

2785671

Registered provider: City of York Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home and manager registered with Ofsted in April 2024. The service operates across two settings.

The home is run by a local authority.

The home offers care in both settings for a maximum of six children who may experience social and emotional difficulties and/or have learning disabilities. At the time of the inspection, four children were living across both settings. Two children were spoken with during the inspection.

Inspection dates: 4 and 5 June 2025

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	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 14 January 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: inadequate

Enforcement action since last inspection:

During a full inspection on 14 to 16 January 2025, the home was judged as being inadequate. A monitoring visit was carried out on 19 March 2025 to review the compliance notices issued under Regulation 6 (the quality and purpose of care standard), Regulation 10 (the health and well-being standard), Regulation 12 (the

protection of children standard) and Regulation 13 (the leadership and management standard). All four compliance notices were deemed to have been met.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
14/01/2025	Full	Inadequate

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The children living in the home have positive relationships with staff. Interactions are warm, and children say they feel safe in the home with staff who they trust. Children receive individualised care and support from staff members who know them well.

Staff understand the concept and importance of role modelling for children and are skilled at weaving in their own life experiences to guide them. This is only done in context to the child's circumstances at a given time. Staff are open in sharing their vulnerabilities with the children, again in context to the situation. This has helped the children to foster meaningful bonds with the staff.

The in-house clinical team and staff have a fully integrated relationship, which directly benefits the children and the progress they make. They work together to develop effective practice and share information. Staff use the clinical team's presence in the home to help them understand and adapt their work practices to better meet the needs of the children. The clinical team also works flexibly with the children and participates in the day-to-day life of the home by getting involved in activities and creating opportunities to form relationships with the children. This has been critical in allowing the children time to build trust and engage in therapeutic relationships. In doing so, children are provided with effective coping strategies and are better able to understand how to build resilience and positive mental health.

The skill of reflective practice is becoming embedded in the children's care. Children's daily records are written with love and care, bringing the child's day to life. This practice is influenced by management and complemented by the clinical team. Additionally, staff write incident reports in a style that allows them to explain their perspective on what happened to the child. Again, this style of writing has assisted staff in keeping the child as the focus, better enabling them to capture their rationale and make sense of it.

Staff collaborate with educational professionals to best meet the needs of the children. When there are concerns regarding a child's education placement, staff collaborate with the virtual school to find a solution. Staff engage effectively with employment and support professionals to guide children with the next stages after compulsory education.

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

Staff follow written risk assessments that detail each child's vulnerabilities, potential risks and presenting behaviours. Furthermore, staff support the children in learning from incidents by helping them fully understand any risks and how to keep themselves safe going forward. A culture of reflection fosters good follow-up from staff and the manager.

Staff understand the need to actively search for the children when their whereabouts are unknown. Missing-from-home protocols are current and provide accurate information for

the police to act on. The information is also shared with the in-house police liaison officer. This has created a collective approach to learning and managing the children's networks in the community.

The staff team has the expertise and confidence to support children in addressing problematic substance misuse. The staff team includes a drugs and alcohol worker who works directly with the children. They also support staff in understanding and working with children who misuse substances. Children are helped to better understand the effect that substances can have on their lives. One child said, 'I'm more in control of my life now; things are making sense to me.'

When allegations are made, they are taken seriously and managed well. The manager responds quickly and effectively, accessing the appropriate advice and guidance. All records are detailed and accurate. When areas of learning in staff practice are identified, they are addressed to prevent reoccurrence. This protects staff and children.

A current fire risk assessment is in place. This details what should happen in the event of a fire. However, the home does not use the fire doors as intended. Doors are held open by doorstops, and one door does not close fully into the frame. In the event of a fire, smoke and flames could spread quickly and pose a risk to the safety of children and staff.

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

The home could have avoided a safeguarding incident that significantly affected the lives of two children. The manager did not update the relevant plans or adapt staff practice in response to a recent separate incident to ensure children's safety. This has left children and staff vulnerable and resulted in a safety breach.

Despite the staff's familiarity with the children, they occasionally overlook current care practice issues and do not prioritise them in their daily work. The clinical team's work does not always align with the staff's ability to embed it into their daily practice. Staff handovers do not capture or communicate important information effectively with any immediacy. Staff say there is an excessive reliance on emails and an overwhelming amount of information they receive.

The appointed independent visitor is not independent from the care of the children. The conflicting role of the independent visitor in the local authority means that objectivity cannot be guaranteed.

Team meetings are meaningful and effective. They are used to discuss issues relating to children's care, such as complaints and inconsistent practice. Specific training and guest speakers are also included when needed. This promotes consistent approaches by staff for the children and provides a safe space for staff to learn and develop in their roles.

Staff are invested in the manager's vision and the model of care driven by senior leaders. There has been a drive to promote accountability among the team and galvanise staff's

energy and commitment to their roles. Staff talk positively about the support they receive from their manager and the clinical team. Staff spoke poignantly of the positive impact that this is having on their performance.

The manager has adopted a system that captures all complaints, grumbles and compliments. This system ensures that there is a plan to promote reflection and learning and devise a response for issues that are raised, good and bad. Children and parents engage in this process, which promotes accountability and reflection.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person 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 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. (Regulation 13 (1)(b)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that the care needs of the children are organised, understood and shared with staff to ensure that children consistently receive effective and safe care.	15 September 2025

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the home complies with relevant health and safety legislation. In particular, ensure that fire doors are not propped open and can close securely into their frame. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that there is effective care planning for all children. In particular, ensure that important areas of practice are clearly communicated to all staff and that each member of staff clearly understands the daily plans and individualised approaches in place for every child. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.2)
- The registered person should ensure that the independent person is impartial to the care of the children. In particular, ensure that the appointment of the independent person does not give rise to a conflict of interest that would, or would appear to, compromise the ability of that person to reach a rigorous and impartial judgement of the quality of care provided in the home. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.6)

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: 2785671

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: City of York Council

Registered provider address: West Offices, Station Rise, York YO1 6GA

Responsible individual: Michael Cavan

Registered manager: Bethany Gamble

Inspectors

Deirdre Silkstone, Social Care Inspector (lead)
Steve Guirey, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

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