

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.

Inspection dates: 30 November to 1 December 2021

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be 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 is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: 7 September 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: inadequate

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
07/09/2021	Full	Inadequate
08/01/2020	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
04/04/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good
08/08/2018	Full	Inadequate

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

Since the last inspection, children have had a more positive experience of living at the home. However, the progress that children make requires improvement to be good.

At the time of the inspection, there were two children living at the home. Staff establish positive and trusting relationships with children. A child's recent move to the home was well planned. The child spent time at the home before their move. Detailed information from the local authority and previous home helped staff to understand the child's needs. As a result, the child, who had previous episodes of being missing, has settled quickly.

The home has an institutionalised feel. However, there is extensive refurbishment under way that will provide children with a more homely and welcoming environment.

Staff understand the children's emotional and mental health needs. Staff have a good knowledge of the relationships that are important to the children. They get to know the children's families well and have a good understanding of the family dynamics. This increases staff's understanding and enables them to tailor their care to the needs of the children.

Staff have failed to sufficiently engage one child at the home. Although the child's plan is agreed with the social worker, there has been little encouragement from staff for her to spend time at the home. There are no clear and immediate consequences or responses when the child does not attend education. Therefore, staff have not helped her to understand the importance or value of education. Consequently, the child has not made progress in education or her social development. The other child's attendance at school has improved.

One child said that she has enjoyed trips out with staff, visiting local beaches and going shopping. The child has only recently moved to the home but already feels comfortable in the company of staff. Activities and trips out help children to broaden their social networks and range of experiences.

The staff seek and respond to children's views. Children's meetings are held regularly, although only one of the two children living at the home attends. These meetings have a clear focus on the child's wishes and feelings. Changes made at the home reflect the child's wishes, which helps the child to feel a sense of belonging.

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

There have been no missing-from-home episodes, no restraints and no sanctions or incidents since the last visit. The children are very settled and have been supported well by staff.

The children said that they have staff whom they can speak to if they have a concern or worry.

Staff support children's health needs well. Staff have regular and meaningful conversations with the children about their health. Children seek out staff to support them with their health needs. This demonstrates the positive relationships that some children have with staff. Children are encouraged to attend health appointments and independence is promoted when a child wants to attend appointments without adult support.

Parents provided complimentary feedback about the home. One parent said that there have been several improvements in behaviour since her daughter moved to the home. The child no longer goes missing from home, is more settled emotionally and attends school more regularly.

One social worker said that she views the home as a place of safety and security for her child.

The managers make appropriate challenge to the placing local authority when they feel that children's rights are not being upheld. This ensures that children receive the services, support and care that they require.

The manager has not updated the location risk assessment to include the presence of builders at the home who are carrying out a refurbishment. There is a skip and a cordoned-off area in the garden where the builders store their materials. Builders are on site in school hours to minimise disruption. However, it is unclear how the additional risks have been mitigated and understood by staff.

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

The manager has met three out of the four requirements made at the last inspection.

Children's needs are better assessed before they move in to the home. Therefore, only children whose needs can be met move in. A child who recently moved in was a good match to the other child already living at the home. Consequently, the children's experiences have improved. The home has a more positive atmosphere and there is no bullying or conflict between the children.

Parents and social workers said that communication with the manager is excellent. Parents and social workers receive weekly updates about their children's progress.

Some records are not reflective of the children's needs. Individual care plans have not been updated since one child's arrival. One care plan refers to previous placements and has not been revised to reflect current care arrangements. Some records have not been updated to reflect children's reduction in risk and their subsequent progress. One child's health plan had not been updated to reflect a recent health concern. The manager has failed to monitor records sufficiently. This shortfall was identified at the last inspection.

Staff training overall is good. However, some staff have not been retrained in managing medication despite their certification expiring. The provider has failed to deliver training to staff despite the manager requesting this training seven months ago. Lack of sufficient training means that staff may not have current information to help them meet children's needs.

The record of the staff duty roster does not include the manager or a senior staff member. This can cause confusion when trying to monitor events.

It was identified at the last inspection that some staff have their mobile phones on their person while working at the home. There is still no clear guidance about the acceptable use of mobile phones when working with children.

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 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 understand the importance and value of education, learning, training and employment; 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. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(iv)(viii))	14 January 2022
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)) This requirement was made at the full inspection and the subsequent monitoring visit and is restated.	14 January 2022

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 have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)) This specifically relates to the provider ensuring that staff are trained in medication dispensation.	14 January 2022
Schedule 4 sets out the other information that the registered person must keep in relation to a children's home. The registered person must— maintain in the home the records in Schedule 4. (Regulation 37 (1) (2)(a)) This refers specifically to ensuring that the staff duty roster includes all staff, the manager and any senior managers.	14 January 2022
The registered person must review the appropriateness and suitability of the location of the premises used for the purposes of the children's home at least once in each calendar year taking into account the requirement in regulation 12 (2)(c) (the protection of children standard). (Regulation 46 (1))	14 January 2022

Recommendation

- 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: County Hall, Martineau Lane, Norwich, Norfolk NR1 2DH

Responsible individual: Lee Napper

Registered manager: Roger Macdonald

Inspectors

Lianne Bradford, Social Care Inspector
Rachel Watkinson, Social Care Inspector

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