

2677302

Registered provider: North West Youth Services

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home registered in July 2022 and is operated by a private provider. The home provides care for up to three children who may experience social and emotional difficulties and/or learning disabilities. There are currently three children living at the home.

The registered manager moved to become the responsible individual. Therefore, the home has been without a registered manager since January 2024. The new manager commenced in post at the same time and has applied to register with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 29 and 30 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	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: 5 September 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
05/09/2023	Full	Good
15/06/2023	Full	Inadequate
27/02/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children develop trusting relationships with staff, who ensure that they are well cared for. Staff get to know the children's strengths and personalities and provide individualised care based on their needs, wishes and aspirations.

Children are healthy. They are registered with local health services, including dentists and doctors, and attend routine appointments. Older children are supported to manage their own medication. Appropriate assessments are in place and safe storage for medication is provided in children's rooms. Children are helped to establish a daily routine. Staff helped one child who had a significantly disturbed sleep pattern to understand what was expected of them through visual plans. The child has made progress and now settles more quickly.

Children's education is valued, and staff support children to attend school. One child had not attended school for two years before they lived at the home, and has begun to attend their new school. A well-planned transition has helped the child to cope with the changes. The child said that they were feeling confident and proud of themselves. When a child is struggling to attend school, the staff work closely with the school, the virtual school, and the child's social worker to understand how best to help the child.

Children know how to complain. Children are confident in raising concerns with staff and managers, and know where else they can go should they feel that their concerns are not being acted on. In addition, children have access to an independent advocate.

One child who moved from the home was provided with a memory book that was highly personalised. This provides them with memories and reflected the time the child had spent at the home.

The home provides a warm and welcoming family-style environment. Photographs of the children are on display and their belongings found throughout the home. Staff encourage and support children to personalise their rooms.

The annexe area of the home is not well maintained. There is a lack of privacy because the toilet door does not have a suitable lock, and the lack of furnishings, and uncomfortable seating, make it uninviting. This is discouraging children from inviting their friends to visit them. Furthermore, a disused alarm control panel that was still connected to the electric supply was damaged during an incident and had been taped together as a temporary repair. This was not repaired promptly; however, once the manager was made aware, the control panel was disconnected.

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

Children develop trusting relationships with staff, who afford them with nurture and emotional warmth. Observations of staff and children throughout the inspection were positive and showed high levels of playfulness and respect.

Children's behaviour is managed well, and staff ensure that children know what is expected of them. When children move into the home, they are provided with sufficient information about rules and expectations. Staff regularly reinforce positive behaviour through reward and praise. A younger child has a chart that helps them to track their own progress. Incentives are in place for all children, to reward their success.

Staff only use physical holds on children when needed to ensure their safety. The type of hold used is consistently in line with the children's individual plans, and the events are well recorded. Children are spoken to by someone who was not involved, and their feelings are listened to and captured. However, the quality of these records is inconsistent. In addition, when consequences have been used, the child has not always been spoken to about how they felt, and the manager has not considered the child's needs within their evaluation.

Staff respond quickly when children are missing from home and follow children's individual missing-from-home protocols. Staff actively search for children and use their knowledge of the child's associates to locate them and bring them home to safety. When risks to the child are not recognised or acted on appropriately by other professionals, the manager shares relevant information and challenges poor practice.

There have been two occasions when a child has made comments which could constitute an allegation about staff members. Staff have not made sufficient records of these comments. The manager has investigated the concerns, but there is a lack of professional curiosity. In addition, they have not recorded the actions taken to reduce risk to children and, on one occasion, the child's social worker was not informed. The manager has also not explored whether these constitute a safeguarding notification to Ofsted. This is not in line with the home's allegation management procedure and does not help to keep children safe.

There was a serious incident that occurred which Ofsted was not notified about in a timely way. This happened at the weekend when the manager was not working at the home. Staff are not aware of the action to follow to notify the regulator if the event arises at the weekend or on a public holiday.

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

The manager has been in post for six months. She has considerable experience working in children's homes as a deputy manager and has recently commenced the required level 5 training course.

There have been staff vacancies which includes the deputy manager post. The leadership team has been recruiting staff to these posts. The manager employs agency staff only as a last resort, such as when an immediate increase in staff ratios is needed

due to new risks emerging. This means that, overall, children receive predictable care from adults who they know and trust.

The changes in the staff team means that there are shortfalls within the auditing and monitoring of the manager. Changes made are in their infancy and need embedding in practice, such as improving the consistency of staff's recording.

The manager is child centred and has a clear vision of the changes she wants to make to provide high-quality care for children. However, these ambitions are not set out clearly. The home's development plan remains in draft form.

Consultation with professionals who are directly involved with the children living in the home could be strengthened. In addition, the review of the quality of care does not include consultation with children and the report lacks evaluation. This does not help the manager to drive forward improvements in the home.

Staff feel well supported and say that the manager has brought stability to the home. They feel more secure in their role. Staff find the manager to be approachable, consistent, and clear in the guidance she gives to staff. This has helped the staff to work better together.

Staff receive regular supervision as set out in the home's statement of purpose. This allows staff to talk about their feelings, concerns, and professional development. Children's needs and experiences are reflected on. Actions are identified and reviewed at subsequent meetings. This is supporting staff to continuously develop their practice and feel more confident in their role.

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 staff— are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(vii)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that when children make comments that indicate that they have been harmed by others, these need to be followed up in line with the home's allegations procedure. This includes making detailed records of the comments made and any resulting investigation and consultation with others.	13 September 2024
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— 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; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(f)(h))	13 September 2024

In particular, the registered person must ensure that there is effective management oversight and evaluation of children's experiences and that this is recorded, including when staff impose consequences on children.

Ensure that effective systems are in place that support the manager to have a full understanding of all aspects of the running of the home, including consultation with others and the impact on children's experiences.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that there is 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. Notification must include details of the action taken by the home's staff in response to the event. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards,' page 62, paragraph 14.13)
- The registered person should ensure that the annex is decorated and furnished in a way that meets the individual needs of children living at the home. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards,' page 15, paragraph 3.7)

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: 2677302

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: North West Youth Services

Registered provider address: Peine House, Hind Hill Street, Heywood OL10 1JZ

Responsible individual: Kayleigh Grice

Registered manager: Jennifer Stewart

Inspector

Rachel Walker, Social Care Inspector

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