

SC035499

Registered provider: East Riding of Yorkshire Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

A local authority operates and runs this home. The home provides medium- to long-term residential care for up to six children.

The manager has been registered since October 2019 but has been redeployed elsewhere since July 2021. The deputy manager is undertaking day-to-day management of the home.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

We last visited this setting on 3 November 2020 to carry out a monitoring visit. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 October 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 serious failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded.

Date of last inspection: 19 November 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection:

At the assurance visit undertaken on 21 and 22 September 2020, there were serious and widespread concerns in relation to the care and protection of children. Three compliance notices were raised relating to the protection of children, the leadership and management of the home, and the care planning standard. A notice restricting accommodation was also served on 24 September 2020. On 4 November 2020, a monitoring visit identified that the provider had made improvements and all three compliance notices were met. The restriction on accommodation was removed.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
19/11/2019	Full	Good
05/02/2019	Full	Good
23/10/2018	Full	Inadequate
02/03/2018	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

During the inspection, a serious concern relating to the safety of the premises was identified. The home was not made safe for a child in line with their care plan. This relates to the acting manager and staff team not responding with sufficient robustness to the risk of harm posed to one child. These concerns, alongside the lack of urgent action relating to a child going missing from home, have led to the inadequate judgement.

Some children have negative experiences while living at this home. Relationships with their peers have involved conflict, and there have been occasions when children have made complaints to the police about this. These include instances of hate crime and bullying, and significantly hurtful/harmful comments. Although staff challenge these behaviours, this has largely proved ineffective in improving relationships.

The premises are generally well maintained. The communal areas downstairs are homely and pleasant. However, the graffiti on the rear wall does not give an impression of the home being cared for. Locked doors to the lounge overnight accentuate an institutional feel. Managers have plans to give the premises a more domestic appearance from the street, but this is yet to be achieved.

Most children are making progress in education. One child has moved from being out of education provision to tutoring, another has moved from specialist to mainstream education. This increases their opportunities later in life. One child has only attended their education provision on one occasion this academic year, and managers say they will be challenging the response of the education service but have not yet done so.

Children sometimes spend time with family members outside of formal contact arrangements. This means that children are spending time with family or friends in an unplanned way. When this happens, staff check on children and encourage them to return home safely.

Some children have positive experiences in the home. Staff support them in gaming, pool tournaments and occasional trips out. This helps to build relationships between staff and children and between peers. Staff complete focused sessions with the children which concentrate on areas of risk and the desired outcomes for the children. These sessions are well recorded, relevant and take place frequently. They are a strength of the home.

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

The acting manager and staff did not respond appropriately to ensure that the premises were safe following serious concerns relating to one child's self-injurious behaviours. The child's risk assessments were clear and accurately reflected the need to ensure that room searches took place to remove items to ensure the child's safety. The environment was not made safe through the removal of potential ligatures and other dangerous items. This was despite room searches being carried out. This resulted in a child having access to items in their bedroom and in the bathroom that they could use to harm themselves.

The acting manager and staff did not follow a vulnerable child's safety plan when they were missing from home and their whereabouts unknown. They did not contact the police for an urgent response in locating the child despite this being a necessary action in the child's plan. These shortfalls led to one child being exposed to an unacceptable level of risk.

Some children use the internet and their mobile phones unsupervised for several hours without staff knowing who they are conversing with. There are safeguards built into the home's Wi-Fi system that show which internet sites have been accessed. However, this is not currently being monitored as only one member of staff has the knowledge to do this, and they have been absent from work. This leaves children vulnerable to online risks and exploitation and the staff unaware of the potential risks to their safety.

The staff complete direct work with children about online safety. The staff are also trained to respond to any risks relating to radicalisation and extremism. Managers and staff have formed professional relationships with safeguarding specialists in exploitation. This ensures that they have the right links in place to manage these risks when issues arise.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

Due to the serious concerns related to the care and protection of children, the manager has not fulfilled their responsibility in providing a safe environment for children. Management oversight failed to identify shortfalls, which has exposed children to harm.

There are gaps in supervision, and the quality of supervision records is inconsistent. There has been no annual review of staff's performance and their development needs. This does not provide assurances that staff have the right skills to meet the needs of the children.

Due to staff sickness, vacancies and the COVID-19 pandemic, there have been occasions when there have been more agency and casual staff caring for the children than core team members. The manager has attempted to mitigate this by consistently using the same casual and agency workers, but staff have indicated this is not always possible and some new staff have worked at the home who do not

have an existing relationship with the children. This not only impacts on the children, but some tasks have been delayed for permanent staff to complete them.

Leaders and managers have the children's well-being as their focus, and care for the children is appropriately individualised based on regular consultation with them. However, not all children's requests are given sufficient priority. For example, one child asked for personal items of emotional significance to be moved from his old bedroom to his new room. However, this had still not been actioned two weeks later. This fails to demonstrate an appropriate awareness of the emotional impact on children of being in a children's home.

Leaders and managers conduct a review of the quality of care, and they have devised a detailed action plan to drive up quality. The home's statement of purpose has not been updated to accurately reflect details in respect of staffing, strategic management and the children's commissioner. This recording shortfall does not impact on the children.

Impact and matching assessments are comprehensive and evidence appropriate consultation with others. Potential issues are identified prior to admission and mitigations are explored to evaluate if they are sufficient at keeping children safe.

All staff are up to date with their training despite the challenges to achieve this during the COVID-19 pandemic. New staff are offered a comprehensive induction alongside agency staff who are also given up-to-date information to support them in joining the team at short notice.

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; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(iii)(vi))	5 December 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— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(e))	5 December 2021

The registered person must ensure that all employees— undertake appropriate continuing professional development; receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience; and have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33 (4)(a)(b)(c))	5 December 2021
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* These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the home complies with relevant health and safety legislation, such as alarms and food hygiene. However, in doing so, the home should seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than 'institutional' impression. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that, in accordance with schedule 1, paragraphs 19 and 20, the following elements of the workforce plan are included in the statement of purpose: the staffing structure; the experience and qualifications of staff and the arrangements for supervision of staff practice. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.10)

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: SC035499

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: Room AF97, Goole Council Offices, Church Street, Goole, East Yorkshire DN14 5BG

Responsible individual: Eoin Rush

Registered manager: Robert Bridgett

Inspector

Rachel Ruth, Social Care Regulatory Inspector

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