

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 the local authority. The home provides a short-break service for children who have disabilities. The home currently provides care for up to 53 children.

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

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 November 2024

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: 5 December 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
05/12/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
24/01/2023	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Since the last inspection, children have continued to enjoy their short-break stays at the home. There were five children staying at the home at the time of the inspection. Four of the children were spoken to and engaged with the inspector during the inspection.

Children's short breaks are carefully considered before they arrive. Managers understand the importance of taking children's wishes and feelings into account before their stay and careful matching the children together at the time of their stay. Children's bedrooms are personalised to their tastes and interests. Their favourite items are placed in their rooms before they arrive. If a child is anxious about leaving their families for a break, the home will send the child a friendly voice message or letter to help prepare them. This helps to inform the child of what is happening and supports them to settle on arrival.

Children are at the heart of this home. Staff provide children with an extremely warm and nurturing home environment. Staff speak about children with enthusiasm, warmth and compassion. They demonstrate unwavering commitment to the children. Children can build trusting, positive relationships with staff who understand their individual needs. One child said, 'I love it here. I wish I could stay more.'

Children communicate their wishes and feelings in a variety of ways. Staff have a detailed understanding of each child's expressions and methods of communication. They involve children in all aspects of the home and always act on what they say where possible. The staff are skilled at really observing and listening to children; this is a core feature of this home.

Children are encouraged and supported to explore their interests and take part in fun, stimulating and new activities. Children access community activities on a regular basis. Staff go to great lengths to create excellent picture boards of positive events and outings through monthly reflection books. These have collections of photos of children achieving their goals and having fun. Children's participation in new experiences enables them to grow in self-esteem and become increasingly confident in their own abilities.

Care planning for children is very effective. All care plans are well organised, regularly reviewed and up to date. Family members and professionals are also involved in these plans. There is good communication between the home, family members and professionals. This contributes to the stability of the children's short break and reduces anxieties for parents while their child is away from home. One parent said, 'We have an open relationship with them. They take on board everything we say. It's a life saver for us. They are fantastic.'

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

The manager and staff understand the children's risks and vulnerabilities. The manager goes to great lengths to understand how best to protect and keep children safe during their stay. For example, the manager sensitively plans each child's stay, considering their compatibility with peers and the skills of the staff team to meet the children's needs.

The manager and staff have a good understanding of their safeguarding roles and responsibilities. Safeguarding training is thorough and planned to meet children's complex needs. Staff understand how to keep children safe. Staff have an in-depth knowledge of their risks and vulnerabilities. As a result, any potential hazards or risks are anticipated, and action is taken to ensure the safety of children.

Staff have received good-quality safeguarding training. As a result, they have a clear understanding of their safeguarding roles and responsibilities. Staff know how to report any concerns they may have. When safeguarding incidents occur, staff know how to respond and keep children safe.

Staff complete the mandatory training required and this helps keep the children safe. They also receive bespoke training that is tailored to the needs of children using the service. Staff discuss safeguarding issues in team meetings. This provides opportunities for staff to discuss and reflect more about specific safeguarding issues. As a result, training is focused on care, support and the safeguarding needs of children.

Children are safer because their risk assessments and plans provide staff with clarity and direction. When there is an accident or a concerning incident, the manager and staff reflect on the plans and risks and adjust the plans if this is required. Plans are also subject to regular updating with the child's family and social worker, so they accurately reflect children's risks and vulnerabilities. These plans provide staff with the direction they need to support and protect children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home has had a period of instability due to the manager being absent. The acting manager who has assumed the role has now registered with Ofsted. This manager has already invested significant time and energy into the home. She is committed and ambitious for children, the staff and the home. She has created a positive culture and vision for the home, which the staff team shares. This is to ensure that all children have the best possible experiences and are provided with excellent, child-centred care during their stay.

Staff speak with pride about each child, and they enjoy their work. They express their pleasure in spending time with the children and enhancing their experiences. Staff demonstrate an openness and willingness to learn. They are well supported by the management team and each other. The manager and management team are visible and

approachable. They work well together, and staff morale is positive. Because of this, the manager and team have ambitious, creative plans to improve the outcomes for children.

Teamwork is fundamental in providing children with high-quality care and support. Staff focus on children's strengths and abilities. Staff have regular, focused team meetings. The staff celebrate all the children's successes. Staff are committed to ensuring that each child has a positive, happy stay while away from their family. The manager and staff encourage a home-from-home, caring and nurturing environment.

The monitoring by the manager is robust. Effective management systems are in place. Records are of a high standard and provide detailed analysis of care provision. Regular audits take place, with actions to address any shortfalls or learnings. This means the manager has a clear understanding of the home's strengths and weaknesses. As a result, development plans are in place to ensure continual improvement.

The committed manager strives to promote the development of the staff team. Staff are supported to develop and grow. Staff access a range of bespoke training essential to the individual needs of the children. The management team has developed workshops on specific needs of children and the practice that underpins the work with children in this home. This means that children receive care from a skilled, reflective and knowledgeable team.

Partnership work with external agencies is very positive. Multidisciplinary work means that the best interests of the children are considered. During this inspection, many professionals contributed and commended the manager and team on the good communication and the excellent quality of care provided. A common thread in the feedback provided by stakeholders is the dedication of staff and how much children enjoy their short break at the home.

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: Heidi Harris

Inspector

Thirza Smith, Social Care Inspector

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