

2594189

Registered provider: North East Lincolnshire council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned and managed by a local authority. The home provides care for up to four children who may experience social and emotional difficulties and/or have learning disabilities.

Two children were living in the home at the time of the inspection. Both children spent time with the inspector during the inspection.

The home is managed by a suitably qualified and experienced manager who registered with Ofsted in November 2023. The registered manager was present throughout the inspection.

Inspection dates: 26 and 27 June 2024

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	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 26 September 2023

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
26/09/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
21/11/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
22/09/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children enjoy living in the home and can build trusting and secure relationships with the staff. One child spoke positively about their relationship with the staff. He said that he can talk to the staff and that the staff help to keep him safe. This child rated the home as 'eight out of 10'. The other child living in the home spoke fondly about how the staff support him to spend time doing things that he likes, such as shopping for clothes.

The staff provide a warm, welcoming, clean and modern home environment for children. Children are encouraged by the staff to have ownership of the home by personalising their bedrooms. In addition, the children are supported by the staff to share their ideas and make improvements to their home environment. This has resulted in new garden equipment being purchased, which has allowed the children to enjoy being able to spend time outside of the home. The home looks and feels like a family home for children.

Children are supported by the staff to have positive experiences and build memories of their time in the home. The staff enjoy spending time with the children, and get to know what the children like and what their goals are for the future. This has meant that the children have access to a range of social and recreational activities that are in line with their individual interests and support them to pursue their hobbies and develop new skills.

The staff have a good understanding of the children's individual needs and vulnerabilities. The quality of the individualised care provided by the staff helps the children living in the home to make progress from their starting points. The home's care plans for the children are child centred and goal orientated. The plans include the wishes and feelings of the children.

The children's care plans promote a dynamic approach to the care that is provided by the staff and help the children to recognise and celebrate the progress that they are making. The plans also allow for new goals to be set so that the children are supported to make continuous progress. One professional said that due to the care provided by the staff '[name of the child] has developed independence skills beyond what was expected'.

The staff support the children to be physically and emotionally healthy by ensuring that they attend routine and specialist health appointments. Where children have additional health needs, the staff work closely with specialist health providers to make sure that children's health needs are met.

Children's education is promoted by the staff, and this has helped one child to recently complete his exams. For another child, the staff worked well with education providers to identify a suitable education provision for the child and support him to settle into his new school. However, one professional stated that the staff could do more to work with education staff to help support the child to settle into the school day.

The staff consult with the children daily and listen to their expressed wishes and feelings. This helps the children to actively participate in day-to-day and more-complex decisions about their lives. The children have access to an independent advocate who visits the home monthly. This level of consultation has resulted in a change of care plan for one child, who is being supported to work towards his goal of being reunited with his family.

The quality of relationships between the staff and the adults involved in the children's lives is good. Professionals and one family member spoke positively about the working relationships that they have with the staff and the quality of care that the children living in the home receive from the staff.

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

Children feel safe living in the home. Professionals and family members have confidence staff's ability to keep children safe. One professional spoke about how the staff helped to reduce the number of times that one child went missing from the home and how they helped to reduce the child's vulnerability to being exploited.

The staff's understanding of the children's individual risks and vulnerabilities is good. The children's safety plans and risk assessments accurately detail each child's vulnerabilities and support staff to know what to do to protect the children and reduce risk. In addition, the staff demonstrate a good knowledge of safeguarding policies and procedures. For example, since the last inspection, children have not gone missing from the home. However, the staff understand what they must do to secure the safe return of a child back to the home should they go missing.

Children know how to make a complaint and have access to an independent advocate. Since the last inspection, one allegation has been made by a child living in the home. This allegation was acted on quickly by the staff and the registered manager and safeguarding procedures were followed.

The staff are suitably experienced and trained in promoting positive behaviour within the home. The staff use effective de-escalation techniques and alternative methods to help children. This means that children are rarely held by staff. On the rare occasion that children are held, this is done as a last resort and staff use the least-restrictive methods to keep the child and others safe. Following an incident where a child has been held, the staff support the child to recover by providing them with care and kindness. The staff are supported to reflect on practice following a child being held, which supports staff learning.

Since the last inspection, improvements have been made to the recruitment of new staff to the home. However, there are shortfalls in respect of the information sought from previous employers when verifying references. Although this has not had any impact on the safety or welfare of the children living in the home, this shortfall does not prevent unsuitable adults from working in the home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

Since the last inspection, there have been two occasions where senior managers have not made child-centred decisions about children coming to live at the home. This shortfall resulted in children quickly moving on from the home, which impacted negatively on the children living in the home and staff morale.

The home is properly resourced by a stable and consistent staff team. The staff spoke openly about the difficulties they experienced when two children moved into the home on an unplanned basis. However, the staff reported that the situation has improved, and they enjoy working in the home. The staff feel supported by the home's leadership and management team, and have confidence in the registered manager and her vision for the home.

The home is managed by a permanent, registered manager who is ambitious for children and has high expectations of herself and her staff team. The registered manager is supported by an experienced responsible individual, deputy manager and senior care officer. Together, the leadership and management team work cohesively to make continuous improvements to the quality of care provided to children. This has resulted in the shortfalls identified at the last inspection being addressed and improvements being made to the experiences of children living in the home.

External monitoring takes place monthly by an independent visitor. While the reports identify whether the independent visitor believes that the children are effectively safeguarded, they lack feedback from family members and professionals. This shortfall prevents Ofsted from having effective oversight of the home and the experiences of children.

The registered manager has a visible presence in the home and they know the children living in the home well. She understands the children's individual plans and the progress that the children are making. The registered manager takes effective action with external professionals where there is a risk that children's progress and safety may be compromised.

Leaders and managers learn from practice and feedback, and use this learning to improve the experiences and care of children. Monthly management meetings are utilised to analyse and evaluate information collated from a variety of sources, understand what this means for children, and ascertain what actions are required for the next month to improve the quality of care provided.

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
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home's statement of purpose; that arrangements are in place to ensure the effective induction of each child into the home. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(i))	1 August 2024

Recommendations

- The registered person must have a system in place so that all serious events are notified, within 24 hours, to the appropriate people. The system should cover the action that should be followed if the event arises at the weekend or on a public holiday. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 63, paragraph 14.13)
- The registered person must ensure that necessary support is given to children to enable them to access their education or training. This includes staff working with education staff to help children to access education and training. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 29, paragraph 5.13)

- The registered person must ensure that any individual appointed to carry out visits to the home as an independent person makes a rigorous and impartial assessment of the home's arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the children in the home's care. This includes the independent person consulting with children's family members and involved professionals on a consistent basis. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards'. Page 65, paragraph 15.5)

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: 2594189

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: Sandra Snell

Registered manager: Grace Rouse

Inspector

Shirin Khan, Social Care Inspector

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