

2767797

Registered provider: Norfolk County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is run by a local authority. It provides care for up to 2 children between the ages of 7 and 17 who experience social and emotional difficulties.

The registered manager left in March 2025. There is a manager in post who has submitted her application to register with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 January 2026

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: 28 August 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
28/08/2024	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Three children have lived at the home since the last inspection. One child has moved out, and their transition was planned and supported. At the time of this inspection, 2 children were living at the home. One child spoke with the inspector.

Children benefit from warm and respectful day-to-day interactions with staff. Staff demonstrate a strong understanding of each child's individual needs and consistently use positive, child-centred language. This approach helps children feel valued and understood.

Staff support children to engage with education, however, attendance is variable. Staff regularly communicate with education providers to discuss challenges impacting children's attendance. Staff make sure children's wishes and feelings are considered to ensure that the education offered is tailored specifically to meet their needs.

Staff support family visits. They recognise the emotional impact of family visits and they respond with sensitivity. This helps children to maintain important family relationships.

Memory books are created to capture children's activities and experiences. Children's views are sought through engagement sessions and house meetings, offering opportunities for children to express likes, dislikes and suggestions for change. Children have influenced changes across the home, including redesigning the living room and personalising their bedrooms. However, the weekly menu is kept in a locked utility room, which restricts children's ability to view it and to anticipate mealtimes.

Staff lock some doors in the home and there is restricted access to food stores. These measures are in place to manage risk and protect property. While they support safety, these measures limit children's free access to shared areas and everyday items, and should be kept under constant review.

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

Both children have complex needs and vulnerabilities. These include difficulties forming appropriate relationships. Staff build safe, trusting relationships that help children to engage with staff. An external professional said, 'I have witnessed the staff managing some very challenging behaviours by remaining calm and outlining consequences, whilst encouraging reflection on what might be a better choice.' This approach helps children to develop emotionally.

Risks are well understood and risk assessments are clear, concise and easy to follow. When children struggle with their emotional wellbeing, staff use a variety of techniques to keep them safe. Physical intervention has been used on 2 occasions since the last inspection. Reports are comprehensive and include a clear rationale for the action taken.

When consequences are used, they are relevant and proportionate, and they relate directly to the child's behaviour. Since the last inspection a high number of consequences have been used. Staff are developing incentives that engage and motivate children effectively.

Missing-from-home incidents are managed effectively. Staff take prompt action to escalate concerns and initiate searches. Staff share information with relevant professionals, including the police, to help safeguard the children. Children are given the opportunity to talk about their experiences on their return.

When concerns about staff practice have arisen, leaders and managers have acted swiftly and appropriately. They have shared information promptly and implemented immediate measures to reduce risks while investigations are ongoing.

Records are sometimes written using language that blames children. This does not support a child-centred approach and is not helpful for children who may want to read their records in the future.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is experienced and holds a relevant level 5 qualifications. Leaders and managers maintain effective oversight of the home and have a good understanding of the home's strengths and areas for development.

Leaders and managers have a good understanding of children's needs and maintain a child-focused approach. They demonstrate a clear awareness of the dynamics between the children in the home and manage these effectively. Managers also understand the impact that caring for children has on staff and use this knowledge to provide appropriate support and guidance.

Staff report that managers are available and supportive and provide clear direction and nurture. Staff receive regular good-quality supervision sessions to help them to explore important topics and reflect on their everyday practice. This helps staff's ongoing development and helps them feel valued. One member of staff said, 'The manager is amazing, really supportive, she actually cares about me and it's not just a tick box exercise.'

Communication between managers and external professionals is good. Children benefit from the manager's approach to close multi-agency working. One professional said, 'Collaboration is a clear strength of the manager. She attends all meetings, proactively reaches out when there are immediate concerns.'

The home's statement of purpose has not been updated and shared with Ofsted to reflect the current workforce and their experience and qualifications.

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 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 staff help each child to access and contribute to the records kept by the registered person in relation to the child. (Regulation 14 (1)(a) (2)(f)) In particular, managers must ensure that records about children are written in a child-friendly way.	21 February 2026

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that children are able to access all shared areas of their home unless there are specific reasons why this would not meet a child's needs. Limits on privacy and access may only be put in place to safeguard each child in the home. Any decisions to limit a child's access to any area of the home must only be made where this is intended to safeguard the child's welfare. All decisions should be informed by a rigorous assessment of that individual child's needs, be properly recorded and be kept under regular review. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.10)
- The registered person should ensure that the staffing structure and the experience and qualifications of staff are included in the statement of purpose. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 14, paragraph 3.5)

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: 2767797

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Norfolk County Council

Registered provider address: County Hall, Martineau Lane, Norwich, Norfolk NR1 2DH

Responsible individual: Kirsty Cuttler

Registered manager: Post Vacant

Inspector

Sallie Bloomfield, Social Care Inspector

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