

SC025395

Registered provider: Nugent Care 2019

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home is operated by a charity. It provides care and accommodation for up to 19 children in two separate houses. Children living at the home may have emotional and social difficulties or learning difficulties.

On the day of the inspection 11 children were living at the home.

The registered manager was registered on 29 March 2021 and she has been absent from work since 10 September 2021.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

We last visited this setting on 19 January 2021 to carry out a monitoring visit. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection dates: 6 to 7 October 2021

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 are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded, and the care and experiences of children are poor, and they are not making progress.

Date of last inspection: 27 November 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection:

A monitoring visit on 1 December 2020 identified significant shortfalls in safeguarding practice, care planning for children, and the leadership and management of the home. As a result, three compliance notices were issued under section 22A of the Care Standards Act 2000. These were in relation to regulation 12 (the protection of children standard), regulation 13 (the leadership and management standard) and regulation 14 (the care planning standard).

A monitoring visit on 19 January 2021 found that the provider met the requirements under the compliance notices for regulations 12, 13 and 14.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
27/11/2019	Full	Good
07/08/2018	Full	Good
17/10/2017	Full	Good
27/03/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

The home is failing to provide effective care and support for the children currently living in the home. It is Ofsted's view that the situation would be exacerbated if other children were to move into the home. Therefore, on 8 October 2021, Ofsted made the decision to issue a restriction of accommodation notice at the home, under section 22B of the Care Standards Act 2000. This means that no new children may move into the home.

There are serious shortfalls in safeguarding practice, care planning, the management of risks to children's safety, and the leadership and management of the home. These weaknesses have a significant impact on children's safety, welfare, experiences and progress.

A child told inspectors, 'It is not a happy home.' Children do not always have positive relationships with staff. Children said that not all of the staff listen to them or speak to them with respect. Children told inspectors that staff are not good at providing them with clear, firm and fair boundaries. Staff do not help children to understand the consequences of their actions and do not ensure that all children are supported to settle at bedtime. This is causing disruption to other children trying to get to sleep.

A lack of clear and consistent boundaries and effective strategies to deal with difficulties is compromising children's stability and sense of emotional security. Staff are struggling to support children to learn about socially acceptable behaviour, develop the skills to manage their feelings and sort out problems constructively.

The records of children's complaints do not show how their concerns have been dealt with and resolved. Furthermore, children are not provided with any outcomes from their complaints. This does not demonstrate that children are listened to and their concerns acted upon.

The planning of children's care is not effective. Impact risk assessments fail to demonstrate that staff have the skills and knowledge to respond effectively to the children's assessed needs and the placing authority's plan for the child. Furthermore, compatibility assessments do not fully consider the impact of a child moving into the home on the existing group of children. Weaknesses in care planning and matching children's needs have had a negative effect on children's welfare, experiences and progress.

Children have not moved on from the home in a positive way. There have been several unplanned endings for children when they are in crisis. As result, children do not always have the information to help them understand why they must leave their home.

Several children are not in school. These children do not have suitable routines that encourage them to engage in education, learn informally or assist them to return to school as soon as possible.

Children's emotional and physical health needs are not always understood and met. They are not consistently getting the support, advice and treatment that promote their health and encourage them to follow healthy lifestyles.

Children are not always living in a pleasant environment. Some children's bedrooms were not clean, and one child's bed was broken. The management oversight of the systems in place, to check and maintain children's bedrooms, is not effective.

Some internal doors in communal areas are locked routinely. This is restricting children's access to shared areas of their home.

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

Safeguarding practice in this home does not promote the welfare of the children sufficiently. The registered manager and staff do not always respond effectively to concerns about children and follow the strategies in place to help keep them safe. A child's allegation that staff had hurt them during a restraint was not reported to the designated officer for the local authority in line with the procedures. This meant that the immediate risk to the child was not assessed and managed.

The registered manager and staff do not always identify risks or take reasonable precautions to manage them safely. For example, concerns that a child had inappropriate images on their mobile phone were not evaluated thoroughly to understand the risks and how best to protect the child and other children.

Care plans and risk assessments do not support staff in keeping children safe or provide detailed strategies or preventative measures for staff to follow to protect children. Safety strategies, including those set out in court-directed orders, are not followed consistently to reduce the risks to children, including risk from self-injurious behaviours.

Some staff, including a person in a management position and agency staff, do not have access to children's electronic records. This limits their ability to understand children's plans and what they need to do to protect children.

The registered manager and staff fail to recognise and minimise the risks to the children's safety and welfare. Staff do not have the knowledge, skills or confidence to de-escalate situations and manage risks to children who are having a difficult time. This increases risks to the child, the staff and the safety and emotional well-being of other children. For example, some children are experiencing bullying and witnessing violent behaviour, and other children have started to show new risk-taking behaviours, including self-injurious behaviour, smoking and aggression.

Staff do not have the skills to recognise and deal with bullying effectively. This has left children feeling unsupported and vulnerable.

The registered manager and staff have a reactive approach which has resulted in physical interventions and an increase in challenging and aggressive behaviour. On several occasions, staff have called the police to help them manage children's behaviour. This fails to demonstrate safe and responsible care and does not provide evidence that the direct concerns raised at previous inspections are being addressed.

The records of physical intervention do not provide a detailed account of the incident and do not include whether children have sustained an injury or the child's views about what had happened. Leaders and managers, therefore, do not have sufficient information to review the use of physical intervention to identify effective practice and respond to any areas of concern. Managers do not routinely review serious incidents and risk management plans to make sure that staff are following the strategies consistently and that the strategies are effective.

The arrangements for managing children's medication are not effective and have left children at risk of potential harm. Children have not been given their medication as directed in their prescription, and medication records contain errors. Medication, including controlled drugs, have not been stored securely. On one occasion, a child got hold of a large amount of medication. The child took an overdose and required medical attention leaving them at risk of significant harm. The registered manager has not made sure that staff handling medication have the right knowledge, skills, competence and supervision. The organisation has not demonstrated that it has addressed the concerns about medication identified at previous inspection visits.

The recruitment of staff is not thorough and is not always carried out in line with procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The organisation is not gathering and checking all the information required to assess a person's suitability to work with children. Some staff did not have clear explanations for gaps in their employment history. Written references and the reasons why the person had left their previous employment are not always verified and the outcome recorded.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

Serious shortfalls in the leadership and management of this home are compromising the experiences and progress of children living there. These shortfalls hinder the staff's ability to protect the children from harm and help children to reach their full potential. The registered manager has been away from work since 10 September 2021. A newly appointed responsible individual has taken over the management of the home.

High levels of staff vacancies and absences due to ill-health are having a significantly negative impact on children's experiences, progress and welfare. A child told inspectors that there are not enough staff to take him out on activities. Children

are not always cared for by people that they know well and who understand their needs and plans. This is compromising children's ability to build stable and secure relationships with staff. On occasions, children have been looked after by 12 different people on the same day. In addition, the staff rotas do not provide accurate records of the names of staff and the actual hours they worked at the home.

Inspectors were informed that staff morale is low. Staff are not receiving the support, guidance and supervision to enable them to provide children with safe care. Staff are not receiving supervision of their practice as frequently as set out in the home's policy. This is limiting opportunities for staff to reflect critically on their practice and development needs and for managers to assess staff performance and continued suitability. New staff do not always receive a thorough induction to working at the home, to help them to understand their role and the children in their care.

Staff have not had opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills through training that is relevant to the needs of the children. They have not had training in working with children with autism spectrum disorder, supporting children to manage their feelings, de-escalating difficult situations, restraint, self-harm, bullying, protecting children from the risk of exploitation, and substance misuse.

The quality of recording is poor. Children's records do not always contain important information about the child's care, such as up-to-date health assessments, personal education plans, and education health care plans. Records do not provide a clear picture of a child's journey at the home or include their views, experiences, progress and outcomes. Some records are not written in ways that children will find helpful and include stigmatising language about children in relation to risk. In addition, some managers and staff do not have access to the electronic recording system.

An audit carried out by the organisation in August 2021 identified weaknesses in management performance and the operation of the home. The shortfalls identified by the organisation are consistent with those found by inspectors during this visit. These include recruiting enough suitable staff to care safely for children, improvements in care and safeguarding practice and in providing staff with the necessary skills, knowledge and support. However, there has not been sufficient time for the organisation to make all the necessary improvements.

Ofsted issued six compliance notices alongside the restriction notice.

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, 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 quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— understand and apply the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff— understand and apply the home's statement of purpose; protect and promote each child's welfare; treat each child with dignity and respect; provide personalised care that meets each child's needs, as recorded in the child's relevant plans, taking account of the child's background; help each child to understand and manage the impact of any experience of abuse or neglect; help each child to develop resilience and skills that prepare the child to return home, to live in a new placement or to live independently as an adult; ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— meet the needs of each child; and	21 November 2021

enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) 2(a)(b)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(c)(i)(ii))	
The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— help each child to achieve the child’s education and training targets, as recorded in the child’s relevant plans; support each child’s learning and development, including helping the child to develop independent study skills and, where appropriate, helping the child to complete independent study; understand the barriers to learning that each child may face and take appropriate action to help the child to overcome any such barriers; maintain regular contact with each child’s education and training provider, including engaging with the provider and the placing authority to support the child’s education and training and to maximise the child’s achievement; raise any need for further assessment or specialist provision in relation to a child with the child’s education or training provider and the child’s placing authority; help a child who is excluded from school, or who is of compulsory school age but not attending school, to access educational and training support throughout the period of exclusion or non-attendance and to return to school as soon as possible; help each child to attend education or training in accordance with the expectations in the child’s relevant plans; and that each child has access to appropriate equipment, facilities and resources to support the child’s learning. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(vi)(vii)(viii)(x)(b))	21 November 2021
The health and well-being standard is that—	21 November 2021

the health and well-being needs of children are met; children receive advice, services and support in relation to their health and well-being; and children are helped to lead healthy lifestyles. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff help each child to— achieve the health and well-being outcomes that are recorded in the child’s relevant plans; understand the child’s health and well-being needs and the options that are available in relation to the child’s health and well-being, in a way that is appropriate to the child’s age and understanding; take part in activities, and attend any appointments, for the purpose of meeting the child’s health and well-being needs; and understand and develop skills to promote the child’s well-being; that each child has access to such dental, medical, nursing, psychiatric and psychological advice, treatment and other services as the child may require. (Regulation 10 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(c))	
* The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff—	21 November 2021

meet each child's behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child's relevant plans;

help each child to develop socially aware behaviour;

encourage each child to take responsibility for the child's behaviour, in accordance with the child's age and understanding;

help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone;

communicate to each child expectations about the child's behaviour and ensure that the child understands those expectations in accordance with the child's age and understanding;

help each child to understand, in a way that is appropriate according to the child's age and understanding, personal, sexual and social relationships, and how those relationships can be supportive or harmful;

help each child to develop the understanding and skills to recognise or withdraw from a damaging, exploitative or harmful relationship;

strive to gain each child's respect and trust;

understand how children's previous experiences and present emotions can be communicated through behaviour and have the competence and skills to interpret these and develop positive relationships with children;

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;

de-escalate confrontations with or between children, or potentially violent behaviour by children;

understand and communicate to children that bullying is unacceptable; and

have the skills to recognise incidents or indications of bullying and how to deal with them; and

that each child is encouraged to build and maintain positive relationships with others. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(ix)(x)(xi)(xii)(xiii)(b)) This requirement was made at the last inspection visit and is repeated.	
* 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; manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other; 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 are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home’s child protection policies; 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; that the effectiveness of the home’s child protection policies is monitored regularly. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(b)(e))	21 November 2021

This requirement was made at the last inspection visit and is repeated.	
* 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; ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to 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. (Regulation 13 (1) (2)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(g)(i)(ii)(h)) This requirement was made at the last inspection visit and is repeated.	21 November 2021

* 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. 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; that arrangements are in place to— ensure the effective induction of each child into the home; manage and review the placement of each child in the home; and 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)(b)(i)(ii)(iii)(c)) This requirement was made at the last inspection visit and is repeated.	21 November 2021
The registered person must ensure that— children can access all appropriate areas of the children's home's premises; and any limitation placed on a child's privacy or access to any area of the home's premises— is intended to safeguard each child accommodated in the home; is necessary and proportionate; is kept under review and, if necessary, revised; and	21 November 2021

allows children as much freedom as is possible when balanced against the need to protect them and keep them safe. (Regulation 21 (b)(c)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv))	
* The registered person must make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the children's home. In particular the registered person must ensure that— medicines kept in the home are stored in a secure place so as to prevent any child from having unsupervised access to them; medicine which is prescribed for a child is administered as prescribed to the child for whom it is prescribed and to no other child; and a record is kept of the administration of medicine to each child. (Regulation 23 (1) (2)(a)(b)(c)) This requirement was made at the last inspection visit and is repeated.	21 November 2021
* The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The registered person may only— employ an individual to work at the children's home; or if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home, if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). The requirements are that— the individual is of integrity and good character; the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform; the individual is mentally and physically fit for the purposes of the work that the individual is to perform; full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3)(a)(b)(c)(d))	21 November 2021

The registered person must— ensure that each employee completes an appropriate induction; ensure that each permanent appointment of an employee is subject to the satisfactory completion of a period of probation. The registered person must ensure that all employees— undertake appropriate continuing professional development; receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience; and have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33 (1)(a)(b) (4)(a)(b)(c))	21 November 2021
The registered person must ensure that— within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes— the name of the child; details of the child’s behaviour leading to the use of the measure; the date, time and location of the use of the measure; a description of the measure and its duration; details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure; the name of the person who used the measure (“the user”), and of any other person present when the measure was used; the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure;	21 November 2021

within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person")— has spoken to the user about the measure; and has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(b)(i)(ii)(c)) This requirement was made at the last inspection visit and is repeated.	
The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which— include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child; are kept up to date; and are signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)(c)) This relates to ensuring that children's records include up-to-date health assessments, personal education plans, and education health care plans. In addition, records should provide a clear picture of children's journeys at the home, including their views, experiences, progress and outcomes. Also, to ensuring that records are written in plain, appropriate and non-stigmatising language	21 November 2021
Schedule 4 sets out the other information that the registered person must keep in relation to a children's home. The registered person must— maintain in the home the records in Schedule 4; ensure that the records are kept up to date. (Regulation 37 (1) (2)(a)(b))	21 November 2021

In particular, keeping a copy of the staff duty roster of persons working at the home, and a record of the actual hours worked.	
The registered person must ensure that a record is made of any complaint, the action taken in response, and the outcome of any investigation. (Regulation 39 (3))	21 November 2021
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— a child is involved in or subject to, or is suspected of being involved in or subject to, sexual exploitation; an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious; there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there; a child protection enquiry involving a child — is instigated; or concludes (in which case, the notification must include the outcome of the child protection enquiry); or there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(a)(b)(c)(d)(i)(ii)(e)) This relates to the registered person not informing Ofsted of serious concerns about the performance of the registered manager.	21 November 2021

* These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

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: SC025395

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Nugent Care 2019

Registered provider address: 99 Edge Lane, Edge Hill, Liverpool L7 2PE

Responsible individual: Sarah Dimmelow

Registered manager: Catherine Forshaw

Inspectors

Nick Veysey, Social Care Inspector
Judith Birchall, Social Care Inspector
Catherine Fargin, Social Care Inspector
Emma Thornton, Social Care Inspector

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