

2707638

Registered provider: Lincolnshire County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned by a local authority. The home provides a short-break service for children who have disabilities. The home currently provides care for 53 children.

The manager is registered with Ofsted and is suitably qualified and experienced.

Inspection dates: 4 and 5 December 2023

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	inadequate
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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: 24 January 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
24/01/2023	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

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

This home requires improvement because safeguarding arrangements need strengthening in some areas. Children have been at increased risk due to a lack of supervision at night by staff. The oversight of leaders and managers is not yet sufficiently strong to detect concerns such as risk assessments not being updated and records not being completed to the required standard.

This short-break service provides care for 53 children. Five children were staying overnight at the time of the inspection. The home is furnished to a very high standard, giving children a sense of warmth and belonging.

The home provides a range of facilities for children to enjoy. This includes a soft-play area, sensory room, playroom and a large outdoor sandpit. This encourages children to have fun, enjoy their stays and create wonderful memories.

Children's participation in the running of the service is captured in the monthly celebration report. The report contains photos of children enjoying themselves, and these are displayed around the home. These opportunities help to develop children's confidence and social skills. However, a member of staff was observed to be feeding a child when they can do this independently. This takes away from the child's independence skills and autonomy in doing things for themselves.

Staff are experienced at supporting children to form trusting relationships with those caring for them and feel welcome when they come to the home for their stays. The careful planning of children's stays supports them to make friendships with other children and promotes social inclusion.

Managers are working closely with an independent reviewing officer to create a widget-form questionnaire to support children to have a voice at their review meetings. Children have regular access to an independent advocate, and they are actively encouraged to meet with her. This is empowering children with communication difficulties to have their say and be listened to.

Children who are new to the home are welcomed in a planned and sensitive way. Provision is made for them to have their initial overnight stay when fewer children are staying. This provides an opportunity for staff to support children and address anxieties they may have. Children who leave the home, have positive endings; their time at the home is celebrated with a party where further memories are made.

When writing records, staff sometimes use language that could stigmatise children. This is particularly when recording children's behaviours.

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

Staff have an understanding of children's safety needs. However, individual risk assessments are poor. One child has a known risk of banging their head. Although this was identified as a risk in their crisis plan, the child did not have a risk assessment. As a result, staff are not aware of the appropriate actions to take in such incidents. There was one incident when the child was able to bang their head against hard surfaces several times before staff held the child for their own safety.

All children have missing-from-care protocols. However, these do not contain clear guidance for staff in the event of a child going missing from the home. This fails to reflect learning from previous incidents of this nature that occurred in the child's family home. It also fails to protect children in potentially distressing situations, increasing their vulnerability.

Children are not always adequately supervised. There have been two occasions when children have been able to leave their bedrooms during the night undetected. On one occasion, a child was able to gain access to a laundry room and chemicals before staff found them. During a second incident, a child was able to leave their room and enter another child's bedroom. The manager has not taken sufficient action to ensure that arrangements for the supervision of children at night are sufficiently secure.

There has been one allegation made by a child. Although the manager thoroughly investigated the matter, concerns were identified in the response from the staff member to the child. This fails to ensure the child is listened to and their concerns taken seriously.

Errors have been made in the medication administering procedures. The manager has been quick to investigate each occurrence when a mistake has taken place. Changes in practice have been implemented to avoid further errors in the future. All staff are trained in medication administration, and staff have undertaken further competency assessments. As a result, the likelihood of further errors is reduced.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

The management of monitoring systems is not yet sufficiently robust to identify shortfalls. For example, the manager had not identified shortfalls in some records and assessments. The manager has not identified shortfalls in practice and has not thoroughly evaluated incident records and risk management strategies. For example, managers have approved risk management plans that lack the required information. This placed children at increased risk of harm.

Staff do not all have the required training in communication, Makaton and Picture Exchange Communication Systems. This lack of training prevents the voice of the child from being heard fully because not all staff understand children's

communication methods. Additionally, staff are not trained in managing children's eating disorders. Managers have failed to ensure that staff have the required training to meet children's individual, complex needs.

Staff report that they feel supported by the management team. Staff benefit from regular supervision and have opportunities to discuss children's progress at regular team meetings. Staff are eager to develop their own skills. For example, one staff member has developed a resource called 'An introduction to key-working', which is made available to all staff.

Staff carry out regular health and safety checks. All children have personal evacuation plans, and regular fire evacuations take place. However, the storage of oxygen cylinders that are no longer required poses a safety risk to all. The home does have a location risk assessment, although this does not contain any consultation with relevant external agencies. This is a missed opportunity for identifying potential risks.

The manager has worked closely with children's social workers and the local authority designated officer, following serious incidents, to ensure there is transparency. However, on two occasions, Ofsted has not been alerted. This impairs the regulator's oversight in reviewing safeguarding incidents to be confident that agencies are taking the necessary action to ensure the safety of children.

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 health and well-being standard is that— The health and well-being needs of the children are met. (Regulation 10 (1)(a)) This specifically relates to the registered person ensuring children receive oxygen therapy as stated in their plans.	16 January 2024
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 harm to the child. have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk. 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; that the homes day to day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(iii)(v)(vi)(b)) This specifically relates to the registered person ensuring that staff understand their roles and responsibilities in regard	16 January 2024

to completing and reviewing children's individual behaviour management risk assessments. It also relates to the registered person ensuring that children's missing-from-care protocols contain all the necessary information. The registered person must ensure that safeguarding measures are in place to keep children safe through the night. It also relates to the registered person ensuring that staff take allegations reported by children seriously and manage them in accordance with the home's safeguarding policies.	
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; 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)(c)(f)(h)) This specifically relates to the registered person using monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. Additionally, allegations made by children should be taken seriously and managed in accordance with the home's safeguarding policies. It also relates to the manager ensuring that staff have the required training to meet the individual needs of the children	16 January 2024

and that Regulation 40 notifications are submitted after serious incidents of safeguarding have occurred. The registered person should ensure that oxygen cylinders that are no longer required are removed from the building as this causes further risk.	
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that each child's relevant plans are followed. (Regulation 14(1)(a) (2)(c)) This specifically relates to the registered manager ensuring that staff follow children's individual plans to promote their independence.	16 January 2024

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that when conducting a review of the premises, they consult and take into account the views of each relevant person. ('Guide to Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', Page 64, paragraph 15.1)
- The registered person should ensure that the home is nurturing and supportive. Language used by staff should be positive and child centred. ('Guide to Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', Page 15, paragraph 3.9)

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: 2707638

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: Lincolnshire County Council, County Offices,
Newland, Lincoln, LN1 1YL

Responsible individual: Tara Jones

Registered manager: Margaret Nowland

Inspectors

Linda Mason, Social Care Inspector
Zoey Lee, Social Care Inspector

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