

2702037

Registered provider: City of Doncaster Council

Assurance inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is managed by a local authority. It is registered to provide care for up to four children who may have social and emotional difficulties.

There are currently three children living in the home. During the inspection two children were seen and one child agreed to speak to the inspector.

The home has had no registered manager in post since October 2024. A manager is appointed and will apply to be the registered manager.

Inspection date: 7 January 2025

Date of last inspection: 31 July 2024

Judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Information about this inspection

At this inspection, the inspector evaluated:

- the care of children
- the safety of children
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers.

The inspector has looked closely at the experiences and progress of children, using the social care common inspection framework. This assurance 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'.

Findings from the inspection

We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance inspection.

Staff do not always follow children's safety plans. Children's risks and vulnerabilities are detailed in their assessments and plans. However, directions for staff to follow are not always clear or actioned. For example, one child's room was not searched to ensure this was safe after the child self-injured, and a body map was not completed of the injuries.

Leaders and managers have not actively engaged professionals about a child's experiences, progress and risks. Although managers contribute to children's meetings, there has been no challenge when agreed safety plans for children are ineffective. This could leave children at risk of harm if left unaddressed.

Children's progress in learning, skills and employment is varied. One child is engaging in learning and is supported to attend education regularly. However, for some children, engaging in education is a struggle. One child is not engaged by staff in activities during the school day and spends long periods in their bedroom.

Leaders and managers have not ensured that all staff have the skills detailed in the statement of purpose or children's plans to meet children's needs. Some staff are waiting for training to be provided for first aid and behaviour management.

Consequences are inconsistently recorded. Although children are placed on supervised spending, this is not always recorded, nor is the effectiveness of the consequence reviewed or evaluated by the manager. The arrangements for managing behaviours that challenge do not provide staff with consistent, well-thought-out strategies to help children.

The property is warm, welcoming and well-furnished. However, children's bedrooms need maintenance and care to provide a nurturing and homely feel. One child's bedroom has a damaged windowsill and another child's room was untidy. These factors are unlikely to provide children with a sense of pride in their personal space in the home.

An independent visitor attends the home regularly and provides a report. The independent visitor is still to be supported to engage children to gain their views when they visit. Although children's voices are detailed in their case records, support for children to engage with the independent visitor is still to be secured.

The frequency and quality of the supervision that staff receive have improved since the last inspection. The manager has developed monitoring systems to have oversight of staff supervision and how frequently this takes place. This ensures that staff receive regular opportunities for reflective conversations.

A manager has been appointed to the home since the last inspection. The manager is responding positively to shortfalls raised at the last inspection and accepts that further time is needed to embed changes. The restated requirements will be considered at the next full inspection.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
31/07/2024	Full	Requires improvement to be good
05/09/2023	Full	Good

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 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— 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; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(iii)(vi)) Restated.	18 February 2025
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must ensure that staff— seek to involve each child's placing authority effectively in the child's care, in accordance with the child's relevant plans; seek to secure the input and services required to meet each child's needs; if the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority's or a relevant person's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 5 (a)(b)(c)) Restated.	18 February 2025

The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— 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)(b) (2)(c)) Restated.	18 February 2025
The registered person must ensure that— within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes— the name of the child; details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of the measure; the date, time and location of the use of the measure; a description of the measure and its duration; details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure; the name of the person who used the measure ("the user"), and of any other person present when the measure was used; the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure; within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person")—	18 February 2025

has spoken to the user about the measure; and has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(b)(i)(ii)(c))	
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Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the children's home is a nurturing and supportive environment that meets the needs of the children. It should be a homely, domestic environment. In particular, the children's bedrooms must be clean, tidy and free from hazards. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that any individual appointed to carry out visits to the home as an independent person must make a rigorous and impartial assessment of the home's arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the children in the home's care. This particularly relates to ensuring that visits by an independent person include regular consultation with children. ('Guide to Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.5)

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 2702037

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: City of Doncaster Council

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

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Joanne Wallis, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
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Manchester
M1 2WD

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