

2788764

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 offers care and accommodation for up to five children between the ages of eight and 17 years who may have social and emotional difficulties.

At the time of inspection there were two children at living at the home.

The registered manager post is currently vacant.

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 November 2024

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	inadequate
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	inadequate
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	inadequate
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There are serious and widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded and the care and experiences of children and young people are poor and they are not making progress.

Date of last inspection: not previously inspected

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: not applicable

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

There are serious and widespread failures that mean children are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded. Their care and experiences are poor, and they are not making, or not likely to make, progress.

Children have been admitted to the home whose primary needs are not within the criteria laid out in the home's statement of purpose. Staff have worked exceedingly hard to provide care and support, but the complex needs of some children have not been met. This has led to children having poor experiences of care. Children have also been moved to alternative placements at pace and in an unplanned way, which is wholly unsatisfactory.

Leaders could not demonstrate a clear decision-making process with regards to how they manage referrals and admissions. Placement planning and record-keeping are generally of poor quality, with important documents, such as behaviour support plans, missing.

Leaders' lack of effective planning for children with exceptionally high and complex support needs has left staff uncertain of how to manage very challenging and difficult behaviours. Children have often engaged in protracted incidents of high risk and dangerous behaviour, sometimes leading to self-injury and/or injury to others.

Staff have created a beautiful home, which demonstrates real care and a desire to provide the best for children. However, their good intentions have been thwarted by poor leadership and unsafe decision-making.

The staff team has good potential. Many of the senior staff have extensive experience in children's homes. Staff new to residential work bring with them a range of transferrable skills from youth work and social care backgrounds.

One child has made good progress. The child has positive relationships with staff, enjoys living at the home and is getting back into education this year after a long period of non-engagement. Her social worker said, '[Name of child] is in a place where she is appreciated, understood and enjoys being there. Staff really see her.'

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

There are serious and widespread failures that leave children being harmed, at risk of harm or their welfare not being safeguarded.

Children with complex mental health needs have not been safeguarded effectively by staff. Staff have not followed agreed risk management and safety plans in all cases. This has placed children at risk and, in some cases, has resulted in police arrest and hospitalisation.

On occasion, managers have given very poor advice and guidance to staff that is not in line with agreed safety plans for children. This has placed staff in high-risk situations and led to decisions being made that have placed children at risk of harm.

Staff have not had sufficient training to meet the range of needs of the children admitted to the home. This has placed children and staff at significant risk.

Leaders have prepared poor-quality risk assessments that fail to provide staff with the support and guidance they need to work with some children safely. There are also important documents missing from files; these are formulated to help staff manage difficult behaviours, keep themselves safe and reduce the risk of injury.

A number of incidents, including unauthorised absences from the home, self-harm, aggression and violence, have not always been brought to the attention of Ofsted. While the provider has notified Ofsted and others of incidents involving police or emergency services, some serious incidents have not been notified.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

The experiences, progress or protection of children are inadequate, and leaders and managers do not know the strengths and weaknesses of the home. They have been ineffective in identifying and addressing concerns and weaknesses in practice.

The registered manager, who resigned in November 2024, failed to lead the home in a way that was consistent with the aims outlined in the home's statement of purpose. Some management decisions made in relation to admitting children to the home were ill-considered and contributed to creating a situation where staff were unable to keep children safe. They failed to consider the newness of the staff team. This, along with the organisation's lack of effective induction and core training in behaviour management, led to staff feeling underprepared to meet the needs of children effectively.

Staff do not receive effective supervision. Leaders have failed to consider the significant emotional and physical impact on staff of the children they were supporting. Staff have been incredibly resilient and stood by the children in their care, despite the challenges they faced. However, managers have failed to provide the support and direction to help staff through a difficult period.

The provider's induction for some staff is disorganised and incomplete. For example, at the time of inspection, there were five staff members who regularly had to manage very challenging incidents, having not received positive behaviour and intervention training.

Senior leaders failed to oversee the probation period of the new registered manager effectively. This led to a failure to identify that there were some significant concerns about their leadership at the home and their ability to safely manage a children's home.

Leaders did not have a readily available list of the relevant staff's skills, experience and qualifications. This means that they were unable to consider whether staff had the relevant skills and experience to meet the needs of children admitted to the home.

Since the departure of the registered manager, the home has been under the care of the responsible individual. Staff say that things have improved immeasurably under her leadership. She is working closely with the operations director to address all concerns raised. They have completed an action plan and are working hard to make the changes required to ensure that the home runs safely and provides positive and nurturing experiences for 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
In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— meet each child's behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 11 (2)(a)(i))	3 January 2024
In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— are provided with supervision and support to enable them to understand and manage their own feelings and responses to the behaviour and emotions of children, and to help children to do the same. (Regulation 11 (2)(a)(x))	3 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 any harm to the child; help each child to understand how to keep safe; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm;	3 January 2024

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; and that the home's 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)(ii)(iii)(v)(vi)(b))	
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 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)(a)(c)(f)(h))	3 January 2024
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home.	3 January 2024

In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home's statement of purpose; plan for, and help, each child to prepare to leave the home or to move into adult care in a way that is consistent with arrangements agreed with the child's placing authority; that each child's relevant plans are followed. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(iii)(c))	
The registered person must compile in relation to the children's home a statement ("the statement of purpose") which covers the matters listed in Schedule 1. (Regulation 16 (1)) Specifically, the statement of purpose must include details of the experience and qualifications of staff, including any staff commissioned to provide education or health care.	3 January 2024

Recommendations

- The registered person should notify Ofsted and other relevant persons if one of the situations specified in regulation 40(4)(a)-(d) occurs, or if there is an incident relating to the protection, safeguarding or welfare of a child living in the home which the registered person considers to be serious (40(4)(e)). (Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards, page 63, paragraph 14.10)
- The registered person should ensure they consider the frequency of incidents and judge whether their cumulative effect makes notification appropriate even if in isolation each event would not warrant this. (Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards, page 63, paragraph 14.11)

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: 2788764

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: North Star Children's Homes Ltd

Registered provider address: Oliver Clive & Co Ltd, 14 David Mews, London W1U 6EQ

Responsible individual: Moira Storkey

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Peter Jackson, Social Care Inspector

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