

SC025395

Registered provider:

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, in two separate houses, for up to 19 children, including children who may present with needs that are associated with social and emotional difficulties or learning disabilities.

The registered manager was registered on 29 March 2021. She has been absent from the home since 10 September 2021.

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 January 2022

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

Date of last inspection: 6 October 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: inadequate

Enforcement action since last inspection:

At the last inspection on 6 and 7 October 2021, inspectors found serious and widespread weaknesses in the care and protection of children. The registered person was failing to provide effective care for the children living at the home. Should further children be admitted to the home, the risks to children's welfare would be exacerbated. Consequently, Ofsted issued a notice restricting accommodation at the children's home with immediate effect on 8 October 2021.

Furthermore, Ofsted issued compliance notices in relation to: regulation 11, the positive relationships standard; regulation 12, the protection of children standard; regulation 13, the leadership and management standard; regulation 14, the care planning standard; regulation 23, medicines; and regulation 32, fitness of workers.

At a monitoring visit on 24 November 2021, inspectors found that steps had been taken to meet the compliance notices in relation to positive relationships, the protection of children, care planning and medicines. However, shortfalls remained in the leadership and management of the home and recruitment of staff. Therefore, Ofsted issued compliance notices in relation to regulation 13 and regulation 32.

At a further monitoring visit on 29 December 2021, inspectors found that the registered person had complied with the notice restricting accommodation. However, inspectors found serious concerns in relation to the safeguarding of children's welfare and staffing arrangements. There was a continued failure to provide effective care for the children living there. Consequently, it was Ofsted's view that should additional children come to live at the home, the risks to children's welfare would increase. Therefore, a further notice restricting accommodation was issued on 30 December 2021. Also, the steps taken to address poor risk management and safeguarding practice, seen at the monitoring visit on 24 November 2021, had not been maintained and were not leading to sustained improvements. In Ofsted's view, the shortfalls highlighted demonstrated ineffective leadership and management and safeguarding practice that has compromised the experiences and progress of all the children living in the home. Therefore, Ofsted issued compliance notices in relation to regulation 12, the protection of children standard, and regulation 13, the leadership and management standard.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
06/10/2021	Full	Inadequate
27/11/2019	Full	Good
07/08/2018	Full	Good
17/10/2017	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

The home is continuing to fail to provide safe and effective care and support for the children currently living there. Leaders and managers have failed to improve the quality of children's care and protection since the last inspection in October 2021. Serious shortfalls in safeguarding practice, the management of risks to children's safety, and the leadership and management of the home continue to have a significant impact on children's safety, welfare, experiences and progress.

Consequently, it is Ofsted's view that should additional children come to live at the home, the risks to children's welfare would increase. Therefore, a notice restricting accommodation at the home, issued under section 22B of the Care Standards Act 2000, remains in place. This means that no new children may move into the home. This provides leaders, managers and staff with the opportunity to address the significant shortfalls while maintaining the safety of the children currently living in the home.

Children's experiences and progress are variable. Overall, children are positive about living at the home. However, some feel that they do not always get the attention they would like from staff because of the complex needs of other children. Social workers raised concerns that some children may not be receiving the quality of care that they need to make the best possible progress, despite feeling settled at the home.

Some children's participation in education has not improved since October 2021. This is reducing their opportunities to reach their potential and improve their life chances. These children do not always have the structure or routine to support them to engage in education, to learn informally or to help them to return to school as soon as possible.

Children's educational needs are not always understood or met. Staff do not have up-to-date information about children's personal education plans. They are uncertain whether children have education, health and care plans. This limits staff's understanding of children's learning objectives and their role in supporting children's education.

Children's emotional and physical health needs are not always met. Some children are not getting the support, advice and treatment consistently in order to promote their health and encourage them to follow healthy lifestyles. Children have missed health appointments, and outstanding immunisations have not been followed up. On occasions, children have missed taking their prescribed medication. Managers and staff have not identified these shortfalls or taken immediate action.

The lack of comprehensive health plans makes it difficult for managers and staff to understand each child's specific health needs and how they should be monitored and supported. It is not clear that staff understand children's needs or that they have shared information with relevant professionals to ensure that children receive the most appropriate medical care and advice.

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. Staff do not always respond effectively to concerns about children's safety. These shortfalls continue to compromise the safety and welfare of the children.

The failure to report a child's allegation that they had been harmed meant that the immediate risk to the child was not assessed or managed. Furthermore, the child did not receive medical attention for a possible injury. This shows that staff do not understand their roles or responsibilities in protecting children or acting in accordance with the home's child protection policies.

The measures used to protect and support children who display self-injurious behaviours or have suicidal thoughts are not effective in reducing the identified risks to children's safety. Staff have received training and advice in understanding self-injurious behaviour. However, when children have self-injured, staff have not taken effective action to support or safeguard the child.

On occasions, staff have failed to ensure that children experiencing suicidal intentions have gone to hospital for an assessment of their physical and emotional well-being. This means that children's needs and risks to their safety are not fully understood, and effective strategies have not been put in place to help children manage their feelings safely.

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. Risk assessments and support plans have been updated. However, they are not always reviewed following incidents in order to ensure that the strategies in place to minimise risks are relevant or appropriate.

Children have taken responsibility for providing support to other children who are having a difficult time. This places inappropriate roles and expectations on children that affect their emotional well-being. This unreasonable expectation has been formalised in a child's safety plan for managing their feelings and suicidal thoughts. It includes advice that the child should speak to two other children as a means of support when the child is feeling are upset.

Some incident reports and restraint records do not provide a clear picture of what had happened, or of the actions taken by staff to keep children safe. This is compromising managers' ability to review the incident thoroughly and respond promptly when concerns emerge. Managers' assessments of serious incidents are

not effective, because they fail to identify shortfalls in practice. Furthermore, managers have not always recognised the seriousness of certain situations, and they have failed to notify the placing authority or Ofsted without delay.

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.

Since the last inspection, the home has lacked a stable and sustainable management team. Improvements in safeguarding practice and the management of risks have not been maintained. Statutory requirements made at the last inspection in relation to the quality of care provided, education, health and medication have not been addressed effectively. Likewise, leaders and managers have not demonstrated that they have taken the necessary steps to meet compliance notices in relation to the protection of children and leadership and management. Consequently, these requirements and compliance notices have been repeated.

A newly appointed responsible individual has taken over the management of the home since 31 December 2021. She has identified and understands the shortfalls and has developed a clear improvement plan. However, there has not been sufficient time for the identified changes to be embedded into day-to-day practice or to have had an impact on children's experiences.

There continues to be several staff vacancies. Due to high numbers of part-time staff and high levels of staff absence, staffing arrangements do not always provide continuity of care for children. Staffing levels are not always sufficient to meet the needs of children living in the home. For example, when staff are responding to the distress of some children, this affects the availability of staff to provide care and support for the other children in the home.

Some staff do not have the skills, knowledge, or experience to understand the risks that children can face, or the skills to support them effectively. For example, recent training in self-injurious behaviour has not yet improved staff practice.

Staff have not received training on the specific health needs for some children. Therefore, staff do not understand how these health needs affect children's daily lives, nor do they have the necessary skills to meet the child's needs.

Staff are now receiving supervision regularly. However, the consistency and quality of supervision are variable. Not all staff receive good-quality supervision. This does not support all staff with opportunities to reflect critically on their work or continually update their knowledge and skills. Furthermore, some staff are not taking advantage of opportunities to meet with colleagues to reflect on serious incidents or children's care in order to develop their practice. This compromises how staff work together as a team to provide children with a consistent quality of care.

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; and 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. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) 2(a)(b)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)) This requirement was made at the last inspection and is repeated.	13 March 2022

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; and help each child to attend education or training in accordance with the expectations in the child’s relevant plans. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(vi)(vii)(viii)(x)) This requirement was made at the last inspection and is repeated.	13 March 2022
The health and well-being standard is that— the health and well-being needs of children are met;	13 March 2022

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; and 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)) This requirement was made at the last inspection 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;	13 March 2022

have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; 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; are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection procedures; 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)(vii)(b)) This requirement has previously been subject to a compliance notice that has not been met, so a compliance notice is issued again.	
*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— 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; and 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.	13 March 2022

(Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)) This requirement has been previously subject to a compliance notice that has not been met, so a compliance notice is issued again.	
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 full inspection visit and is repeated.	13 March 2022
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;	13 March 2022

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; 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 full inspection visit and is repeated.	
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))	13 March 2022

This requirement was made at the last full inspection visit and is repeated.	
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*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 address: Nugent, 99 Edge Lane, Edge Hill, Liverpool L7 2PE

Responsible individual: Joanne Henney

Registered manager: Catherine Forshaw

Inspectors

Nick Veysey, Social Care Inspector

Judith Birchall, Social Care Inspector

Emma Thornton, Social Care Inspector

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