

2702037

Registered provider: City of Doncaster Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This 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. All three were spoken to as part of this inspection.

The home has a suitably qualified registered manager.

Inspection dates: 31 July and 1 August 2024

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: 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

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

Children living in the home have varied relationships with staff. Some children speak warmly of their relationships with staff and describe them as positive. One child spends most of their time out of the home, returning only to sleep. Another child does not feel that they have trusted relationships with staff yet. Staff have not yet managed to engage one child, resulting in the child having a lack of knowledge about their care.

The home's statement of purpose does not reflect the support that it can offer to children. It is unclear whether therapeutic support is offered or not in the home.

One child was recently supported by staff through a challenging time for the child, both emotionally and physically. Staff supported them to work with external professionals, and ongoing work continues directly with the child. Another child was successfully supported to fulfil their desire to move back home with their family.

Staff promote the value of education for children and have worked closely with professionals to support them back into education. Children are making small steps of progress after a period of being disengaged. One child has successfully found part-time employment, and children who have college placements for September are looking forward to the new opportunities this will give them.

Staff support children to maintain their health, and they encourage work with external agencies around sexual health, substance misuse and emotional well-being. Staff identified health concerns for one child and worked closely with health professionals to get support for them. This has led to positive health outcomes for the child.

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

The manager and staff raised concerns about a child being at risk when they were missing from the home. However, information shared with professionals while the child was missing has not always identified the most significant risk. At times, there was insufficient challenge to other providers to support the child. This delayed support being put in place to safeguard the child.

Support from other agencies is now more effective. The child has a specialist worker with whom they have built a strong relationship. The worker is supporting and educating the child about the risks they face. However, delays of several months in appointing a worker left the child at risk.

The manager and staff have removed items from children or limited their phone data and supervised children's spending in order to further manage risk. This has been done

in agreement with other professionals but is not recognised by managers as a consequence. The effectiveness of the measures has not been evaluated or reviewed.

Staff rarely use physical interventions to manage children's behaviour. The staff aim to build relationships with children and are calm and purposeful when a child is distressed. They work restoratively to help children move forward. Staff focus on building relationships and building communication with the child.

There are clean plans to follow when children go missing, and these have been kept under review. Staff responses and practice have changed and developed in response to learning from incidents. Creative work between staff in the home and the specialist worker led to one child's whereabouts being identified. Other agencies were then able to act to safeguard the child.

The manager and staff are open and transparent with professionals about challenges, and they welcome others into the home. The manager was honest about the difficulties faced in the home recently, and achievements and challenges were shared openly. Learning has taken place from recent incidents, and this has resulted in one child not going missing since being returned home, which are positive first steps.

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

The manager escalated children's risks to external agencies but did not challenge them when the response to the risks was delayed. Despite the manager appropriately raising concerns, staff shortages in external agencies prevented them from allocating a specialist worker to the child in a timely way. This had not been challenged by the manager effectively. The manager communicated emerging risks for children to other services but did not always do this consistently or demonstrate a level of urgency.

When a child went missing from the home, the manager communicated this to other services as a health risk rather than stressing the risk of exploitation of the child. This led to other agencies not identifying the emerging risks to the child. The manager was not part of the essential meetings to safeguard the child, despite asking to be involved in them. This led to vital information from the home not being shared in a timely manner. Decisions around levels of risk were not always communicated back to the home. Information is now shared more effectively between agencies. However, agencies have not worked together efficiently to prevent harm to the child.

Not all requirements set at the last inspection have been met. There have been significant concerns throughout recent months, and some have not been shared with the regulator. This has prevented them from having full oversight of the situation. Some risks were identified, shared with professionals and captured in risk assessments, but not noted as serious enough to report to the regulator. When a child received an injury during a missing-from-home episode, there was insufficient exploration of the cause.

The quality of supervision is not always consistent and reflective. A recommendation was

made about this at the last inspection. Staff have recently received training around key risks to children. However, they would have benefited from this before the child moved into the home so that all were aware of early signs of risk.

The independent visitor does not always review and evaluate significant incidents when they visit, which are areas of substantial risk. They have had little consultation or discussion with children over several months. On the last visit, they did consult with one child. This does not give appropriate challenge to managers regarding ongoing concerns.

Staff feel supported by the manager and deputy in the home and by colleagues, and they receive regular supervision. The manager has an open-door policy, and staff receive emotional and personal support. This helps to retain regular staff who the children know, and it promotes stability in the home.

Managers and staff are committed to the children. They demonstrated determination and worked creatively with the missing coordinator when a child went missing from the home. Staff travelled to the area to try and gather information. Once staff identified who the child was with, they shared this information. Immediate action was then taken to safeguard the child and return them home.

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— 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))	16 September 2024
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))	16 September 2024
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if—	16 September 2024

there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(e)) This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	
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))	16 September 2024
The registered person must ensure that all employees— undertake appropriate continuing professional development and receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(a)(b))	16 September 2024

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that they review the home's statement of purpose. This should be child-focused and indicate what needs the home can meet. It should also be clear about the approach to care for the children and how therapeutic support is accessed if required. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 14, paragraph 3.5)
- The registered person should ensure that all incidents of control or discipline, including the use of consequences in the home, are subject to systems of regular scrutiny and their fairness and effectiveness reviewed. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.34)
- 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 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)

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: 2702037

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: Olabode David

Inspectors

Carol Jagger, Social Care Inspector

Vikki Thwaites, Social Care Inspector

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