

2667363

Registered provider: City of York Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned and managed by a local authority. The home provides care for one child between the ages of 11 and 17 years. Children who live in the home are likely to have social, emotional or mental health difficulties.

The home registered with Ofsted in December 2021, and this is the home's first inspection. The qualified manager, who also manages another home for the local authority, registered with Ofsted in December 2021.

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 June 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	inadequate
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The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: not previously inspected

Overall judgement at last inspection: not previously inspected

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

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: requires improvement to be good

Children's overall progress and experiences are not well understood because their placements are not underpinned by a plan that sets out what is to be achieved. Staff do not know what they should be talking to children about to help them to make progress. For example, the arrangements for children's education are not always clear, which leads to a lack of day-to-day structure for children. The care that staff provide is often reactive and lacks purpose. As a result, children do not know what needs to happen to enable a successful move in the future.

Children do not always have a positive introduction to the home. For example, a child moved into the home without proper evaluation of whether staff were able to understand and meet their needs. The child had to move to another placement within a short period, having experienced significant difficulties in the home. This was a very poor experience for the child.

Agency staff are regularly used in the home due to staff shortages. Children feel uncomfortable with unknown staff working in their home so often. There is no evaluation of the impact on children of being cared for by people who they do not know. There has been no change to this practice since the home opened and managers do not have a plan to resolve these difficulties.

Children cannot currently access all parts of the home. For example, the kitchen door is locked at night despite there being no safeguarding reason to do so. Changes to external locks have not been made, even though this was required several months ago. The child is frustrated by these arrangements and knows that they are not right. As well as affecting their day-to-day experiences, the child is not being helped to develop trust in and respect for managers and staff.

Staff work hard to develop good relationships with children. They want children to make progress and to be safe. The child living in the home knows this and generally responds well to permanent staff. For example, the child talks to staff about issues relating to emotional distress. Staff have worked through some significant difficulties since the home opened. They show resilience and commitment to children.

Children provide their views on their day-to-day experiences. This includes significant aspects of their care, such as time spent with family, as well as more routine matters, such as meal planning. The child in the home is being helped to understand the impact of their own views. This is important for their developing sense of personal identity.

The care of children is well supported by a multi-disciplinary team. This is a strength of the service. The home's manager attends regular meetings with this team to consider the issues that matter most to children. Managers share the views of

children at these meetings, which helps to ensure that the voice of the child is heard. However, the outcomes of these meetings are not incorporated into structured plans for the child's placement. This reduces their value.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

The arrangements for fire safety are not effective. Fire drills have not taken place since the home opened. Fire alarm tests are not carried out in line with the home's own fire risk assessment. Managers were unable to explain this gap in essential practice, which was only identified during the inspection. Managers undertook to rectify this situation as a matter of urgency.

Staff undertake training to help them manage children's behaviour. This means that when they must physically intervene with a child, they do so safely. However, behaviour support plans are not effective. They do not provide staff with strategies to help children to become calm, which means that children can become very unsettled. This had a poor impact on one child.

Staff do not yet have the skills and knowledge to meet the emotional needs of children. For example, staff have undertaken some safeguarding learning. However, they have not had in-depth training to help children struggling with complex emotional needs. This means that staff cannot provide children with all the help they need.

Staff prepare and follow individualised risk assessments for children. Risk assessments contain specific actions, which help staff to know what to do. For example, if a child is missing from the home, staff go out to search for them and work with the police and other agencies. Children's risks from being missing from the home reduce because of the action that staff take to protect them.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

The quality of management oversight of the home is ineffective. The registered manager does not spend significant time in the home, although he sometimes does residential shifts when the needs of the rota require it. The registered manager does not monitor the quality of paperwork. He does not evaluate the impact on children of the care they receive. The registered manager has a poor understanding of many of the processes in the home, which means shortfalls relating to these are not rectified.

The arrangements for the day-to-day oversight of the home have not been appropriate. The registered manager also manages another home. This affects his ability to provide effective management of this home. The person in day-to-day control was not given adequate support or training. However, recent changes have been well received by staff. Senior managers understand the reasons for these shortfalls, but they have taken too long to put in place more suitable arrangements.

Staff do not have an effective induction into working in the home. Some staff received introductory information almost two months after they started working in the home. Staff do not know the length of the home's probationary period, and they do not have meetings with a manager to discuss their progress. This means that staff are not helped to feel confident in their roles and do not feel supported by managers.

Staff do not receive regular supervision of their practice. Since the home opened, only five supervision sessions have taken place. Three of these sessions were carried out by a member of staff who does not have the experience to perform this role. This is a significant gap in practice and means that children have been cared for by staff who do not feel valued and supported in their work.

The small staff team lacks a breadth of experience. Only one member of staff has previous experience of working in a children's home for children with social, emotional and mental health difficulties. Training offered to staff has been largely online and meets only minimum standards for staff working in a children's home. This means that staff have few resources to draw on when difficulties arise. Despite this, staff remain committed to children and want them to make progress.

The arrangements for an independent visitor are not effective. Visits have not taken place every month. When visits have taken place, the visitor does not always seek evidence to support the information provided. For example, the low rate of supervision was not identified. The visitor does not understand the experiences of children well enough to conclude whether they are being safeguarded and their well-being promoted.

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 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)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that fire drills, which include children and staff, are carried out and that the routine testing of the fire alarm takes place in line with the home's own fire risk assessment.	29 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— lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;	29 July 2022

ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child; understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home; 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)(a)(c)(d)(f)(h))	
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 arrangements are in place to— ensure the effective induction of each child into the home; manage and review the placement of each child in the home; and plan for, and help, each child to prepare to leave the home or to move into adult care in a way that is consistent with arrangements agreed with the child's placing authority; and that each child's relevant plans are followed. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(i)(ii)(iii)(c))	29 July 2022
The registered person must ensure that— the privacy of children is appropriately protected; children can access all appropriate areas of the children's home's premises; and any limitation placed on a child's privacy or access to any area of the home's premises—	29 July 2022

is intended to safeguard each child accommodated in the home; is necessary and proportionate; is kept under review and, if necessary, revised; and allows children as much freedom as is possible when balanced against the need to protect them and keep them safe. (Regulation 21 (a)(b)(c)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv))	
The registered person must— ensure that each employee completes an appropriate induction; and ensure that each permanent appointment of an employee is subject to the satisfactory completion of a period of probation. The registered person must ensure that all employees— receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (1)(a)(b) (4)(b))	29 July 2022
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— to inspect the premises of the home and such of the home's records (except for a child's case records, unless the child and the child's placing authority consent) as the independent person requires. The independent person must produce a report about a visit ("the independent person's report") which sets out, in particular, the independent person's opinion as to whether— children are effectively safeguarded; and the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being. (Regulation 44 (1) (2)(b) (4)(a)(b)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that visits take place unless the home is closed. In addition, the decision about whether children are safeguarded and their	29 July 2022

well-being promoted must be made taking into account an evidence-based analysis of how care is provided.	
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Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff encourage an enthusiasm for positive behaviour through effective positive behaviour strategies in line with the child's relevant plans. ('Guide to the Children's Home Regulations, including the quality standards', page 39, paragraph 8.13)
- The registered person should ensure that staff are provided with training to give them the knowledge and skills to recognise any signs that might indicate a child is in any way at risk of harm, including self-harm. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 43, paragraph 9.12)

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: 2667363

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: City of York Council

Registered provider address: West Offices, Station Rise, York YO1 6GD

Responsible individual: Jamaila Hussain

Registered manager: James Wanstall

Inspector

Jane Titley, Social Care Inspector

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