

2701185

Registered provider: Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This local authority children's home provides care for up to four children with social and emotional difficulties. There were four children living in the home at the time of the inspection.

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 November 2023

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: 17 January 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
17/01/2023	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children experience stability through the consistent routines and boundaries that staff implement in the home. This supports children to have positive relationships with staff and each other. These relationships help children to experience a sense of belonging and safety. One professional commented that the relationships for one child had been 'invaluable' to the child's progress and that the child has 'thrived' as a result.

Children are supported to follow their interests through activities with staff and children's peers. Appropriate relationships with family and friends, and with others outside of the home are promoted. Staff understand how important these links are for children, including spending quality time with their families. This is promoted and facilitated, even if family members live a considerable distance away. A family member said, 'Staff go above and beyond to ensure [name of child] has a positive relationship with his family.'

Education is promoted by staff, and all children attend education at appropriate settings. Staff advocate for children to ensure that their education plans meet their current needs. When children approach the age of independence, their plans are developed alongside statutory partners and in line with children's aspirations. Two children have apprenticeships, and one child has a part-time job.

Children's health needs are met. Staff advocated for regular meetings with health staff to ensure that children's plans are progressed. Children's goals and care plans align with the recommendations highlighted in health assessments. Specialist support for children is sought when it is needed, although children do not always engage with this. In these cases, staff try to support children by booking appointments and encouraging children to attend.

Memory books, which are created by staff for children, remind children of the positive experiences with staff, other children and people who are important to them. These are updated regularly and go with the children when they move on from the home.

Children's moves in and out of the home are well thought out. Even when endings are unplanned, staff continue to support children so that relationships are not severed. When children move in, staff meet children, talk with them, give them opportunities to ask questions, and help them to settle in. Children visit the home before moving in, so that when they do move in, people are familiar to them and their bedrooms are decorated in line with their wishes.

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

Children feel safe and are protected from harm. Staff understand the risks that are present for children. They respond in line with plans and complete work alongside children to reduce risks. If staff are concerned, they seek support and action from multi-agency colleagues.

Risk assessments are individual to children, detailed and easy to read. They are updated regularly, and track children's progress. The risks identified in the risk assessments, align to current risks for children.

When children go missing, staff search the local area and places that children usually go. Staff contact children's known associates and family, as well as contacting the relevant safeguarding agencies. When children return, staff ensure that independent return-home interviews take place.

Staff use their good relationships with children to de-escalate negative behaviours when children are in crisis. This means that children rarely need to be held. There has only been one occasion when a child has needed to be held, and this was necessary to ensure their safety. While the records demonstrate the actions of the child and staff, the record of the debrief with the member of staff following the hold shows that this did not take place in a timely way.

The positive relationships with children promote open and restorative conversations. Children trust the adults working in the home and go to them with their worries or concerns. On two occasions, children have shared concerns about staff. On one of these occasions, the allegation was not managed in a timely way. The risk to children was minimised as the member of staff did not work at the home during this time.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is appropriately qualified and experienced. He has created a caring and child-focused culture within the home, which results in a warm and homely atmosphere for children. Staff spoke about children with smiles on their faces; they celebrate children's achievements.

When statutory documents are not received from the local authority, the manager and staff ensure that this is escalated for a speedy response. This is mitigated by staff making their own record of the meeting and having a clear understanding of any actions or recommendations. This means that they can ensure that they are taking appropriate actions and updating plans even when they do not have formal paperwork.

Staff feel valued and proud to work at the home. Supervision takes place regularly, and it is detailed and reflective. Discussions about the children always take place, and any actions set are reviewed in the following supervision. The manager supports staff in their own professional development by ensuring that they receive

opportunities to support progression. Team meetings take place regularly, and when shortfalls are identified through the monitoring systems, appropriate additional learning is provided.

The manager advocates on behalf of children. He has effectively challenged other agencies when children have not received a good service. The manager has utilised processes to ensure agencies are accountable for their actions and children are treated in a fair way and kept safe.

Safer recruitment practices ensure that staff are safe to work at the home. There is one vacancy in the team. This is covered by members of the team or bank staff from within the local authority so that children receive care from consistent people.

Not all staff are up to date with their mandatory training. First-aid training and other mandatory training for some staff has lapsed. All staff are due to attend the relevant training imminently. However, there are sufficient staff working in the home to ensure that a suitably trained person with a current first-aid qualification is always present in the home.

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person 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 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— understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(v)(vi)(vii)) In particular, ensure that when an allegation about a member of staff is made, immediate action is taken so that children are safeguarded from harm.	1 December 2023
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 staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c))	10 January 2024

In particular, ensure that mandatory training is up to date for all staff.	
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Recommendations

- The registered person must ensure that when a physical intervention has taken place, the manager debriefs any member of staff who has been involved, within 48 hours. If the manager is not available within this timescale, this should be completed by another appropriate person. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 51, paragraph 9.59)

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: 2701185

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Doncaster Council

Registered provider address: Civic Office, Waterdale, Doncaster DN1 3BU

Responsible individual: Angela Currie

Registered manager: Kevin Cox

Inspector

Joanna Beal, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
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