

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC043255
Inspector	Tracy Murty
Type of inspection	Full
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	Cynthia Mountcastle
Date of last inspection	21/02/2014

Inspection date	24/06/2014
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Previous inspection	satisfactory progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	None

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	good
Outcomes for children and young people	good
Quality of care	good
Keeping children and young people safe	good
Leadership and management	good

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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Young people make very good progress from their starting points. They attend education on a daily basis and have aspirations and goals for their futures. Over time, any concerning behaviours are reduced or eradicated, with placing authorities reporting high levels of satisfaction at the positive changes noted for young people. Young people enjoy a wide range of stimulating social activities, supported by the dedicated staff team.

Staff place the needs of the young people at the centre of their practice. They fully engage young people in all aspects of their care and encourage them to comment on their records. Care and placement plans clearly reflect the needs of young people and how they will be met. Targets are set for each young person every month, with records reflecting the progress made by young people. Young people feel safe and very well supported. One social worker praised the staff stating 'they go above and beyond what they need to do, to ensure that young people have the best possible experiences and care.'

The Registered Manager displays a detailed awareness and understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the home. She is very experienced and committed to ensuring the needs of both young people and the staff team are met at all times. Management monitoring and oversight of the services provided is detailed and

reflects the skills of the manager and commitment to continuous improvement.

Shortfalls identified as a result of this inspection include the frequency of fire drills and offering medical attention for young people following the use of restraint. There is also a need to ensure that young people's meetings are held on a more frequent basis and that any furniture damaged by young people is replaced promptly.

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home is managed and run by the local authority. It provides residential care for up to six young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
21/02/2014	Interim	satisfactory progress
06/06/2013	Full	good
05/11/2012	Interim	good progress
09/05/2012	Full	good

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

Statutory Requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
31 (2001)	ensure the children's home is suitably furnished with adequate living and storage space to meet the needs of the young people accommodated there. This is with specific reference to ensuring that any damaged furniture is replaced in a timely manner and specialist items are provided as necessary to meet the needs of young people (Regulation 31(4)(a))	01/08/2014
32 (2001)	ensure, by means of fire drills and practices at suitable intervals, that the persons working at the home and, so far as practicable, young people accommodated there, are aware of the procedure to be followed in case of fire. (Regulation 32(1)(e))	01/08/2014

Recommendations

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

- ensure that where there has been physical restraint, young people are always given the opportunity to be examined by a registered nurse or medical practitioner (NMS 3.16)
- ensure that the views of the young people are sought regularly on their care. This is with specific reference to ensuring that young people's meetings take place on a regular basis. (NMS 1.4)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Young people make very good progress in relation to increasing in confidence and a sense of self-worth during their time in this home. From their starting points, they develop a clearer understanding of their own needs and how to meet them, with staff support. One social worker praised the staff team for the work they have done. They commented; 'the young person has come on so much. Their concerning behaviours have significantly reduced and their understanding of their background and self-worth has significantly improved.'

Young people enjoy good health and can identify their own health needs and how to meet them. Staff support and encourage young people to consider such issues as smoking and provide them with information on how to access specialist support services. Over time, young people learn the value of ensuring good physical, emotional and psychological health and embrace the support and guidance provided by the staff team. They engage well with specialist services and take personal responsibility and pride in meeting their own health needs.

Young people engage in a wide range of activities and events. Some young people actively engage with the looked after children participation team events and contribute their views on services for looked after children in the county. They also contribute to delivering and developing social work training for a number of universities. This enables young people to develop in confidence and in being able to fully contribute to looked after services locally and nationally.

Young people have very good attendance in relation to their educational placements. For some young people, their attendance has improved 100% since moving to live in this home. Young people articulate aspirations and goals for their futures, with one young person stating; 'I want to work with children when I leave school.' Several young people have made significant improvements in relation to their educational engagement since moving to live at this home.

Young people take part in a wide range of activities in the local and wider community. They use local resources and facilities and feel very much part of their local community. Staff support them to make a positive contribution to the community. This has included plans for some young people to take part in a car boot sale, to raise funds towards their summer holiday.

Young people have regular and meaningful contact with family members and others who are important to them. The staff team supports them to have direct and indirect contact, as agreed with the placing authority. This has included friends of young people being invited to visit the home. A social worker praised the staff team and key workers for their commitment and imaginative practices in supporting and promoting

contact for young people at all times.

Young people are encouraged to learn how to meet their own needs, in preparation for their move to independence. They are supported to keep their rooms tidy, to do their own laundry and to prepare some meals. Staff also undertake accredited awards with young people on independence skills, so that they can take pride in their achievements and developing skills.

Young people feel supported by staff to consider any concerning or anti-social behaviours and make significant progress to improve in these areas over time. Local police and youth offending services support the staff team by making regular visits to the home to talk with young people about the consequences of their actions. Some young people have also been involved in a mentoring scheme with a local secure unit. This provides them with a real insight into the consequences of anti-social and offending behaviour and has led to a reduction in such behaviours.

Quality of care

good

Young people generally interact positively with each other, with staff support and guidance. Staff maintain clear and relevant plans and risk assessments for all young people. These are regularly reviewed and updated to reflect the changing needs of the young people. Staff demonstrate a detailed knowledge and awareness of each young person and how their needs will be met.

Young people engage in a range of external events to contribute their views on looked after services. Young people feel able to raise any concerns or issues they may have with staff on a daily basis. Residents' meetings in the home have not taken place on a regular basis for some months now. This does not provide young people with a consistent means of expressing themselves or for managers to respond to any issues or requests they may have.

The home has not received any complaints from young people or others since the last inspection. Clear policies and processes are in place, in the event that a young person wishes to make a formal complaint. The home also has a system in place for young people to record any general comments about the care they receive. Managers respond to these in a very timely manner, formally writing to young people to advise them of what action they have taken.

Staff know the needs and personalities of each young person in detail and are able to meet their complex needs with high levels of skill and dedication. Placement plans reflect the specific needs of each young person and how they will be met. Young people read and sign their plans and display a clear understanding as to what their needs are and how staff will support them.

Recording of the care provided to young people is detailed and clear, and provides a

comprehensive oversight of the aims and goals for each young person. Monthly reports clearly demonstrate how stated aims and objectives for each young person have been met. Staff ensure that photo albums and achievement files are kept for young people. This provides them with lasting memories of their time living in this home and of their achievements. Staff encourage young people to read and consider their files and to comment on the care they receive.

Staff work closely and proactively with other agencies to support young people. They invite local police and youth offending services to visit young people, so that they learn about the consequences of any anti-social behaviours. Health colleagues also visit the home on a monthly basis and provide general and more specific advice and guidance for young people and staff. One social worker praised the staff team for their work with local education providers. Through such close working, young people have improved significantly in their achievements and outcomes.

Keeping children and young people safe good

Young people report feeling safe and that staff do their utmost to ensure their safety at all times. Risk assessments reflect a detailed awareness and understanding of each young person's needs and how staff will meet those needs. Young people enjoy positive relationships with their key workers and also have access to an independent advocate, who visits the home every month.

Young people learn over time how to understand their own behaviours and to manage them more constructively. Staff work closely and at a suitable pace with young people to assist them in working towards set goals. Over time, this has led to a significant reduction for some young people in destructive or anti-social behaviours. Staff fully understand the specific needs of each young person and ensure plans and risk assessments reflect how those needs will be met.

Staff ensure that young people know what their placement and other plans state and mean. This includes free time for young people. They understand what actions staff will take, if they do not return from free time as agreed. Staff diligently follow the missing from care procedures. Young people seldom go missing from this home but do, on occasion, have brief unauthorised absences. Staff actively go out to search for young people in such circumstances and liaise with the local police. Staff discuss the incident with young people upon their return, in order to try and reduce such behaviours.

Staff use physical restraint only when de-escalation techniques have not been successful and young people are believed to be at risk to themselves or others. Recording of restraints is detailed and young people are asked to reflect and comment on the use of restraint in their individual records. Staff have not routinely offered young people the opportunity to seek medical attention following the use of restraint. Managers have clear systems in place to monitor the use of restraint on a

regular basis.

The recruitment and selection of staff is robust and prevents unsuitable people from working in this home. Young people have been involved recently in the selection process for new staff. They drew up a list of questions for candidates, which were important and relevant to them. This reflects the commitment of managers and staff in engaging young people in all aspects of their care so that they can influence the running of the home.

Leadership and management

good

The Registered Manager has been in post for seven years and has the skills, qualifications and experience necessary for the role.

There have been no reported complaints or concerns since the last inspection. Systems are in place to ensure that staff know what procedures should be followed in the event that a young person or others were to make a formal complaint. Young people have detailed information provided to them on admission about the complaints procedures. The young person's guide also provides them with details of other professionals and agencies they can contact for support and advice.

At the last inspection, a number of actions were set. The Registered Manager has ensured that medication records now clearly reflect administration of prescribed and non-prescribed medication for all young people. Management monitoring reports have been sent in to Ofsted at the required intervals. Notifications of any relevant events have been made to Ofsted in a timely manner. Records of physical restraints are completed by staff promptly and shared with the placing authority.

The home has a detailed development plan in place, which has been updated and amended by the Registered Manager. This sets out the short and longer terms goals for the service and how these will be met.

The Statement of Purpose for the home has been amended and updated to reflect the changes to regulations and is clear and comprehensive. The Registered Manager has considered this and ensured that it continues to meet the aims and objectives of the service and how the staff team will meet them.

The home is visited on a monthly basis by an independent person. Reports from those visits clearly set out any recommendations for the Registered Manager to consider and address. The Registered Manager then ensures that their own monthly monitoring of the service takes into consideration the recommendations of the independence visitor. This enables a continuous process of learning and development of the services provided to young people.

The home employs the services of a maintenance person who visits the home on a

weekly basis to undertake any identified repair and maintenance works internally and externally. Where young people cause damage to internal areas of the home, replacement items of furniture have not routinely been provided in a timely manner. This does not provide a homely feel to some young people's bedrooms and communal areas and does not consistently meet their needs for storage.

The home employs a sufficient number of staff to meet the complex needs of young people. Relief staff have been recruited to offer additional support during holiday periods and when young people may require more support to meet their complex needs. Staff receive a wide range of training and development opportunities to ensure that they have the skills and competence to undertake their duties. They receive regular formal supervision and annual appraisals.

Records of the care provided to young people are very comprehensive and clear. They provide a strong sense of what work has and will be done to support and meet the needs of each young person. Young people read and consider their records and make comments on the care they receive. This promotes a real sense of engagement with young people being able to see how the care provided to them has improved their outcomes over time.

The Registered Manager oversees all health and safety requirements for the home. The Registered Manager has failed to ensure that fire drills take place when young people are admitted to the home. The home would benefit from more frequent fire drills to provide young people and staff with a clear sense of what to do in the event of a fire.

What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Good	A service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements.
Adequate	A service that only meets minimum requirements.
Inadequate	A service that does not meet minimum requirements.

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.