

# SC043255

Registered provider: Lincolnshire County Council

Assurance inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

A local authority owns this home. It is registered to provide care for up to six children who may require support with social and emotional difficulties.

The manager registered with Ofsted in May 2024.

At the time of the inspection, six children were living in the home.

**Inspection date:** 12 December 2024

**Date of last inspection:** 2 October 2024

**Judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Information about this inspection

At this inspection, the inspector evaluated:

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

The inspector has 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 identified the following serious and widespread concerns in relation to the care and protection of children at this assurance inspection:

Staff have failed to adequately supervise the six children who live at the home. Staff ratios for safeguarding purposes have not been adhered to. This has resulted in one child sexually harming another child.

Significant risks associated with harmful sexual behaviour are not adequately understood by the staff team. Leaders have failed to implement sufficient and specialised training for this subject matter. This means staff do not have the necessary experience and skills to support children with this behaviour, and to mitigate known risks.

Risk management plans are not reviewed or updated sufficiently following incidents. This prevents the workforce from managing children's behaviour effectively as they do not have accurate information. Police have been called on numerous occasions to manage children's behaviours as staff have not been able to cope.

Children are physically restrained. At times, these holds are not approved methods of behaviour management in care plans. Staff fail to deploy de-escalation strategies effectively as outlined in behaviour support plans. This limits opportunities to prevent escalation for children. Records do not always capture what other strategies were attempted before holding children.

Management oversight of the home has not been effective. The working patterns of the registered manager and deputy manager do not align with the needs of the children or the staff team. This has left the workforce without adequate leadership and guidance during challenging times and significant incidents.

The capturing of children's views is poor. Staff do not regularly seek children's opinions about their care. They have been prevented from contributing towards their own care planning and management of risk. Children do not feel listened to, despite some living at the home for several years.

When allegations are made, robust investigations are not always carried out. Records of some investigations are not detailed enough. A particular incident involving the registered manager has not been properly evaluated or referred to the local authority designated officer. This prevents the required professionals from making an evaluation of children's safety. The provider did take immediate action following the inspection to address this shortfall.

A lack of professional supervision for staff limits opportunities for the workforce to develop and improve practice. There are missed opportunities to reflect and learn together, particularly following significant incidents and challenging periods.

Managers do not consistently hold debrief discussions with staff following significant incidents and physical intervention. This further prevents an opportunity to improve care for children.

Leaders and managers have failed to make progress against identified breaches in regulation. Statutory requirements made at the last inspection in October 2024 have not been met. This demonstrates the provider's inability to make improvements in a timely manner to keep children safe.

Senior leaders were supportive of the assurance inspection and subsequent findings. An immediate action plan was completed to provide assurances of immediate actions in place. Senior leaders showed support for the registered manager during the inspection and with a clear development plan moving forward. As a result of this inspection, the regulator has issued two compliance notices and a restriction of accommodation notice, preventing any further children from living at the setting.

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement |
|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| 02/10/2024      | Full            | Good                 |
| 05/10/2023      | Full            | Good                 |
| 17/01/2023      | Full            | Outstanding          |
| 22/02/2022      | Full            | Outstanding          |

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

## Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person must take to meet the Care Standards Act 2000, The Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards'. The registered person must comply within the given timescales.

| Requirement                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Due date        |
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| <p>*The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that—</p> <p>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and</p> <p>promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>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;</p> <p>ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate;</p> <p>ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;</p> <p>ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child;</p> <p>ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child.</p> <p>understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home.<br/>(Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f))</p> <p>This specifically relates to leaders and managers ensuring that there is sufficiency of staff in place to meet children's needs in line with a consistent approach. Staff need the appropriate training to meet individual children's needs.</p> | 20 January 2025 |

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| <p>Leaders and managers must have robust monitoring systems in place or supporting staff to learn, reflect and develop.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                        |
| <p>*The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>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;</p> <p>help each child to understand how to keep safe;</p> <p>have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm;</p> <p>manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other;</p> <p>understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person;</p> <p>take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child’s welfare; and</p> <p>are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home’s child protection policies;</p> <p>that the home’s day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm.</p> <p>(Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(b)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii))</p> <p>This specifically relates to the registered person ensuring that staff understand their roles and responsibilities in accordance with children’s individual risk assessments and that these are completed with up-to-date information. Concerns regarding a child’s welfare should be fully explored and actioned in line with policy.</p> | <p>20 January 2025</p> |

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| <p>The registered person must ensure that—</p> <p>within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes—</p> <p>details of the child’s behaviour leading to the use of the measure;</p> <p>the date, time and location of the use of the measure;</p> <p>a description of the measure and its duration;</p> <p>the name of the person who used the measure (“the user”), and of any other person present when the measure was used;</p> <p>within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so (“the authorised person”)—</p> <p>has spoken to the user about the measure;</p> <p>and has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and</p> <p>within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(ii)(iii)(iv)(vi)(b)(i)(ii)(c))</p> <p>This specifically relates to the registered person ensuring that records of restraint are completed and monitored appropriately by the manager and approved use of intervention is used with children.</p> | <p>20 January 2025</p> |
| <p>The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>help each child to achieve the child’s education and training targets, as recorded in the child’s relevant plans;</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | <p>20 January 2025</p> |

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| <p>support each child's learning and development, including helping the child to develop independent study skills and, where appropriate, helping the child to complete independent study;</p> <p>understand the barriers to learning that each child may face and take appropriate action to help the child to overcome any such barriers;</p> <p>help each child to understand the importance and value of education, learning, training and employment; and</p> <p>promote opportunities for each child to learn informally.<br/>(Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v))</p> <p>This specifically relates to ensuring that all children are engaging in education, whether within or outside of the home, and that staff are supporting and encouraging this, and supporting routines for children.</p> |                        |
| <p>The registered person must make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the children's home.</p> <p>In particular the registered person must ensure that—</p> <p>medicines kept in the home are stored in a secure place so as to prevent any child from having unsupervised access to them.<br/>(Regulation 23 (1) (2)(a))</p> <p>This specifically relates to ensuring that the safe storage and disposal of medication and clear management oversight of this are in place.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <p>20 January 2025</p> |

\*These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.



## Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that all staff are supported to complete the appropriate qualification by the relevant date. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.12)
- The registered person should ensure that the home is a homely, domestic environment. The home must comply with relevant health and safety legislations, such as installing alarms and following 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)

## Children's home details

**Unique reference number:** SC043255

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** Lincolnshire County Council

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

**Responsible individual:** Tara Jones

**Registered manager:** Kelsie Tyrrell

## Inspector

Eleanor Quanbrough, Social Care Inspector

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