

2788618

Registered provider: North Star Children's Homes Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home was registered in September 2024. The home cares for up to five children between the ages of eight and 17 years who may have learning disabilities.

At the time of this inspection, there was one child living at the home.

There has been no registered manager since July 2024.

Inspection dates: 24 and 25 April 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: 27 November 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
27/11/2024	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Staff provide effective care and support to the child who currently lives in the home. The child continues to make good progress, starting school again after a long period out of education. They continue to develop key independence skills. Staff are proactive in supporting the child to engage in a wide range of activities in the community. Staff promote contact with family and friends, which is so important to the child.

Staff understand the child's needs and work patiently and warmly to ensure the child feels valued. They have clear ambitions for the child and work with them to support them to meet their goals.

Staff understand the impact of the child's health conditions and work sensitively to ensure their health needs are met. They recognise the daily challenges that the child faces and work closely with them to find solutions to obstacles to their progress. This enables the child to lead a full and active life.

The child speaks positively about the staff. Relationships between the staff and child are based on trust and affection.

Since the last inspection, two children moved into the home. These children had to leave the home after a short stay as it was felt that their needs could not be met. The provider has failed to implement organisational changes to referral and admissions processes effectively. This led to the admission of children whose needs were not met effectively by the staff team. The provider's failure to apply effective matching and admissions processes directly contributed to children experiencing placement moves that may have been preventable.

The registered provider has taken significant steps to address concerns relating to the admission of children. A complete overhaul of the referrals and admissions process has occurred. A dedicated referrals and admissions manager has been put in place. There has been a thorough audit of staff skills and competencies to ensure that children who come to the home are a good match for current children and that the staff are equipped to meet their needs.

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

Staff understand their roles and responsibilities in relation to safeguarding children. They understand how to use the internal safeguarding processes at the home. Staff recognise their position and obligations in wider safeguarding networks. They feel confident to raise safeguarding concerns, both internally and externally if required.

The child who currently lives in the home has a clear set of risk assessments that the staff are familiar with. The staff have received training that meets the specific needs of this child. Staff have been given training on the risks and vulnerabilities of children. They can identify appropriate steps to take if a child goes missing.

One child who came to live at the home since the last inspection was particularly vulnerable due to episodes of going missing from the home. This often happened during periods of emotional distress and heightened anxiety. Staff were not given appropriate support and guidance to manage this child's needs. There was also a culture in which there was an overreliance on the police to manage children's behaviour.

There were a number of incidents at this time that were worthy of notification to Ofsted, but the provider failed to submit these notifications in acceptable timescales. A supporting registered manager from another of the provider's homes did identify these shortfalls and provided a list of incidents to Ofsted before this inspection.

Another child, whose presenting needs were not compatible with the home's statement of purpose, also had a premature placement ending after it was agreed that staff could not meet their needs. Risk assessments, both before admission and during the child's time at the home, were insufficient and did not support staff to meet the needs of the child effectively.

The provider has taken significant steps to address these concerns. A full audit of all risk assessments has taken place. Leaders have identified areas where admissions processes have not worked and taken clear steps to close gaps and improve systems. The current management arrangements are having a positive impact on the effective operation of the home.

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

The home has had no registered manager since it commenced operation. A manager was appointed and had commenced the application process. However, there were delays in sending the correct documentation to Ofsted, and the manager left before the registration was complete. A recruitment process is currently underway for a new manager.

This area is judged as requires improvement due to a period in the home where ineffective management oversight and leadership led to an unsettled period for children living in the home and a lack of support to help staff understand and meet the needs of some children who lived in the home. There were no available supervision records or performance management records for the outgoing manager during the unsettled period at the home.

The registered provider has taken significant steps to address these concerns, and new management arrangements are now in place. The previous manager has now

left the organisation, and effective interim arrangements are in place to support the team. A complete overhaul of the referrals and admissions process has been completed. The home has also benefited from the temporary support of an experienced registered manager and deputy from another home within the organisation. There has been a root and branch review of systems, practice and record-keeping, bringing the home in line with current organisational practice.

The current deputy manager is supporting staff while the provider recruits for a new registered person. They demonstrate a clear understanding of shortfalls and areas for improvement at the home. They are working closely with the responsible individual and senior leaders to ensure that staff receive the support they need to restore their confidence in their roles and with the organisation.

The deputy manager has identified new training initiatives to support the staff in meeting the needs of the child. He is also using this time to supervise all staff and ensure that they are up to date with all relevant training.

The deputy manager is determined to always promote the child's voice and provides frequent opportunities for the child to provide feedback and contribute to decision-making in the home.

The home celebrates difference and inclusion, and staff ensure that children recognise and value the importance of creating a home that promotes equality of access and experience for all children and staff.

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 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— lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate; 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; demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on— research and developments in relation to the ways in which the needs of children are best met; and feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received; and use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.	31 May 2025

(Regulation 13 (a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(c)(f)(g)(i)(ii)(h)) In particular, the registered person should adhere to organisational changes in policy and practice. The registered person must work within the boundaries of home's statement of purpose and apply due diligence during admissions. The registered person must ensure that staff have the skills and capabilities to support children who come to the home effectively. The responsible individual should be able to provide clear evidence of the support they have provided when there is a period of turbulence at the home.	
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious; there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(b)(e))	31 May 2025
A person may only manage a children's home if— having regard to the size of the home, its statement of purpose, and the number and needs (including any needs arising from any disability) of the children— the person has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills to manage the home effectively and lead the care of children. (Regulation 28 (1)(b)(i))	31 May 2025

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: 2788618

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: North Star Children's Homes Ltd

Registered provider address: 14 David Mews, London W1U 6EQ

Responsible individual: Nicola Forbes

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Peter Jackson, Social Care Inspector

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