

2672877

Registered provider: North Lakes Children's Service Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned by a private company. It is registered to provide care for four children with social and emotional difficulties.

The home was first registered in March 2022. Four children moved into the home on 26 August 2022.

The current manager took over the day-to-day running of the home on 29 August 2022. He has submitted his application to register with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 17 and 18 January 2023

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	requires improvement to be good
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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 applicable

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: not applicable

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

The children currently living in this home moved into this home from another of the providers homes in the area. However, not all children reported that the transition had been easy. One child said, 'The move from the other home was tough but staff were supportive.'

The home is well presented. Children's bedrooms are personalised and have a range of toys, games, and equipment to suit the children's individual interests. All children's bedrooms have ensuite bathrooms. There are toilets on the ground floor which are not available to children. This is because potentially unsafe items are stored in this room. Leaders and managers accept that these toilets should be available for children. They plan to review what action they can take to make this toilet accessible.

Children said that they enjoy living in the home and feel supported and protected by those who care for them. Children understand how to raise concerns. However, on one occasion when a child made an allegation against a member of staff, the records available did not demonstrate that the child was spoken to about this incident.

Leaders, managers and staff support children to attend school full time; as a result, children are making progress in line with their relevant plans. However, children are presenting with risks at school that are not prevalent in the home. The manager identified that communication with school could be improved when significant incidents have occurred.

Children are healthy and are supported to attend appropriate medical appointments. Children have access to specialist services to meet their individual needs. A registered nurse is employed by the provider. She has oversight and involvement in children's individual healthcare arrangements and knows the children well.

Therapeutic support for children is individualised and helps children to understand their past experiences of trauma and neglect. Children have weekly access to a therapist. The therapist also provides clinical supervision to staff, which promotes a consistent approach to care.

Staff support children to spend appropriate time with family, friends and other significant people in line with their care plans. This means children can maintain important relationships.

Children have memory books that reflect their time in the home. The memory books contain pictures of children enjoying activities with their families, friends, staff and each other.

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

Not all staff fully understand their roles and responsibilities in protecting children from harm. Risk management plans do not consistently identify actions for staff to follow to keep children safe. Staff said that some strategies detailed in risk management plans are unclear, this can lead to confusion for the staff team.

Children have positive relationships with those who care for them. During the inspection, the inspector observed children and staff interacting. Interactions were playful and respectful. Staff respond to children with clear boundaries. Direct work with children focuses on children's individual needs. Key-work sessions help children to understand their behaviour and discuss their feelings securely.

Leaders and managers do not consider the needs of individual children alongside the needs of other children living in the home. There have been several incidents of bullying between children. Details have been shared with relevant agencies and individuals. However, children are not consistently spoken to following incidents. The manager has had oversight of incidents but does not consistently record an evaluation or outcome.

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

A new manager has taken over the home. The previous manager has voluntarily withdrawn her registration. Leaders and managers have implemented new systems to support management oversight and monitoring in the home. However, there has been insufficient time for these improvements to become embedded in day-to-day practice to support children's care.

The new manager understands the plans for children. However, children's plans are not consistently updated, and it is unclear how staff are made aware of updates. Staff also confirmed to the inspector that they do not always know when a document has been changed.

Children's records do not accurately represent children's current care arrangements. Although children now live in a new children's home, all documents refer to their previous placement. The manager has not escalated his requests for relevant plans to be provided by the placing authorities. This means that documents do not reflect children's journey through care.

Staff said that they feel supported in their roles and receive regular supervision from leaders and managers. Records demonstrate that staff are receiving regular mandatory training and are supported to attend focused and specific training sessions to meet the needs of the individual children.

The manager has completed a quality-of-care review. However, children's feedback and consultation have not been included in this review. This breach in regulation means that children's views have not been considered as part of this monitoring and review document.

The statement of purpose details that the home can provide care for four children. There are three children currently living in the home. As a child's bedroom is being used for staff to sleep in, this does not allow the home to accommodate four children at this time.

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
In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— meet the needs of each child; and enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home; (Regulation 6 (2)(c)(i)(ii)) This specifically relates to children being able to access all areas of the home.	1 April 2023
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; manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; 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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(iv)(v)(b))	1 April 2023

This relates to having a consistent approach to risk and clear actions for staff to take to help to minimise the risk of harm. Furthermore, ensure that staff understand how to prevent children from harming each other.	
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— ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to 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; demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on— feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(e)(f)(g)(ii)) In particular, this relates to the requirement for leaders and managers to update all relevant plans and ensure that these plans are read, understood and followed by those who care for children. In addition, leaders and managers should address and record any concerns raised and feedback on the experiences of children.	1 April 2023
The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which— include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child; are kept up to date; and are signed and dated by the author of each entry.	1 April 2023

(Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)(c)) In particular, leaders and managers should ensure that the date and circumstances of any measure of control, discipline or restraint used in relation to the child are recorded. In addition, leaders and managers should ensure that children's relevant plans are kept up to date and accurately reflect children's current care-planning.	
The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ("a quality of care review") at least once every 6 months. In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating— the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it. The system referred to in paragraph (2) must provide for ascertaining and considering the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff. (Regulation 45 (1) (2)(b) (5))	1 April 2023

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: 2672877

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: North Lakes Children's Service Limited

Registered provider address: Malvern View, Hanbury Road, Stoke Prior,
Bromsgrove, Worcestershire B60 4AD

Responsible individual: Joanne August

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Nichola Croft, Social Care Inspector

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