

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC042994
Inspector	Tracy Murty
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Lincolnshire County Council
Registered person address	Lincolnshire County Council, County Offices Newland LINCOLN LN1 1YL
Responsible individual	Janice Spencer
Registered manager	Theresa Valerie Ann Clarke
Date of last inspection	11/06/2014

Inspection date	28/01/2015
Previous inspection	adequate
Enforcement action since last inspection	None

This inspection

This home was judged adequate at the last full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has **improved effectiveness**.

The Registered Manager has ensured that the three requirements and one recommendation made at the last inspection have been fully considered and addressed. New systems have been devised and implemented with the staff team. This provides clarity and consistency in relation to any potential welfare concerns for children receiving a short break in this home. Staff report feeling more confident now in the expected processes and recording of any safeguarding or welfare issues identified during a child's stay.

The Registered Manager has also revised the processes and procedures for staff reporting of any concerns identified. Clearer monitoring and management oversight now provides additional scrutiny and promotes the safety and welfare of all children during their stays. Regular case file audits are carried out by the staff team of all records relating to each child. This has led to a significant improvement in the quality and relevance of care plans and other key documentation. Staff have also ensured that outstanding minutes from children in need or looked after review meetings are chased and placed on the child's file in a timely manner.

The home produces a regular newsletter, which is sent out to all parents and carers. The newsletter has been used to inform parents and carers of the role of the independent advocate. Children benefit from being able to meet with the advocate each month, to share their wishes, feelings and any issues they may have. Parents have also been provided with contact details and a photograph of the advocate via the newsletter.

The use of physical restraint in this home is minimal. This reflects the skills and competence of the staff team, in being able to use alternative strategies to support children. Where restraint is used, children are offered medical assistance following its use. Where children cannot communicate verbally, staff record what actions they

have taken to ensure that the health needs of children have been fully considered and met.

Children enjoy their short break stays in this home. Parents and carers report consistently high levels of satisfaction at the services and care provided to their children. The staff team demonstrate a detailed understanding and awareness of the complex needs of each child and how those needs should be met. Parents report having confidence in the staff team and in being kept very well informed of any relevant information about their child during their stay.

Targets are set for each child during their stays. These reflect the individualised needs and abilities of each child. Managers regularly monitor progress made for each child and produce highly detailed reports of how the services provided have improved the outcomes for children. Children over time, develop increased skills and confidence. This will assist them greatly when they move on to adult service provisions. One parent stated; 'my daughter is always excited and happy when I fetch her, it shows she has been having a nice time.' Another parent thanked the staff team for the care and support they have given to their child over many years. They stated; 'we would not have survived as a family without this service.'

Children are sensitively introduced to this short break service. Managers and staff work closely with parents and carers to plan for overnight stays. For some children, this is the first time they have spent time away from family members. Staff ensure that introductory visits can be made to the home and keep in close contact with family members. Careful matching of each child ensures that each stay is tailored to meet the needs of the group. Over time, children form positive friendships and attachments. One child refers to their short break stays as 'having a sleepover with my friends.' Children become more secure in themselves and parents/carers report having no worries when their children are at this home. The home is also now able to provide emergency care for children, through the development of an extra bedroom in the home. This provides a much needed service for families in crisis.

The Registered Manager responds to any reported complaints in a very timely and consistent manner. Full enquiries and investigations into any reported concerns are undertaken. Complainants receive very detailed and clear responses to any concerns they raise. The Registered Manager displays a real commitment to ensuring that the staff team learn from any complaints raised, leading to improved care and support for children.

A wide range of fun and stimulating activities is provided for children during each stay. Staff respond flexibly to the needs of each child when considering activities. One member of staff stated that; 'whilst we plan for what they might like to do, this may change when they arrive. We always taken into account their mood, health needs and adapt accordingly.' Children attend local shops and places of interests, go swimming and enjoy various trips out with staff. Over the summer, they were involved in developing a vegetable plot in the garden of the home. Photographs of

children engaged in various activities with staff demonstrate the fun and enjoyment they have during their stays.

Health records for each child reflect their specific and complex needs and how these should be met. Staff receive specific training in relation to the administration of medication and first aid. Procedures for dealing with medication are robust and very well recorded by staff. Staff demonstrate skill and diligence in ensuring that medication received into the home is clearly recorded for each child. This prevents any errors occurring during each child's stay.

Other records reflect the complex and changing needs of each child. Staff review and update all documentation regularly. Potential safeguarding issues are well documented, with staff following clear procedures to ensure that all necessary action is taken to promote the welfare of children. Records do not clearly reflect the outcome of any safeguarding concerns and decisions made by managers. Information is located in several places on case files for such incidents, reducing the effectiveness of understanding the outcomes and decision-making processes. All potential safeguarding issues have been fully considered and responded to, with there being no adverse impact on the welfare or safety of children. A recommendation has been set to address this shortfall.

Information about this children's home

The home provides short breaks for young people with learning difficulties and/or physical disabilities. Up to five young people can be accommodated at any one time.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
11/06/2014	Full	adequate
17/02/2014	Interim	good progress
30/07/2013	Full	outstanding
18/12/2012	Interim	good progress

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

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure that information about a child is recorded clearly and in a way which will be helpful to the child when they access their files now or in the future. This is with specific reference to ensuring that outcomes and final decisions from any safeguarding concerns are clearly recorded. (NMS 22.5)

What inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspections we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service and to consider how well it complies with the relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the framework of inspection for children's homes.