

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 operated by North East Lincolnshire Council and is registered to provide care for up to 11 children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and physical disabilities. Some children live in the home, and others receive short-break overnight care.

At the time of the inspection, three children were living in the home and two children were staying for an overnight stay.

Inspectors spoke to and observed all five of the children as part of the inspection.

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 August 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: 30 April 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: inadequate

Enforcement action since last inspection:

A compliance notice was issued under Regulation 12 further to an inadequate inspection outcome on 30 April 2024. A monitoring visit took place on 16 June 2024, and the requirements of the compliance notice were met.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
30/04/2024	Full	Inadequate
17/10/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
11/10/2022	Full	Good
14/07/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Staff in the home know the children well and understand their needs. Children have warm and trusting relationships with the staff and reach out to them for support and reassurance. Children say that they love coming to stay and can choose activities they would like to do. Children grow in confidence and independence because of this.

Children in the home are supported to develop and maintain important friendships. The manager looks for opportunities for children to have time with their friends and makes opportunities for them to have short stays together to support this. One child who lives in the home has occasional overnights with a friend and regular overnights with family. This reduces stigma for the child and helps them to have positive experiences.

The manager has had areas of the home refurbished, and the home and the atmosphere were relaxed and calm during the visit. Recent repairs and redecoration make the home feel fresh and welcoming to children. Play equipment, games and books are available to the children alongside a well-equipped sensory room and outdoor play areas. Children have space to explore and play when at the home.

Children's emotional needs are addressed and met. One child has been distressed by recent moves and incidents in the home. Staff work with well-being professionals to help the child to feel safe again in their home. The child is regaining confidence in the home environment and is rebuilding trust with staff.

Staff adapt their communication style and approach according to the child's needs and their emotional state. Staff are supportive and reassuring, soothing children when upset and supporting them to communicate their needs. The children's guide has been adapted to incorporate symbols and photos so that more children can read and understand it. Different versions are provided for children who live in the home and children who have short stays.

Staff support children living in the home with their health and education needs and offer additional help if they are struggling. For a short period, they provided transport for one child to school when the child was feeling anxious. This helped reassure the child and prepare them for the day ahead.

Staff continue to visit children who have left the home. They provide ongoing support through transition periods to help children settle into new routines and to get to know new people. Professionals praised the manager and staff for their support to a child who recently moved on from the home.

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

The manager has improved fire safety systems and has appointed a staff member to champion this safety area. Records now clearly show when children have been involved in the evacuation process. When children are involved, staff note any difficulties that arise and update the child's personal plans to reflect this, as well as any actions that are required to support them better. This helps children to stay safe and understand how to keep themselves safe in an emergency.

The manager is responsive to and investigates any matters of concern in the home and shares this with relevant professionals. Professionals say that the manager shares information without delay and is not afraid to challenge others to ensure that children are better protected.

The instances of children going missing from the home have been reduced. Previous episodes related to a child who has now left the home. The manager reviewed these incidents, reflected and learned from them. This helps to shape and inform future practice.

Staff rarely physically intervene with children if children are upset. Where staff have intervened, the manager has reviewed the incidents and spoken with staff and the child involved to learn from them. Appropriate challenge takes place in the discussions with staff to ensure that they are confident and understand the risks involved. Reflective practice helps staff to improve their knowledge and skills.

Medicated toothpaste was not stored safely during the inspection, and an investigation is underway with relation to a medication storage error. On discovering this, the manager took immediate action to safeguard children, but medication has remained within their reach and not stored safely.

One child is closely supervised in line with a legal order to keep them safe. When inspectors viewed the garden area, they saw that paint pots and a screwdriver were left within reach of children. While staff were encouraging the child to be involved in painting the fences, leaving these materials and tools within reach of children without the supervision of staff has the potential to pose a hazard.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home manager is deeply committed to the children and has a good understanding of their needs. She also has positive relationships with staff. Staff describe her as having an open-door policy. One staff member who has worked in the home for many years said, 'I have honestly never had such a supportive manager. She always has time for you.'

The manager is open and honest with professionals, including the regulator. She recognises the strengths of the service and where the service needs to develop. Many

improvements have already been made, and plans are underway to improve the service further.

The manager has developed a new tool that aids her oversight of all areas of a large service. The senior staff contribute to this, which keeps the manager up to date with the children's progress and any changing needs. This has helped the manager to hold others to account. The manager knows what is happening with each child because of this.

The manager follows safer recruitment processes. Staff complete a thorough induction during their probationary period. This involves the completion of mandatory training and training that is specific to the children's needs in the area they work in. Staff receive regular supervision, can discuss issues at any time and are supported. The manager ensures that staff are supported to safely care for children.

A complaint was received by the responsible individual since the last inspection and was dealt with in a timely manner. The manager carefully considered what they could learn from the complaint and how they could improve their practice. This demonstrates a learning culture in the home and a willingness to listen to those involved in the service.

The manager completed a quality of care review, but it was not shared with the regulator within the prescribed timescales. This prevents the regulator from maintaining oversight of changes and progress 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 persons 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 persons must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
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. (Regulation 23 (1) (2)(a))	8 October 2024
The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ("a quality of care review") at least once every 6 months. After completing a quality of care review, the registered person must produce a written report about the quality of care review and the actions which the registered person intends to take as a result of the quality of care review ("the quality of care review report") The registered person must— supply to HMCI a copy of the quality of care review report within 28 days of the date on which the quality of care review is completed. (Regulation 45 (1) (3) (4)(a))	8 October 2024

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that the home complies with relevant health and safety legislation by storing hazardous substances and tools in a secure, locked area when they are not in use. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

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: North East Lincolnshire Council

Registered provider address: Civic Offices, Knoll Street, Cleethorpes DN35 8LN

Responsible individual: Sandra Snell

Registered manager: Vanessa Metcalfe

Inspectors

Carol Jagger, Social Care Inspector
Ladean Wilson, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

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