

SC034797

Registered provider: Norfolk County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This local authority home provides medium- to long-term residential care for up to four children who have experienced trauma and may have experienced neglect and/or emotional abuse.

The manager registered with Ofsted in April 2020.

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

Inspection dates: 7 to 8 September 2021

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 widespread failures that mean children are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded and the care and experiences of children are poor and they are not making progress.

Date of last inspection: 8 January 2020

Overall judgement at last inspection: declined in effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
08/01/2020	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
04/04/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good
08/08/2018	Full	Inadequate
13/12/2017	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

Some children have made progress from their starting points. However, shortfalls in keeping children safe and protecting them from harm have had a significant impact on the outcomes and experiences of some children and been detrimental to their well-being.

Insufficient consideration in matching the needs of a new child against a child who was already living at the home has had a negative impact on one child's safety and well-being. This child's experiences at the home have been seriously undermined to the point that he has been moved out for his own safety.

The staff do not have the skills, knowledge or experience to manage one child's extremely complex behaviours. This has resulted in the child having no boundaries and no sense of being a child. It has meant that staff are unable to prevent his exposure to risky situations or to protect him, other children and staff from the risk of physical harm.

There is no clarity in staff's understanding or children's plans in respect of how staff should help one child to clean his bedroom. This lack of support was raised as a requirement at the assurance visit but has not been addressed. Staff said that they do not go into the child's room much as he does not allow them to. Given the risks for this child, related to fire-setting, staff do not have sufficient sight of his bedroom to ensure that it is clean and free of hazards and fire-lighting equipment.

Children are not living in a homely environment. Carpets have burn marks on them where fires have been set, and one door frame and door need replacing following damage caused when the police needed to intervene in an incident. This damage does not make the environment homely. A requirement was raised at the assurance visit in respect of the environment. Although damage has been repaired since the assurance visit, other damage is evident at the home.

Some children have made progress. This is recognised by external professionals. One child successfully moved out of the home and another child has improved their relationships with their family and staff. Staff have supported a child to engage in activities in the community and encourage the child to engage in hobbies and interests that he enjoys.

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

Staff have failed to prevent a child being bullied or to protect him from physical harm from another child. Staff failed to intervene to safeguard the child. This child has been attacked physically and verbally and this has resulted in him having to be moved into respite care for his own safety. Consequently, the progress that he was

making stopped and, through no fault of his own, his placement was disrupted. This child's experiences at the home may well affect his development, well-being and ability to continue to explore his identity.

Staff have failed to prevent a child from setting fires in the home on two occasions. Risk assessments do not detail appropriate risk-reduction strategies to manage this. During the inspection, the inspector found that the child had put glue in his bedroom door lock. This was only removed by staff when the inspector raised it. Given the known risk of fire-setting, lack of regular checks of the door lock is a significant oversight and demonstrates that staff are not suitably vigilant. Incidents of glue being put in the door lock are not referenced in the child's risk assessment. There is a lack of direction and guidance to staff on managing fire-setting behaviours.

There have been several incidents of damage caused to the home. Verbal and physical aggression and self-harm are not adequately referenced in the risk assessments. One child smokes; arrangements for this are not sufficiently recorded in risk assessments. Staff lack clear direction and guidance on how to manage risks effectively to protect children.

Staff's inability to provide a child with boundaries and guidance is leading to an escalation in the child's behaviours. The child is not engaging with the staff. Staff do not sanction unacceptable behaviour for fear of negative responses from the child. Therefore, he is not parented or guided to help him manage his feelings and behaviour. This does not promote his well-being and fails to keep him safe.

A child has been missing from care 17 times since his admission to the home. A waking-night staff member has been employed. However, this is not a deterrent and the child continues to leave the home at night. Due to the young age of the child, risks are elevated when he goes missing. On two occasions, staff failed to notify Ofsted of serious incidents of the child going missing from home overnight. This does not enable Ofsted to have an accurate and current view of the home or to check how serious incidents are managed.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

Leaders and managers admitted a child to the home in May 2021. The manager and staff acknowledge that they cannot meet his needs or manage his behaviour. The impact of this has been that the child is not kept safe, and another child's care has been disrupted.

The management team monitors incident records. However, the monitoring is not effective as it does not identify practice issues regarding staff's management of children. Therefore, opportunities are missed to guide staff practice and improve their behaviour management skills.

Some staff have their mobile phones with them while working at the home. There is no clear guidance about the acceptable use of mobile phones when working with children.

The management team has recently been working shifts and covering sleep-in duties to cover gaps in the rota. This has meant that some managerial tasks have not been completed to their usual standard.

Staff said they have good opportunities for training. One staff member has been trained as a climbing instructor. This develops staff and gives children increased opportunities for recreational pursuits.

The management team works collaboratively with professionals. A police officer said that since the manager has been at the home, reliance on the police to address children's behaviours has reduced.

Staff feel supported by the manager. Staff supervision and staff meetings have a clear emphasis on the children. The management team and staff are aware of what the children need, despite not being able to deliver what is required.

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— ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— meet the needs of each child; and enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(i)(ii)) In particular, ensure that damage to the home is repaired promptly and carry out refurbishment to the home to make the environment more homely. This requirement was made at the assurance visit and is restated.	29 October 2021
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—	29 October 2021

understand and apply the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff— provide personalised care that meets each child's needs, as recorded in the child's relevant plans, taking account of the child's background. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(iv)) In particular, ensure that children's plans detail what action staff need to take to support a child to keep their bedroom clean and tidy. This requirement was made at the assurance visit and is restated.	
*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; 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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(iv)(v)(vi)(b)) In particular: provide staff with training and in-depth guidance on managing behaviours of fire-setting, bullying and children	11 October 2021

going missing from home, to increase their confidence in setting and maintaining boundaries for children; ensure that risk assessments reflect all known risks, give clear risk-reduction strategies and that staff understand and follow the strategies; review all incidents of children going missing and incidents of harmful behaviours with the staff involved. Use learning from these reviews to identify training needs and to inform future strategies to reduce the likelihood of recurrence.	
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— use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(h))	29 October 2021
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 children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home's statement of purpose. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a))	29 October 2021
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if—	11 October 2021

there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(e))	
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* This requirement is subject to a compliance notice.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that all staff consistently follow the home's policies and procedures for the benefit of the children in the home's care. In particular, ensure that all staff are aware of and follow the home's policy on the use of mobile phones when they are working with children. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.20)

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: SC034797

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Norfolk County Council

Registered provider address: Martineau Lane, Norwich, Norfolk NR1 2DH

Responsible individual: Lee Napper

Registered manager: Roger Macdonald

Inspector

Lianne Bradford, Social Care Inspector

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