

2615067

Registered provider: Northamptonshire Children's Trust Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is registered to care for up to five children with social and/or emotional difficulties.

The registered manager is suitably experienced and is in the process of completing the relevant management qualification.

There were three children living at the home at the time of the inspection.

On day one of the inspection, there was a delay in starting inspection activity due to problems with the provider's IT network. The provider requested a deferral. Ofsted agreed that the inspection would be paused on day 2 if IT systems remained non-operational. On day 2 of the inspection, the IT systems were fully operational and a pause in inspection was not required.

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 May 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	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 2 October 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
02/10/2023	Full	Good
09/08/2022	Full	Good
11/08/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The staff build positive relationships with children. This helps children to settle into the home quickly and start making progress. Children who have previously experienced instability have been supported well by staff and now have more consistency in their lives. A social worker said, 'The energy from staff in the home is all about the children. I have been really impressed. I feel that they have got it right here and staff are 100% there for children.'

The children enjoy living in the home. One child said, 'The home is 9 out of 10.' The positive relationships children and staff have, together with the intensive direct work that staff carry out with children, helps them to feel safe.

Children are well supported with changes in their care arrangements. At significant and difficult times, children are helped to prepare for the next stages of their lives. Staff sensitively manage these transitional periods. There are detailed and well-considered independence skills development plans for children. Staff maintain important connections with children after they have left the home.

External professionals report that the staff are supportive and knowledgeable. There is consistent communication between the home and the wider professional network. Staff know the children well and they are aspirational for each child. Staff ensure that the relevant and individualised support is in place for each child and, as a result of this, the children are making progress.

The environment is warm and has a homely feel. It is well maintained, clean and tidy. Staff take pride in the home and garden areas. Staff consult with children about what they would like in the home and garden and this informs planning.

Each child is engaged in education and has made progress from their starting point when moving to the home. Staff work closely with education colleagues to promote children's engagement and achievements. Staff listen to children and try to find positive solutions when there are barriers to learning.

Care planning for one child has drifted and lacks the required detail and contingency planning. The care plan and relevant documentation have not been provided by the local authority.

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

Children are supported to be safe. Staff use their knowledge and experience to recognise risk and vulnerability and take immediate action to reduce this. There is a strong multi-agency safeguarding response to any incidents of concern. Staff have a good

understanding of safeguarding procedures. They know what action to take if they have any concerns about a child.

The children's individual risk assessments contain the required detail to guide staff in safeguarding them. These assessments are regularly reviewed by the manager and amended as required. Staff understand the importance of consistently following risk assessments. As a result, and over time, children's incidents of risk reduce.

Staff use professional curiosity to promote children's safety. They understand how to manage missing-from-home incidents in accordance with the home's policies and protocols. Staff understand safeguarding processes and the importance of working together with other agencies. Sharing of information with other agencies is good. When necessary, managers escalate and chase responses from others in a timely manner. Children's missing-from-home episodes have reduced but staff carefully track, monitor and evaluate any incidents that occur. A missing-from-care coordinator professional said, 'I do not have any concerns regarding MFC incidents. Staff can normally explain the lead-up to the missing incident or what might have triggered it. This tells me they know the young person well. I have also witnessed the young people have strong connections with staff, which is positive to see.'

Staff use a therapeutic approach to promoting positive relationships with children. Physical interventions are used as a last resort to keep children safe in high-risk situations. There has been a reduction in the use of physical intervention. Debriefs are completed with staff and there is management oversight, along with independent review, to ensure nothing is missed. The details of how children are debriefed following incidents are not always clearly recorded.

Staff act as strong advocates for children when accessing services and support. They are proactive in engaging support for children in a timely manner. These services have supported children on a range of issues, such as going missing from home, child exploitation, healthy relationships and mental health.

Allegations are appropriately responded to and children are listened to. When there have been staff misconduct matters, managers have ensured there has been a robust response.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is managed effectively by a permanent and experienced manager. The manager is committed to securing improved outcomes for the children.

The staff team remains stable and provides predictable and consistent care to children. All the staff enjoy good working relationships. Communication between the staff is good and they say morale is positive. Staff share relevant information and show professional curiosity in identifying any further information to support risk assessments for the children's safety.

Staff feel well supported. They are happy and feel motivated to care for children. They have a detailed understanding of the children's needs and how to care for them effectively. This positive approach and the positive relationships help children to make progress in a short space of time.

Staff feel supported by managers. They have regular supervision, training and team meetings which include additional clinical support. Leaders and managers actively seek relevant training opportunities to meet staff's training needs. Training and learning needs are kept under review and staff targets are set. However, opportunities are missed in supervision to reflect on and evidence individual children's progress, attainment and achievement or to identify any emerging patterns or themes.

There are established management monitoring systems to provide good oversight of the quality of care provided to the children. Managers understand the importance of providing staff with the skills and knowledge to care for the children safely and consistently.

A small number of staff have not achieved the relevant qualification within the required time frame.

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
For the purposes of paragraph (3)(b), an individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification if, by the relevant date, the individual has attained— the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (England) ("the Level 3 Diploma"); or a qualification which the registered person considers to be equivalent to the Level 3 Diploma. The relevant date is— in the case of an individual who starts working in a care role in a home after 1st April 2014, the date which falls 2 years after the date on which the individual started working in a care role in a home; in the case of an individual who was working in a care role in a home on 1st April 2014, 1st April 2016. The registered person may defer the relevant date if the individual— does not work, or has not worked, in a care role in a home for a prolonged period; or works, or has worked, in a care role in a home on a part-time basis. (Regulation 32 (4)(a)(b) (5)(a)(b) (6)(a)(b))	30 September 2024
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;	23 May 2024

has signed the record to confirm it is accurate;

within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure.

(Regulation 35 (3)(b)(i)(ii)(c))

This relates to ensuring children receive debriefs following incidents of restraint and that these are evidenced and recorded.

Recommendations

- The home should play a full part in promoting the best interests of the child, proactively advocating for the child to ensure that others play their role and deliver the high-quality support that is needed. Such partnership working should always take place before a child arrives, while the child lives in the home and when the child prepares to return home, move to another setting or leave care. This relates to ensuring that local authority care plans for children do not drift. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 11, paragraph 2.4)
- The registered person should have systems in place so that all staff, including the manager, receive supervision of their practice from an appropriately qualified and experienced professional, which allows them to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2)

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: 2615067

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: Sarah Kennedy

Registered manager: Nicola Ahern

Inspectors

Bev Allison, Social Care Inspector
Caroline Coop, 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
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

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