

SC033127

Registered provider: North East Lincolnshire Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned and managed by a local authority and provides care for up to 11 children with learning and physical disabilities. The home is divided into three smaller homes. Two of these provide long-term care for children and one provides short-break services.

The registered manager has been in post since 2010. During this inspection period, the registered manager has not consistently been in day-to-day charge of the home. An assistant manager is in post, but they have not applied to register with Ofsted.

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 23 September 2020 to carry out an assurance visit. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection dates: 14 to 16 July 2021

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: 21 January 2020

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
21/01/2020	Full	Requires improvement to be good
18/12/2018	Full	Good
05/03/2018	Full	Outstanding
01/03/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children are making good progress. Children who were non-verbal are developing the ability to use verbal language, which encourages their interaction with others. The inspector observed children sharing, exploring and playing in their home. This is a significant achievement for some children, who previously could not tolerate other people or things within their environment.

Children's discharges are well planned, and the staff take steps to help alleviate the children's worries. Children visit suitable 'move on' homes in adult social care to help them to choose where they would like to live. They meet other young people who have successfully transitioned into adult care. These steps provide the children with the opportunity to ask questions and gain reassurance. Children's confidence is growing as the staff teach them to independently complete tasks, such as using the toaster and collecting their medication from the pharmacy. One professional said, 'I truly feel they are doing a great job and I am confident that [name of child] will manage well when she moves to her flat.'

The absence of a vehicle with wheelchair access restricts some children's choice of activities and their experiences. Public transport is accessible from the home. However, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and considering the children's complex health needs, public transport is not always a feasible option.

Children like the interaction from staff and happily play with toys and enjoy home-based activities. Photos capture the children's experiences and journey through care. These show children with smiles beaming across their face as they enjoy stimulation through sensory play. Other children expressed their happiness about when they learned to ride their new bikes at Christmas time and when they successfully baked cupcakes at Easter.

Children's health needs are met. They attend routine health appointments, and staff encourage them to have any necessary treatment. There is a focus on healthy eating in some of the homes, which helps children to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Children are encouraged to eat fruit as snacks and sugary desserts are saved for weekends.

As the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions have eased, children are able to see their families. The remodelling of the summer house provides families with a safe space to spend time with their children. Staff help and support children to make video calls and write letters to their families. This is crucial for some children as members of their families are unable to visit.

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

There have been two missing-from-home incidents. Children's vulnerability and risk of significant harm increase when they are missing. Staff take immediate steps to find the children and organise a coordinated approach with emergency services. Lessons have been learned from these incidents and the registered manager takes immediate action to address any shortfalls in staff practice. The staff team has reflected on these incidents and is aware of the children's safety plans. However, not all staff have refreshed their safeguarding training, which is an outstanding action.

Return home interviews are not routinely completed. One child did not have the opportunity to meet with an independent person. The police and staff speak to children about their time missing from the home. Children are also seen by health professionals. These steps help staff to identify if children have been hurt when missing from the home, and to mitigate future risk.

The children's stays are well planned to ensure an appropriate mix and the safety of those who are not mobile. This process ensures that children can enjoy their time at the home and the environment is safe. One parent said, 'I know my son is safe and well cared for, I would not leave him if he was not.'

Medication arrangements aid the safe administration of medication to children. Only staff who have specific experience and relevant training are permitted to administer medication to children. Clear medication procedures help the staff to identify any medication errors. This helps staff to quickly realise if a child has come for their break without all their prescribed medication. However, in these circumstances, the staff do not consistently seek medical advice to ascertain the impact of missed medication for children.

The staff understand the children and respond to their presenting behaviours. The staff know what techniques to use to help children and prevent them from harming themselves or others. On occasions, staff use physical restraint to protect children from harm. The methods used are the least restrictive and are only used as a last resort. The assistant manager has oversight of all incidents. However, not all staff have received refresher restraint training.

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

The registered manager has had periods away from the home in response to COVID-19 guidance. The assistant manager has been a source of stability to the staff team. The registered manager and assistant manager put arrangements in place to support the day-to-day running of the home. Ofsted was not informed of these arrangements.

Short-break services have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Children and their families have had their stays cancelled and their packages reduced. These restrictions and changes have been necessary to meet the needs of all children and to protect children and staff from the risk of infection. Leaders and managers understand the pressure that this reduction in services has on children and families. Despite these restrictions, the managers made sure that those children, subject to a child protection plan, maintained regular breaks.

Children's views are important. Irrespective of the children's form of communication, they are individually encouraged by staff to share their wishes and feelings. For example, a child with limited verbal communication and restricted movement was able to tell staff that they did not want green beans with dinner and they did not want bubbles in their bath. Children learn that the staff in the home respond to their wishes and feelings.

Leaders and managers value staff. The assistant manager has insight into staff's strengths and areas for development. When shortfalls are identified in staff practice, performance plans are implemented, which are routinely reviewed by the assistant manager.

Leaders and managers have monitoring systems and evaluation tools in place to support their oversight and development of the home. The managers know where they need to focus their development, and independent visitor reports are an additional tool that the managers use to improve the home. The managers continue to review the home's statement of purpose. However, this has not been sent to the regulator, which impacts on its oversight of changes for 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, 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 enjoyment and achievement standard is that children take part in and benefit from a variety of activities that meet their needs and develop and reflect their creative, cultural, intellectual, physical and social interests and skills. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that each child has access to a range of activities that enable the child to pursue the child's interests and hobbies. (Regulation 9 (1) (2)(b))	10 September 2021
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(b) (2)(c)(h))	10 September 2021
The registered person must— notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision. (Regulation 16 (3)(b))	10 September 2021
In particular the registered person must ensure that—	27 August 2021

medicine which is prescribed for a child is administered as prescribed to the child for whom it is prescribed and to no other child. (Regulation 23 (2)(b))	
Any person who carries on or manages an establishment or agency of any description without being registered under this Part in respect of it (as an establishment or, as the case may be, agency of that description) shall be guilty of an offence. (Section 11 (1) Care Standards Act 2000)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that the person in day-to-day charge of the home registers with Ofsted.	10 September 2021

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that when a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from the home without permission, the responsible local authority provides an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. Homes should take account of information provided by such interviews when assessing risks and putting arrangements in place to protect each child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.3)

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: SC033127

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: North East Lincolnshire Council, Civic Offices, Knoll Street, Cleethorpes, Lincolnshire DN35 8LN

Responsible individual: Yvonne Shearwood

Registered manager: Karen Stones

Inspector

Jennifer Fenlon, Social Care Inspector

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