

2608872

Registered provider: Northamptonshire Children's Trust Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is operated by a local authority. It provides care for up to two children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

The manager became registered with Ofsted in October 2020.

At the time of the inspection, two children were living at the home, and their views were considered as part of the inspection.

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 August 2025

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: 15 July 2024

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
15/07/2024	Full	Requires improvement to be good
20/06/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
11/01/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
09/03/2022	Interim	Improved effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children are happy and settled in their home. The home is well presented, clean and maintained to a good standard. Plans to refurbish the kitchen are in place and this will improve its practicality and create a more homely atmosphere. Children have personalised their bedrooms to reflect their tastes and interests. One child has a pet hamster. This contributes to their sense of belonging and the encouragement to take responsibility for their animal companion.

Children and staff have developed positive and trusting relationships. This enables children to have important conversations with staff about the things that matter to them. Staff demonstrate a good knowledge of the children. This contributes to creating consistent routines and clear boundaries. A social worker praised a staff member for his thoughtful presentation of a child's profile at a fostering event. This is testament to how his depth of knowledge made him the most appropriate person to share this information.

Children have made progress in their education. One child has excellent attendance at school, and despite the distance, staff have successfully maintained their motivation and engagement. Another child, following a period of instability at their previous school, currently accesses an alternative provision as a temporary measure. The manager has taken a proactive role in liaising with providers to develop a bespoke educational plan tailored to the child's interests and designed to enhance their engagement. The team's sustained efforts to promote attendance and routine have contributed to greater structure and stability in the children's daily lives.

Children are supported to take part in activities that promote their social development and increase their confidence. One child has made notable progress in joining in with activities, including guitar lessons and attending an interview with the Sea Cadets. Children regularly attend community-based activities aligned with their personal interests, which has enabled them to develop their skills. Children also benefit from enriching experiences such as holidays, with one child recently travelling abroad for the first time. As a result of thoughtful planning and dedication from staff, children are gaining new experiences and growing in confidence.

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

Children's risk assessments are reviewed on a regular basis and updated to reflect their current presentation and needs. Staff demonstrate a strong understanding of individual risks and implement effective strategies to reduce risk to children and ensure that children are kept safe.

Children rarely go missing. On the one occasion this occurred, staff responded promptly by following the missing-from-home procedure and child's individual risk assessment, ensuring a swift and safe return home. The managers explored the incident further and

initiated a discussion with professionals in the wider network to consider the negative influence of peers. As a result, the child received additional support to manage their friendships, and further safety measures were implemented to reduce future risk.

Physical interventions are used as a last resort to manage incidents where children pose a risk of significant harm to themselves or others. Most commonly, staff use other agreed strategies, such as distraction or verbal communication, to defuse situations and reduce incidents occurring. All incidents involving physical intervention are carefully documented, and debrief discussions are held with both staff and children involved. The manager's improved oversight of these incidents has supported a culture of reflection and strengthened processes within the home.

Children are supported to maintain meaningful relationships with their families. For one child, staff worked sensitively with a family member, resulting in a successful reunion after several months apart. Another parent expressed how valuable it has been to visit their child's home and praised the excellent communication with staff. This collaborative approach helps children feel reassured that the people who care for them are working together in their best interests.

Two children who previously lived in the home made an allegation against a member of staff. This allegation was reported and handled appropriately by the manager and senior leadership team. A comprehensive investigation was carried out, which allowed for conclusions to be drawn and learning to be identified. While the learning outcomes have been shared with the wider staff team, there remains an opportunity to further strengthen the policy and expectations around professional boundaries. This particularly relates to staff using their personal mobile phones for work purposes.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager's commitment and determination has contributed to the improvements that have been made since the last inspection. The overall positive changes have had a very good impact on children and supported them to make progress. The manager is well supported by a strong deputy manager, who plays an active role in the day-to-day running of the home, particularly in the manager's absence.

The manager understands the importance of having a well-trained and consistent group of staff to care for the children. He has embraced the strengths of his staff, enabling effective delegation of tasks. This collaborative approach has allowed the manager to maintain a clear focus on the children's well-being and progress. This is demonstrated through the strong, positive relationships he has developed directly with the children.

Staff are well supported and now benefit from regular and meaningful supervision sessions. Team meetings are both productive and purposeful, providing a space for reflection. The manager encourages the team to share their views and contribute to the ongoing development of the home. This encourages a culture of learning and reflection. This whole-team approach has helped staff to work in a connected and consistent manner, improving the quality of care provided to children.

Staff are safely recruited in line with safer recruitment practices. Recent vacancies have now been successfully filled, completing the staff team and strengthening the home's capacity to provide consistent care. New staff are supported through a comprehensive induction process to ensure they are well-prepared for their roles. The manager has recently recruited additional senior staff. This ensures that each shift is led by someone with senior experience, promoting consistency, accountability and effective team guidance.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Recommendations

- The registered person is responsible for ensuring that all staff consistently follow the home's policies and procedures for the benefit of the children in the home's care. Everyone working at the home must understand their roles and responsibilities and what they are authorised to decide on their own initiative. There should be clear lines of accountability. This includes staff having access to appropriate resources, such as work mobile phones so they can safeguard children effectively when outside of the home. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.20)
- The registered person must ensure that all staff in a care role, including external agency or bank staff, must have the qualification in regulation 32(4) within the relevant timescale listed in regulation 32(5). The registered person may extend the time period if the member of staff hasn't worked in the role for a prolonged period, such as sick leave or maternity leave, or if it is not reasonable to expect the member of staff to complete in this timescale due to the nature of the hours they work. The registered person must clearly outline and document the rationale for a staff member being granted an extension and identified a target date for completion. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.12)

Information about this inspection

The inspector has 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: 2608872

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Northamptonshire Children's Trust Limited

Registered provider address: One Angel Square, Angel Street, Northampton, Northamptonshire NN1 1ED

Responsible individual: Post vacant

Registered manager: Scott Beasley

Inspector

Kayleigh Spinks, 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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