

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. The home provides care for up to six children who may have social and emotional difficulties or learning difficulties.

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

The registered manager's post has been vacant since 6 August 2024.

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 September 2024

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: 7 June 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
07/06/2023	Full	Good
19/05/2022	Full	Good
18/01/2022	Full	Inadequate
06/10/2021	Full	Inadequate

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

At the time of the inspection, there were four children living at the home. The children have settled in quickly, and they are making progress from their individual starting points.

Since the last inspection, several children have left the home. Some children moved in a well-planned way to independent living arrangements. Other children moved because they became unsettled. Outcomes for these children have been mixed. Staff have tried to make endings positive and celebrate children's time at the home when they leave.

Most children attend education. One child is studying in further education and aspires to go to university. One child has struggled for several years to attend school. Staff are working with the local authority and are offering a range of informal educational activities to support the child to re-engage with education.

Children get on well together and have quickly formed friendships. Some children enjoy doing activities together. In addition, staff introduce children to new hobbies and pastimes. For example, some children have started to go fishing and horse riding. However, children told the inspector that they get frustrated when too few activities are planned for them or when activities are cancelled at short notice.

Children see their families and friends regularly. This is a positive and safe experience for children. Staff work with children, their families and social workers effectively to repair and sustain important relationships.

Children are registered with community health services, and staff encourage them to attend appointments. One child is struggling to attend due to their anxiety about a treatment they require. Staff are offering the child advice and reassurance around this.

The home is warm and welcoming, and children are comfortable living there. There have been recent improvements to communal areas, and children's bedrooms are personalised.

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

Children say they feel safe living at the home. There are risk assessments in place that help staff to understand the steps they must take to keep children safe. Managers ensure that these risk assessments are kept under review and updated to address any emerging risks to children.

Some children can display behaviour that is challenging when they are upset or angry. Staff are trained in the use of holding a child to keep them safe. This type of intervention is only used if a child is presenting as a risk to themselves or others. Children are given the opportunity to talk about the incident afterwards and tell staff how being held made them feel. This helps managers to understand what happened from the child's perspective and consider whether changes to staff practice are necessary.

All children have individual behaviour support plans. These plans help staff to understand children's behaviours and how to respond to them. However, children's plans do not always contain all the details of the practical strategies staff are using to care for children. This does not support a consistent approach.

Staff follow clear procedures in the event of a child going missing from the home. Staff maintain contact with the child whenever possible and are proactive in encouraging and supporting them to return to the home safely. However, children are not always offered an independent interview by their placing authority on their return to the home. Managers have not sufficiently challenged this.

One child went missing from the home frequently. The proximity of the children's home to his friends' addresses was a strong pull factor for this child. This child was vulnerable to criminal exploitation while missing. Staff were persistent in their efforts to disrupt this pattern of behaviour. However, notice was served on this child's placement as staff were unable to keep him safe.

One child is going missing from home less often. The child is building positive relationships with staff and the other children who live at the home. The child's social worker said, 'The change in [name of child] is superb, and it is amazing that it has happened so quickly. [Name of child] feels that she matters and that she is cared for.'

Staff do direct work with children to help them understand how to keep themselves safe. This work is focused on areas of vulnerability and risk for the child. Staff are creative and use online tools and films to engage children in these conversations.

Children know how to make a complaint. Managers have designed a complaint form that is accessible to children via a QR code. Managers ensure that children receive a written response to the complaints that they make. However, children told the inspector that they do not always feel listened to by staff and that they do not always understand the reasons why some of their requests are declined.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The post of registered manager is vacant following the resignation of the previous post holder. This person continues to work at the home, which provides children and staff with some continuity. The responsible individual is taking responsibility for the day-to-day management of the home while the manager's post is being recruited to.

The responsible individual is an experienced and confident leader. She has good oversight of events in the home and knows the children and the staff. The responsible individual is supported by an experienced and qualified deputy manager who has worked at the home for a long time.

The responsible individual is aspirational for children. She has high expectations of the staff team to support children to achieve their full potential. Since taking over the day-to-day management of the home, she has quickly identified some areas for improvement and has plans in place to address them.

There is not a full staff team in place. Staff are covering vacancies on the roster, and no agency staff are being used. This minimises the impact on children as they are cared for by staff that they know. However, staffing sufficiency was a requirement at the last inspection, and this requirement is repeated to secure improvement.

Staff are driving some children to school. However, the time this takes has an impact on the availability of vehicles for the other children. This meant that one child could not be picked up in the community when she was upset. The responsible individual is requesting additional support with this from the placing authority, but at the time of the inspection, this was unresolved. A requirement is made to ensure that sufficient resources are in place to meet the needs of all the children living at the home.

Staff receive training that is aligned to the needs of the children living at the home. The responsible individual is using team meetings to deliver supplementary training to enhance staff's knowledge on areas such as trauma and attachment.

Staff morale is an issue. Some staff feel supported and listened to by their managers, but others feel less so. However, staff do receive regular supervision, and the responsible individual is changing the structure of supervision sessions so that staff welfare is always discussed.

Professionals speak highly of the home and the progress children are making there. They value good communication from staff and say they are kept updated following significant events in the home.

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 the home has sufficient staff to provide care for 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— feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(d)(f)(g)(ii)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that there are sufficient staffing levels to care for the children and that there are sufficient resources available to meet the needs of all the children living at the home.	31 October 2024

The children's views, wishes and feelings standard is that children receive care from staff who— develop positive relationships with them; engage with them; and take their views, wishes and feelings into account in relation to matters affecting the children's care and welfare and their lives. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff— ascertain and consider each child's views, wishes and feelings, and balance these against what they judge to be in the child's best interests when making decisions about the child's care and welfare; help each child to understand how the child's views, wishes and feelings have been taken into account and give the child reasons for decisions in relation to the child. (Regulation 7 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(iii))	31 October 2024
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Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that they challenge the responsible local authority if an independent return home interview is not offered to a child who has been missing. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.30)
- The registered person should ensure that children's care plans and risk management plans detail all the strategies that staff are using to care for children safely and consistently. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5)

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: SC025395

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Nugent Care 2019

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

Responsible individual: Amanda Carpenter

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Sophie Thomson, Social Care Inspector

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