

# SC043255

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 by a local authority. It is registered to provide care for up to six children who have emotional and social difficulties and have had adverse childhood experiences.

The inspector sought children's views during the inspection.

The manager is registered with Ofsted and is suitably qualified and experienced. They were present throughout the inspection.

### Inspection dates: 17 and 18 January 2023

**Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account** **outstanding**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **outstanding**

The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

**Date of last inspection:** 22 February 2022

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** outstanding

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement |
|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| 22/02/2022      | Full            | Outstanding          |
| 27/01/2020      | Full            | Outstanding          |
| 17/10/2018      | Full            | Outstanding          |
| 04/10/2017      | Full            | Outstanding          |

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding**

Children make excellent progress from their starting points. They receive nurturing, individual and consistent care from a team that knows and understands them well. As a result, children have positive and trusting relationships with the adults caring for them, which has helped them to feel settled and secure. Professionals who were consulted with were universally positive and described children's care and progress as 'amazing', with staff described as being 'responsive to needs and behaviour'. Children were described as being happy, and communication between staff, professionals and parents as excellent.

All the children have suitable education in place and have good attendance and attainment. Staff work well with schools and have provided help when needed, including sharing strategies on how best to support the children. This has helped to maintain school placements and has led to better engagement in education for some children.

Children attend and have access to a wide range of clubs and activities in the community. This has led to increased independence, the improvement of social skills and the development of some friendships away from the home. Children have gone on holidays and have enjoyed day trips and overnight stays relevant to their individual hobbies and interests. For example, one child went on holiday by train to Scotland, and another child was taken to London to see a musical show. Children's achievements, and special occasions such as birthdays, are celebrated and shared. This has helped to develop children's confidence and self-esteem and is providing children with positive memories.

Children are supported and encouraged to stay in touch with people who are important to them. For some children, this has led to improved relationships with their families and having more extended time with them. Staff work well with families in maintaining and improving their time with the children, and they have provided practical support to enable this to happen. Children are encouraged to spend time with their friends, which has led to children having play dates with friends from school.

The children have a clear voice and are regularly consulted with about all aspects of their care and the development of the home. One child regularly attends the Children's Council meetings and has attended various events, including being part of the inspection of children's homes. This has provided a child's view of the care being provided and supports the wider development of services.

Health needs are well met, and staff have used external agencies to provide further support and guidance. Some children have accessed specialist therapeutic support and, as a result, there has been a reduction in the number of risks and incidents.

Children's care plans consider advice from specialist services, which helps to inform strategies and guidance for staff on how best to support children. Care planning is a strength of the home, and children's plans are individual and consider how to treat their needs holistically. They are regularly reviewed and updated, and the manager has good oversight of these through monitoring and quality assurance.

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

Risk assessments are detailed and individual to the child. They give clear strategies for risk management, which informs the staff on how to best manage risks. Risk assessments are regularly reviewed and updated in multidisciplinary meetings that provide a holistic view of the child. This means that risk management is considered for the home, education and the community.

On one occasion, staff did not consider all risk factors when managing an incident, which led to an allegation of harm by a child. This is currently being investigated by external professionals, and the manager has taken swift action in implementing strategies to reduce any further risk.

The management of allegations is usually good, and the manager works cohesively with external safeguarding professionals in investigating and managing any concerns. The manager identifies learning from incidents and uses this to improve practice and inform behaviour support planning. This has led to a reduction in incidents, and children are being supported to look at more appropriate ways of managing their emotions.

Children have trusting relationships with staff and are confident to raise any concerns they may have. Children are listened to, and any concerns are thoroughly investigated, with children being made aware of any outcomes. This means that children feel heard and are given a clear voice.

Relationships between children have not consistently been positive. Consequently, there have been incidents of verbal and physical bullying, and on one occasion physical harm, with a child sustaining a fracture to their hand. Work has been done with children to help them improve their relationships, and there has been a marked reduction in these types of incidents, and they now occur less frequently.

On one occasion, not all safer recruitment checks were undertaken in obtaining references from the previous employers of a member of staff. This meant that the manager did not have all the relevant information relating to previous employment and whether there had been any concerns. The manager took action in response to this during the inspection process.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding**

The manager is entirely child-centred and is knowledgeable and passionate in their role. They provide strong leadership and have high expectations of the team and the

children. The manager is a reflective practitioner and uses this to good effect in learning and the development of the home and staff. They use current research and guidance to drive improvements in the home and in the care of children. They are respected by the staff team and other professionals and are an integral part of a wider multidisciplinary team. The manager uses their knowledge and experience in sharing good practice with other managers to support development across all the homes.

The manager is highly organised, which means that quality assurance and monitoring systems are effective and lead to excellent oversight of all areas of the home. The manager has a good awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of the home and has plans for further improvement and development. Monitoring tools are used to good effect in identifying patterns and trends and where additional support may be needed.

Staff are well supported in their roles and benefit from a strong and consistent leadership team. Staff have regular, reflective supervisions, which provides an opportunity for learning and the development of skills, practice and knowledge. Staff have access to a wide range of training and have participated in workshops led by the manager in specific areas relevant to children's needs. Staff have also benefited from external agencies providing more in-depth training to further develop knowledge and skills. This means that staff have a good understanding of how best to support children and provide individualised care.

The manager has fostered good links in the community and with external professionals, such as the police and fire service. Children are encouraged to engage with the community, and one child has recently taken on a volunteering role in a local charity shop. The fire service also arranged to play in a football match with the children to help nurture positive relationships. This supports children to feel connected to their communities and in building opportunities and social groups.

There have been some challenges with staffing and recruitment, which is currently universal across children's care settings. These challenges have been well managed, and the core staff team has been stable, which has provided consistency for the children.

## 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     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| <p>The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on—</p> <p>mutual trust and respect;</p> <p>an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and</p> <p>positive responses to other children and adults.</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 develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone;</p> <p>that each child is encouraged to build and maintain positive relationships with others.</p> <p>(Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(iv)(b))</p> <p>In particular, this relates to supporting children to have positive relationships with each other and to manage conflict effectively.</p> | 1 April 2023 |

### Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. Where there are safeguarding concerns for a child, their placement plan, agreed between the home and placing authority, must include steps to be taken to manage any assessed risks on a day-to-day basis. ('Guide to the Children's Home Regulations, including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5)
- The registered person should ensure that the recruitment practice of staff safeguards children and minimises potential risks to them. ('Guide to the Children's Home Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)

## **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:** 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:** Katherine Sansom

## Inspector

Sarah Orriss, Social Care Inspector



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