They know some staff well and have good relationships with them. However, due to staff shortages, relief staff often work in the home. Children find it hard to build relationships with staff when they keep changing. The changes create inconsistency and do not provide children with stability.

Although children enjoy taking part in activities, a lack of consistent staff impacts on these opportunities. For example, there are occasions when children have to wait for activities to start, or when these have been cancelled, due to staffing issues. This leaves children feeling upset and frustrated and reduces opportunities for informal learning.

Children's engagement in education is mixed. Some children have completed their exams and now have part-time employment. Where children do not engage in education, staff try to find alternative placements that better reflect their learning needs. For one child, these efforts have been successful and the child is now attending an alternative school provision for one day a week. When children are not in education, staff try to engage them in meaningful activities. However, these ad hoc efforts are mostly ineffective. There are no clear alternative plans to engage children in meaningful activities when they are not in education and this hinders their learning.

Some children continue to smoke and there is some substance misuse. Staff try to educate children about the risks that this poses to their physical and emotional health. Sometimes, staff's efforts are successful and sometimes they are not. Staff also continue to promote healthy lifestyles and they support children to attend medical appointments when necessary. Where children need specialist mental health support, the staff make referrals to specialist services and this means children can access the support that they need.

The home environment downstairs is comfortable and welcoming; however, upstairs some bedrooms require attention. The manager made sure that a hole in a bedroom wall was reported for immediate repair during the inspection. Work also started during the inspection to clear a cluttered bedroom.

Children learn independence skills. For example, where appropriate, children undertake driving lessons. Other children learn life skills such as budgeting, washing and cooking. These skills help to prepare them for later life.

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

Recruitment procedures are not robust. There is confusion around where the responsibility for recruitment checks lies. Gaps in recruitment procedures mean that some staff are not fully vetted before they start working with the children. This potentially places children at risk of harm.

One child's risk assessment does not contain all of the known risks to the child's safety. The lack of information means that staff are unaware of what actions to take to manage and reduce all risks. A lack of dates in the risk assessment means that staff do not understand why some risks are graded higher than others. Although staff thought that some risks were historical, without dates this could not be confirmed.

Staff use group work and individual sessions to help children to identify risks to their safety. The impact of this work varies. For some children, this helps them to become increasingly safe, but for others they remain at risk of serious harm.

Staff use physical restraint as a last resort. The manager prioritises supporting staff to build positive relationships with children. As a result, the use of physical restraint has reduced since the last inspection with only one low-level physical restraint being used. However, the management oversight and debrief for this incident is incomplete. This is a missed opportunity for staff to reflect on this incident and to review their practice.

Some children are involved in criminal activities despite staff efforts to educate them on the possible consequences of their actions. There are occasions when the criminal actions of some children impact negatively on other children living in the home, and this is detrimental to children's experiences and progress. Also, at times, all children are punished for the actions of individual children. For example, following an incident where aerosols were misused, these are no longer allowed in the home. This approach does not provide children with choice or individualised care.

Children regularly go missing from the home. Staff follow both general missing from home procedures and the protocols for individual children that are devised with the help of the local specialist police officer. Staff work closely with the police when children are missing to make sure that the children are found as quickly as possible.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

The manager is keen to improve the home for the children and is aware of the strengths of the service and some of the areas for development. Nevertheless, the manager is not always able to dedicate sufficient time to management tasks as she often works directly with the children in order to support staff. As a result, known shortfalls are not quickly addressed.

The manager's internal monitoring systems are not consistently effective. The current monitoring systems have not helped the manager to identify gaps in

children's risk assessments, staff training, oversight of incidents and in recruitment procedures. This failure impacts on children's experiences.

Staff said that they are well supported by the manager. One member of staff referred to her as 'inspirational'. Permanent staff receive regular supervision that helps them to reflect on their work with the children. However, relief staff who regularly work in the home do not receive supervision. This is a missed opportunity to ensure consistent support for children, promote staff development and review staff practice and performance.

Staff can participate in a range of training. This includes mandatory training and additional courses that reflect children's needs. The system for monitoring staff training is complex. This makes it difficult for the manager to identify where there are gaps in staff training and to address these gaps. Consequently, staff do not always receive adequate training to help them to understand children's individual needs.

Ofsted is not always notified of serious incidents that occur at the home. This hinders Ofsted's ability to monitor safeguarding concerns, and the actions that the manager has taken to address these concerns.

The manager is a strong advocate for the children. She works closely with other services such as the youth offending team, police and social workers to make sure the children receive the help they need.

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 education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— help each child to achieve the child's education and training targets, as recorded in the child's relevant plans; and promote opportunities for each child to learn informally. (Regulation 8 (1)(2)(a)(i)(v))	17 July 2022
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— 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))	17 July 2022
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—	17 July 2022

ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child; and use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(e)(h))	
No measure of control or discipline which is excessive, unreasonable or contrary to paragraph (2) may be used in relation to any child. The following measures may not be used to discipline any child— any measure involving punishing a group of children for the behaviour of an individual child. (Regulation 19 (1) (2)(j))	17 July 2022
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The registered person may only— employ an individual to work at the children's home; or if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home, if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). The requirements are that— the individual is of integrity and good character; the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform; the individual is mentally and physically fit for the purposes of the work that the individual is to perform; and full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2.	17 July 2022

The registered person may permit an individual to start work at the home despite the fact that the requirement in paragraph (3)(d) has not been met if— the registered person has taken all reasonable steps to obtain full information about each of the matters in Schedule 2 in respect of the individual, but the enquiries in relation to any of the matters in paragraphs 3 to 6 of Schedule 2 are incomplete; full and satisfactory information in respect of the individual has been obtained in relation to the matters in paragraphs 1 and 2 of Schedule 2; the registered person considers that the circumstances are exceptional; and the registered person ensures that the individual is appropriately supervised while carrying out the individual's duties, pending receipt of any outstanding information on the matters in paragraphs 3 to 6 of Schedule 2, which is then considered satisfactory by the registered person. (Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3)(a)(b)(c)(c) (7)(a)(b)(c)(d))	
The registered person must ensure that all employees— undertake appropriate continuing professional development; and receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(a)(b)) In particular, ensure that relief staff receive practice-related supervision.	17 July 2022
The registered person must ensure that— within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person")— has spoken to the user about the measure; has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record	17 July 2022

confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(b)(i)(ii)(c)(iv))	
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— a child is involved in or subject to, or is suspected of being involved in or subject to, sexual exploitation; an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious; there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there; a child protection enquiry involving a child— is instigated; or concludes (in which case, the notification must include the outcome of the child protection enquiry); or there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(a)(b)(c)(d)(i)(ii)(e))	17 July 2022

* 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: Joanne Spender

Registered manager: Tracy Jefferson

Inspectors

Jamie Richardson, Social Care Inspector (lead)
Rachel Webster, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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