

SC042994

Registered provider: Lincolnshire County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned and operated by a local authority. It provides a short-break service to children with emotional and social difficulties, physical disabilities, learning disabilities, mental health difficulties and sensory impairments. Currently, 54 children access this service.

The manager is suitably qualified and is in the process of registering with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 9 and 10 May 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	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	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 17 March 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: improved effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
17/03/2022	Interim	Improved effectiveness
07/12/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good
06/01/2020	Full	Outstanding
03/09/2018	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children have positive experiences during their short breaks. Staff carefully consider children's individual needs. The staff team is skilled at matching groups of children for each break. This careful matching of children provides opportunities for children to develop friendships and enjoy activities with other children.

Children get to have opportunities and experiences that they may not ordinarily be able to engage in due to their complex needs. Children have been able to participate in activities in the community, such as swimming and attending a funfair, which were positive experiences. External agencies work with the home and provide additional activities that provide sensory and stimulating experiences, for example African drumming.

Children are helped and supported to develop their independence, social skills and communication. Staff aspire highly for the children. They work very well with parents and other professionals in setting realistic targets designed to help children make progress. Children's achievements are celebrated, shared and captured in photos and artwork throughout the home.

The staff team provides nurturing care. Children are treated with respect and dignity. Staff are responsive to children's needs and are skilled at adapting how they communicate to meet the needs of children. Children are provided with safe and consistent routines which help to reduce their anxieties. As a result, children are happy and settled during their stay.

Children's plans are clear and detailed. They provide the staff with the necessary guidance and understanding of the children's needs. Plans set out how the children can be supported during their stay. There is a strong emphasis on working with parents and involved professionals to inform care plans that are consistent and reflect parents' and children's views.

Children are given options and choices. This provides them with a voice in how the home is operated and meets their needs. Staff look at a range of ways to ensure that children's views are captured and responded to. Parents and external professionals are also kept informed via regular newsletters. These illustrate the events and activities that children have been involved in and developments in the home.

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

Children's risks are carefully considered and inform detailed risk assessments and support plans. Staff have a good understanding of risk and how best to support children with complex needs. Staff are skilled at ensuring that children are provided with a safe environment that protects them from harm.

Staff have received additional training and guidance in the reporting and recording of safeguarding concerns. A new system now means that any safeguarding concerns are reported in a timely way to the management team and external agencies. When there have been concerns, these have been managed appropriately. The manager has worked with other professionals to ensure that children are safeguarded and concerns are responded to immediately.

Any concerning incidents involving children are well managed. There have been no recent incidents that have involved the staff restraining children. Following any incidents, the staff have reflective debriefs which allow them opportunities to discuss their practice and identify any learning. As a result, some children's support plans have been reviewed and updated to reflect this learning. Children, wherever possible, are also given the opportunity to talk about incidents. This enables them to understand the actions taken by staff to keep them safe.

Staff know the children very well and have a good understanding of how children can communicate in different ways. Staff are attuned to the children and use this knowledge to observe children for any signs of behaviour that may indicate something is wrong. Any concerns are documented and shared with relevant people.

Medication administration has been reviewed following an error. Staff have received additional training, including competency assessments. The new protocol gives staff clear guidance and a step-by-step guide designed to minimise the risks of medication errors occurring. As a result, there have been no further errors in practice.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

A new management team has been appointed. Its members provide strong leadership. A new development plan has been implemented and as a result there have been improvements throughout the home and in working practices. The manager has high aspirations for the staff. She has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the service.

There has been a clear emphasis placed on staff development and support. Staff have benefited from regular supervision and clear training plans that reflect their needs and those of the children. Some staff have had annual appraisals, where they discuss practice and are set targets and goals for further growth. Not all staff have had appraisals. This is an area for ongoing improvement.

The manager works well with a multidisciplinary team. This includes colleagues from health, social care and education. They have strong and positive relationships with families and work closely with parents and carers in implementing care plans for the children. Parents describe the home as a 'lifeline' and say that they 'trust' the staff in providing safe care to the children.

The children's identified key workers are being supported and encouraged to take a more active role in meetings to provide their views and ideas regarding the children's care needs. This empowers staff to contribute their first-hand knowledge of the children in developing children's plans.

The manager has implemented a range of systems for auditing and monitoring of the home. These are in the process of becoming embedded in practice. Senior staff are being given more responsibility and are taking lead roles in key areas, with oversight from the management team. This is supporting professional development and shared ownership about practice in the home.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that all staff have their performance and fitness to carry out their role formally appraised at least once annually. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.5)

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: SC042994

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Lincolnshire County Council

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

Responsible individual: Janice Spencer

Registered manager: Julie Adams

Inspector

Sarah Orriss, Social Care Inspector

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