

Lincolnshire Secure Unit

Lincolnshire County Council

Lincolnshire Secure Unit, Rookery Avenue, Sleaford, Lincolnshire NG34 7TY

Assurance inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this secure children's home

This home is operated by a local authority and is approved by the Secretary of State to restrict children's liberty. It provides care for up to 12 children aged between 10 and 17 years. The home was providing care for 8 children at the time of the inspection.

The home provides care for up to 11 children placed by the youth custody service and one child placed under section 25 of the Children Act 1989. Admission of any child who is under 13 years of age placed by local authorities under section 25 of the Children Act 1989 requires the approval of the Secretary of State.

The commissioning of health services at this home is the statutory responsibility of NHS England under the Health and Social Care Act 2012. Education is provided on site in dedicated facilities.

The manager registered with Ofsted in 2008.

Inspection date: 13 May 2026

Date of last inspection: 23 September 2025

Judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Information about this inspection

At this inspection, the inspectors evaluated:

- the care of children
- the safety of children
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers.

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children, using the social care common inspection framework. This assurance 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'.

Findings from the inspection

We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance inspection.

Children feel valued and speak positively about the care they receive. They appreciate having varied activities which support opportunities for exercise and social interaction. The home environment is calm and pleasant, and children enjoy spending time together in communal areas. Children are treated with respect and staff support their cultural needs. It helps children to settle into the home knowing that their individual needs are being acted on.

Children's risks, vulnerabilities and needs are well understood. Case managers are proactive when a child presents with an emerging risk. This included drawing up a dynamic self-harm risk plan and formulating staff guidance for managing non-epileptic seizures. These measures and strategies to reduce risk and harm are regularly reviewed and closed when the risk is no longer a concern. This approach helps children to see the progress they are making.

Children's voices, views and opinions are listened to and acted on. Children have the right to make a complaint and have the confidence to do so. All complaints raised by children are treated with the same level of scrutiny and care, regardless of the nature of the issue raised. Children are supported to understand the outcome through formal feedback and ongoing support.

There are very few serious incidents. One serious incident led to police and the on-call manager attending the home. Following this, prompt action was taken for one child to move to another setting to minimise further disruption and risk to the other children. One child was supported to write a letter to their peers apologising for their actions and the impact this may have had on others. This shows there is a reflective culture at the home which supports children to develop a sense of regret in a positive way.

Children are not restrained regularly. Staff use least restrictive measures where possible to try and avoid restraining a child, such as guiding and blocking. Children are spoken to following any use of restraint to support them to understand the reasons. A restorative and trauma-led approach helps the children to understand the consequences of their behaviour.

There has been one use of an unauthorised restraint, which was still being investigated. Appropriate reports have been made to relevant agencies. The restraint coordinator has introduced training scenarios to support staff to develop their skills and staff have provided positive feedback on this. The restraint coordinator also work closely with the national restraint provider to seek external feedback and scrutiny on the use of restraint where required. This means there is transparency and accountability, where learning and external feedback are welcomed.

Allegation management is robust; investigations are timely and relevant agencies and professionals are consulted and referred to. There is a clear multi-agency collaborative information-sharing ethos that ensures children are safe and decisions made are considered and in the best interests of the child.

Staff spoken to feel well supported. They have regular supervision and state there is an open-door policy. Staff acknowledged a challenging period before and after a significant incident but expressed confidence in the lessons learned and management response through reflective debriefs and training.

Occupancy levels have been consistent since the last inspection. There are always some vacancies in youth custody commissioned homes because of the demand for beds when children are placed on remand. The youth custody service has authorised the use of a second welfare bed at this home, and both are occupied.

No requirements or recommendations were made at this inspection.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
23/09/2025	Full	Outstanding
05/11/2024	Full	Outstanding
12/12/2023	Full	Good
10/01/2023	Full	Good

Secure children's home details

Unique reference number: SC042921

Provision sub-type: Secure unit

Registered provider: Lincolnshire County Council

Registered provider address: County Offices, Newland, Lincoln LN1 1YL

Responsible individual: Tara Jones

Registered manager: David Clarke

Inspectors

Cath Sikakana, Social Care Inspector

Leanne Lyon, Social Care Inspector

Laytoya Morgan, Social Care Inspector (shadow)

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