

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 run by a local authority. It provides care for up to 11 children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The home is divided into three buildings. Two of these provide long-term care, and one provides short-break services. At the time of this inspection, five children were living in the home on a permanent basis.

The manager is suitably qualified and registered with Ofsted in December 2023.

Inspection dates: 30 April and 1 May 2024

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account

inadequate

How well children and young people are helped and protected

inadequate

The effectiveness of leaders and managers

inadequate

There are serious and/or widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded.

Date of last inspection: 17 October 2023

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
17/10/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
11/10/2022	Full	Good
14/07/2021	Full	Good
21/01/2020	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

Children in the home have varied experiences of care. Some children are supported by a qualified staff team. One child has had several different groups of staffing over recent months. Their experience of care has been disjointed due to the changes in staffing. Temporary staff have not followed children's plans, which has left children and staff at risk of harm.

The manager has cancelled some overnight short stays in recognition of the current risk levels. Families are upset due to the short notice. One family feels let down and has no alternative support. Children are not receiving planned care, and families spoke of repeated cancellations.

One child has had to move bedrooms to a different area of the home to keep them safe. Professionals and staff have noted changes and regression in children's behaviour recently. This suggests that children are upset or worried. One child has had disturbed sleep due to noisy incidents at night. The effect of one child in distress is negatively impacting on others who live there.

Some areas of the building have been refurbished. They are bright and inviting for children. Other areas within the home show signs of damage, which are awaiting repair. The garden has loose and damaged masonry and a broken gate with exposed nails. These were within reach of children and could cause injury to them. The manager arranged for these to be cleared when they were made aware.

Children who have lived in the home for a long time have warm and trusting relationships with staff. Staff speak positively and with care about all children and want them to achieve the best outcomes for them. Families and professionals speak of the trust that they have in the manager and staff of the home. Families spoke positively about the care their children usually receive.

One child described the manager as fair. They said that the manager listens to them and tries to make things change for them. Most children's experiences, until the past few months, have been positive.

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

Children living in the home have said or demonstrated that they do not feel safe in the home. Staff have not assessed risks after incidents. Appropriate action has not been taken to reduce the risk to children. A child who is subject to a legal order has had episodes of going missing from home. On return to the home after one episode, the child said that they were exposed to exploitation while they were missing. Appropriate follow-up work took place for the child. Staff have not prevented the child from going

missing. On one occasion, the child spent time in police custody when found. The child is at increased risk of exploitation and criminalisation.

On a recent occasion, staff did not prevent a child with high-risk behaviours from entering different areas of the home. The child was able to enter these areas after disabling the door fobs. Children and staff were at significant risk during this incident.

Temporary staff did not follow the plans agreed to support a child. The plan identified where a controlled item should be stored. The staff did not follow the plan and a child was able to obtain the item with ease. Despite this taking place, staff were still not clear about the storage guidance for the items, during the visit.

Records of incidents do not capture children's views and feelings after them. Post-incident reflection with staff is also not captured. This prevents learning and the opportunity to change support strategies. Reflective work has not been completed, which would help the children to form more positive relationships with staff and others. Work to express their emotions differently or explore risk has not been completed. Children and staff have not been afforded learning opportunities from these incidents.

Staff were not able to find fire extinguishers in one part of the home. The manager found the fire extinguishers during the inspection and alerted the team. The fire risk assessment does not address the safe storage of oxygen tanks. These are stored for children's health needs but were unlabelled. Oxygen signage was put in place as soon as it was raised. Risks around fire have not been identified by staff and managers.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

The manager has worked in the home for several years and is respected by their team. The manager has been managing a crisis in the home for the past few months. The manager does not have sufficient staffing capacity to complete the required daily tasks. The management structure of the home does not offer the manager practical day-to-day support.

The current additional temporary team is in place due to the required staffing levels. The manager has not supported the temporary staff to the same level as the permanent staff. The temporary staff are managing a complex situation. There has been a lack of supervision and oversight for them.

Permanent staff in the home are up to date with their training. Permanent and temporary staff say that they do not have the training and skills to support one child. Staff spoke of their care for each of the children and their commitment to them. The situation is affecting the staff's emotional well-being and physical health. Some staff do not feel safe at work, and others have been injured. Staff do not have the training and skills to keep all children safe.

Temporary staff support one child. The staff are not following the child's plans consistently. Incidents have increased, and temporary staff have been hurt. Permanent

staff intervene and offer support. They are working with other children, so this then affects their care. The manager has not been able to review recent incidents. This prevents reflection and learning.

The manager did not have detailed information before the admission of a child. The child arrived in an emergency. Once the child was in the home, the manager was able to gain a better understanding of the complexities of their needs. The move was intended to be temporary. Professionals who know the child state that this was not an appropriate or safe place for the child to live. These professionals raised concerns of increased risk to the child and others. The child remains in the home, and the level of risk to them and others is significant.

The manager finds themselves spending much of their time responding to incidents involving one child. The manager attends twice-weekly multi-agency meetings, but no alternative placement has been identified. The manager has closed their short-stay service temporarily to reduce the risk to other children. They have moved children who live in the home to different areas of the home to try to reduce risk.

Senior leaders and managers proposed a plan to increase safety during the inspection and to avoid higher enforcement by the regulator.

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 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 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 premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished, and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(b)(d))	11 June 2024
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.	11 June 2024

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; 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. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(d)(e))	
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 arrangements are in place to ensure the effective induction of each child into the home; each child's relevant plans are followed. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(i)(c))	11 June 2024
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— meet each child's behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child's relevant plans; help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone; 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;	11 June 2024

de-escalate confrontations with or between children, or potentially violent behaviour by children. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(iv)(x)(xi))	
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— details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use 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)(v)(b)(i)(ii)(c)) In particular, support children to talk about their feelings, and ensure that learning from incidents from children and staff feedback takes place.	11 June 2024
After consultation with the fire and rescue authority, the registered person must— take adequate precautions against the risk of fire, including the provision of suitable fire equipment in the children's home; provide adequate means of escape from the home in the event of fire; ensure, by means of fire drills and practices at suitable intervals, that persons working at the home and, so far as reasonably practicable, children are aware of the procedure to be followed in case of fire. (Regulation 25 (1)(a)(b)(d)) In particular, the fire risk assessment should address the safe storage of oxygen and where fire extinguishers are located, and children should be supported to understand what to do in the event of a fire through practice drills.	11 June 2024

* These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Recommendations

- The registered person should provide a children's guide for all children in the home. This should be accessible to the children who live in the home, considering their communication needs. It should be kept under regular review with the statement of purpose and any changes explained. ('Guide to the Children's Home Regulations, including the quality standards', page 9 paragraph 4.21,22 and 23)
Page 9 Paragraph 4. 21, 22 and 23

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

Kate Jackson, Social Care Inspector

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