

2701185

Registered provider: Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home was previously registered with Doncaster Trust. On 1 September 2022, the home was re-registered due to a transfer in legal identity. The home is now run by Doncaster Council.

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

Inspection dates: 17 and 18 January 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: not previously inspected

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: not applicable

Recent inspection history

Not previously inspected

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Sharing enjoyable activities and regular, meaningful chats help children to build strong and trusting relationships with staff. Children feel well cared for and recognise how staff help them. Children are comfortable sharing their feelings and views, which staff listen to.

Staff fully promote children's learning. Staff understand the importance of children having the right educational provision. They work with professionals to review education plans for children who are reluctant to go to school. Some children make considerable progress, excel at school and are working towards their secondary school qualifications.

Staff recognise the importance of children having good health. Children are discouraged from taking harmful substances, and they go to the gym and learn about eating nutritious food. Children's health and personal hygiene improve with the daily support and goals that staff set.

Children spend time with people who are very important to them. A high level of investment by staff has helped one child to reconnect with family who live a considerable distance away. Spending time with family has helped this child and other children to develop better relationships with their parents. Some children have celebrated Christmas with their families. Families value the support that staff provide. One family member said, 'The staff have been like family.'

Children spend lots of time at the home before they move in. They stay overnight, meet staff and other children and choose how to decorate their bedroom. There are good dynamics between children as the manager thoroughly assesses how well they can live together. Children who are new to the home are happy and settle in quickly.

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

Staff identify and manage children's risks very well. Strong partnership working between the home's staff and professionals takes place when these risks escalate. Staff and professionals collaborate to review children's plans and support their needs. Children understand the strategies staff use to help keep them safe. The manager takes proactive action when children do not work with their safety plan and provides alternative interventions. One professional said, 'Staff are doing everything they can to help [child's name].'

Staff follow the individualised missing-from-home protocols and proactively search for children who go missing from care. Children are not away from the home for long periods of time. When children return, they talk to staff and also an independent person. This provides opportunities for children to share their concerns and reasons for being away from home. This also helps staff understand where

children have been and if the risks have changed. The frequency of one child being missing from care has significantly reduced over time. This is because they have good relationships with staff and benefit from the structure and stability in the home. The child has not been missing from care for many months.

The use of restrictive physical intervention is rare. Staff use a proportionate response to maintain everyone's safety. The holds used by staff and the records created are subject to thorough review and scrutiny to ensure that practice is proportionate and necessary. Action is then taken to assist children when incidents occur.

Staff understand children's behaviours and use therapeutic and reflective approaches to support children. Children talk with staff about socially acceptable behaviour. They engage in restorative acts to help make things right. However, the manager is not consistent in their review of the effectiveness of these consequences. Therefore, the effectiveness and outcomes of consequences are not always clear.

Room searches are aligned to children's safety plans. Staff conduct these searches and remove any items they believe may be of risk to children. Staff records identify when searches have taken place, but the records do not clarify whether the child knows when there has been a search or what the outcome of each search has been.

Staff encourage children to talk about their experiences of bullying. Children talk with staff and disclose the text messages they receive on their mobile phones. Staff respond to disclosures; they reassure children and take action to protect them. Staff attend meetings and support children to meet with the police. This has usually resulted in the end of any bullying, leading to children developing trust in staff and professionals.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The dedicated manager ensures that children receive high-quality care. He has constructive working relationships with the two deputy managers and the responsible individual, who regularly visits. Together, they oversee a range of monitoring and review systems. The home runs smoothly and in line with the statement of purpose.

The manager values the input of supporting professionals and holds the ethos that 'we can't do it on our own'. Professionals understand the progress children make and the challenges they face because communication from the home is very good.

The manager's knowledge of the staff's individual learning styles helps to develop the team around him. Reflection and self-review are seen to be key. Regular supervision, progression plans and purposeful post-incident debriefs occur. The manager's approach motivates staff, who feel valued and well supported.

An established and cohesive staff team provides consistent care for children. Staff like working with each other, which helps to create an uplifting atmosphere in the home.

Staff look after the home well and ensure that it is clean and tidy. All areas are well maintained, and there is a good use of communal space. A maintenance support team completes timely repairs and responds promptly to emergency situations. This ensures that children have a nice, homely place to live.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that they inform children when bedroom searches take place and what the outcomes have been. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 16, paragraph 3.20)
- The registered person should ensure that the effectiveness and outcomes of consequences for children are consistently recorded. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.36)

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 Metropolitan Borough Council

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

Responsible individual: Angela Currie

Registered manager: Kevin Cox

Inspector

Alexandra Howitt, Social Care Inspector

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