

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	27/08/2015
Unique reference number	SC043732
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	Post Vacant
Inspector	Tracy Murty

Inspection date	27/08/2015
Previous inspection judgement	Good
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
how well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

SC043732

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Young people present as being very happy living in this home. They form positive relationships with the staff team and learn new skills and increase in confidence over time. Young people tend to remain living at this home until they move on to adult service provisions. This provides them with stability and security and a real sense of belonging.
- Staff support young people to ensure that their holistic health needs are consistently met. A range of specialist health professionals and agencies work as part of the team around the child, to meet the complex health needs of young people living in this home. This leads to improved physical and emotional well-being for young people and in parents reporting high levels of satisfaction in how well staff and professionals meet their children's health needs.
- Staff and managers work very closely and positively with a wide range of agencies and professionals. Feedback is consistently positive about how well staff and managers in this home place the needs of young people at the centre of their working practice. Staff and managers demonstrate a detailed understanding and awareness of the individual needs of each young person living in the home. Excellent communication and observations of (often) non-verbal young people placed, enables the staff team to identify and respond appropriately to any specific needs.
- There have been no reported incidents of young people going missing from this home. This is attributable to the high staffing ratios, close support and monitoring of each young person. Risk assessments and behaviour management plans clearly set out the known and potential risks and areas of concern for each young person. Staff regularly review and update these, along with involved professionals to ensure that the safety and welfare of each young person remains paramount.
- Staff report feeling very well supported by managers in this home. They receive regular supervision and annual appraisals, but not all staff have completed mandatory training to date. They would also benefit from some more specialist and specific training and development opportunities in relation to working with children with disabilities. This would further enhance their skills in meeting the complex needs of young people living in this home.

- The newly appointed manager has submitted an application to Ofsted to become registered. She has many years' experience working with children with disabilities and has the necessary skills and experience to undertake the role. More work is planned to support staff in supervision in relation to their responses and feelings following the use of restraint. This will enable managers to better track, monitor and take any necessary action in relation to specific young people and their behaviour management plans.
- Two further shortfalls identified during this inspection relate to the recording of complaints and recording of the statutory provision of young people. There has been no adverse impact to young people as a result of these shortfalls.

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

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 (England) Regulations 2015 and the *Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards*. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
ensure that staff have the experience and skills to meet the needs of each child. This is in relation to ensuring that mandatory training is completed and additional training on autism, Makaton and any other relevant communication systems is provided (Regulation 13(2)(c))	09/10/2015
ensure that a procedure is established for considering and recording complaints made by or on behalf of children (Regulation 39(1))	09/10/2015
ensure that information in each child's case records includes details of the statutory provision (if any) under which the child is provided with accommodation. (Regulation 36, Schedule 3(8))	09/10/2015

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendations:

- ensure that staff supervision meetings enable staff to reflect and act upon how their own feelings and behaviour may be affected by the behaviour of the children they care for. This is with specific reference to considering incidents of restraint within the home (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 39, paragraph 8.15)

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to seven young people. It is owned and managed by the local authority. The home provides care and accommodation for young people with a learning and/or physical disability.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
06/02/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
09/09/2014	Full	Good
25/02/2014	Interim	Good Progress
30/05/2013	Full	Good

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
Young people receive good quality care and support from a dedicated staff team. Over time, they develop trusting and positive relationships with the staff team. One placing social worker commented: 'The young person that I am involved with is mainly non-verbal. However, through his verbal cues it is clear that he has a positive relationship with the staff team.' Staff use a variety of communication systems and methods to elicit the wishes, views and feelings of each young person. This includes symbols and pictures to elicit their views and to help in setting achievable targets for each young person. A new development in the home relates to setting young people personal targets. They have a chart in their bedroom, setting out what they want to achieve each week. This can relate to such personal achievements as brushing their teeth or assisting staff in household chores. At the end of each week, an awards ceremony takes place with young people and staff. This imaginative practice by staff celebrates the successes of each young person and demonstrates the progress made by them during their time living in this home. The staff team work hard to ensure that young people can express their likes, dislikes and that they are routinely offered choice in their lives. This can be seen in relation to selecting food they like at mealtimes, choosing clothing and in selecting activities they would like to take part in. One young person observed during the inspection was sensitively supported by a member of staff to make a choice of what he wanted to do that day. He was able to consider simple choices and select what he wanted to do. This enables young people to feel in control of their lives and environment. Staff display a detailed and sensitive awareness of each young person and respond accordingly to their individual needs. The home employs the services of an independent advocacy service. An advocate visits the home each month to meet with young people and staff. This provides young people with access to independent support and advice, should they need it. The home is also visited each month by an independent visitor, who considers all records, talks with parents, professionals and staff to consider the quality of care and services provided to young people in this home. Young people cannot verbalise that they understand how to make a complaint, but they have access to independent support on a regular basis. The home has also adapted its children's guide for each young person. This provides simple and clear information in relation to how young people can make a complaint or raise any concerns they may have.	

The manager has a system in place to record compliments and comments made by young people or others, but does not currently have a specific system in place to record any formal complaints made about the home. This undermines the manager's ability to record, respond to and monitor any complaints received.

Young people attend education and make good progress from their starting points. Staff and managers work very closely with local schools to ensure that young people's complex needs are met in both settings. Staff from the home attend relevant meetings, share information on a daily basis with school staff and work with other professionals very closely. There is a clear understanding by staff of the need to ensure consistency of care and support to young people at home and in their educational provision. One involved professional stated: 'There is clear communication from the home with family and other professionals. The risk assessments are kept up to date, identifying strengths, any risks and how they will be managed.' A designated teacher stated: 'The home interacts well professionally with education.'

Young people enjoy a range of social activities and opportunities. They use the resources and facilities of the local and wider community on a regular basis. This includes visits to local parks, swimming, shopping and attendance at clubs. Family members regularly visit their children at the home. One parent said: 'I come to visit my son several times each week. The staff make me feel welcome and support me to do things with him. I am happy with the care and support they provide to him.'

Young people have all of their holistic health needs very well met by the staff team. Close partnership working exists with a range of health professionals, including occupational therapists, speech and language therapists and mental health services. Mental health services have worked with staff to devise specific behaviour management plans for young people recently. These identify potential triggers for young people's behaviours and set out how staff should respond. Mental health workers regularly visit the home to meet with young people and undertake specific pieces of work with them. Staff have also recently supported a young person who was admitted to hospital, by remaining with the young person for the duration of their in-patient admission. This demonstrates the huge commitment of staff to meeting the needs of young people at all times.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
Young people benefit from living in a very safe environment. They present as feeling safe and secure, through the high staffing ratios, support and supervision they receive on a daily basis. They receive highly personalised and individualised care to meet their specific and complex needs. Staff, family members, placing social workers and involved agencies regularly meet and discuss young people's changing needs and how they will be met. It is apparent that young people know and trust the staff who care for them. Managers display photos of staff in the main hallway each day, so that young people know who will be caring for them. This provides young people with visual and simple information. During this inspection, young people were noted to be excited and happy when staff came on shift and secure in their company. Young people ask which staff will be coming in and look out for their cars arriving, showing excitement and happiness at their arrival. This reflects their sense of security and in being cared for by staff they like and trust. There have been no reported incidents of young people going missing from this home. This is due to very high staffing levels and the internal and external security measures in place. Risk assessments and plans reflect the complex needs of each young person and how those needs should be considered and met. Young people have a range of plans in place covering such areas as self-harmful behaviours, responses to change, anxiety and routines. These provide staff with clear guidance on how to respond to each young person. Specialist health colleagues work with staff to review and update such plans, in order to ensure that they remain relevant and meet the changing needs of young people. Staff routinely use de-escalation techniques with young people who display challenging or potentially risky behaviours. There is a relatively high use of restraint used in the home, but this is only used when other techniques have been unsuccessful and there is a real risk of harm to the young person or others. Recording of restraint is comprehensive, and debriefs are held with staff and managers following each incident and use of restraint. This meets a recommendation made at the last inspection. Staff would benefit from having specific time set by in their formal supervision meetings to discuss the impact on them of the use of restraint. This would also assist managers in being better able to monitor and track the use of restraint with young people, identify any patterns or trends and to strengthen the support staff may need.	

The selection and recruitment procedures for new staff are robust and prevent unsuitable people being recruited to work in this home. There have been no allegations or concerns raised about any member of staff working in this home since the last inspection. Staff spoken with during this inspection demonstrated a clear and detailed understanding of safeguarding and whistleblowing policies and procedures. The new manager has also introduced induction packs for permanent and agency/relief staff. These include checklists for new staff and enables managers to ensure that all staff have considered relevant policies, procedures and had opportunities to shadow more experienced staff on shift. A mentor scheme has also been put into place for new staff. Such measures provide new staff with the necessary support in their probationary period and enhances their confidence and skills. One new member of staff stated: 'I have been really impressed with the level of support and guidance I have had since starting work in this home, it has been far better than where I previously worked.'

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
The new manager came into post in June 2015. She has recent and relevant experience in managing a similar social care service. An application has been received by Ofsted in relation to her application to be approved as the registered manager and a date has been set for her interview. In a relatively short period of time in post, the new manager has instigated some positive changes to how the home operates. She is supported by a highly competent and long-serving deputy manager. Recent changes made include structured activity planning by staff for social activities for all young people during the recent school holidays. Staff responded well to this and considered fun and interesting things for young people to be involved in. A fun day was held, involving all young people, staff, managers, parents and carers and involved agencies. The event included a magician, bouncy castle and other activities. Young people clearly enjoyed this event, as well as trips out to local places of interest, making pizza and sensory play activities during the summer break. Staff completed feedback sheets from each activity and elicited and recorded the views of young people to each activity. This information contributes to further activity planning and demonstrates that young people's wishes and views have been taken into account by staff. The manager has also implemented a new recording system for staff to use at staff handover meetings. This provides detailed profiles of each young person, medication considerations, any outstanding areas of need and planning for lead	

responsibilities for staff coming on shift. Staff report feeling very positive about this recent change, as it has reduced the paperwork previously used and provides for smooth and clear information sharing between staff.

The home's development plan is detailed and reflects the current and changing needs of young people. The new manager has fully considered and updated this since coming into post. It includes reference to incidents and staff debriefs and that further analysis is needed. The manager monitors all incidents on a monthly basis and produces detailed reports of her findings. The manager acknowledges that staff would benefit from having a specific focus in their monthly formal supervision meetings to discuss all incidents and use of restraint and she has plans to amend the supervision recording format accordingly.

Staff receive a range of training and development opportunities, through attendance at courses and also via e-learning courses. Not all staff have completed the range of mandatory training to date. Discussions with some staff during this inspection also identified that they would benefit from additional training and learning opportunities in relation to Makaton and autism. The manager is aware of this shortfall and has plans in place to address the issues for mandatory and other training to be offered and completed by staff, with clear timescales set. Staff provide very good support and care to young people, but their skills and competences would be further enhanced by more specialist training and development opportunities.

Records relating to young people provide a very clear oversight as to how their individual needs are met. Staff undertake regular case file audits, to identify any areas requiring amendment or change. This provides young people with accurate and relevant care and support. One file considered during this inspection did not reflect the current legal status of one young person. There has been no adverse impact as a result of this shortfall, but managers need to ensure that such information remains accurate and up to date on case files.

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of looked after children is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place, however, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, young people and their families. In addition the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This 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 Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the *Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards*.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance *raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted*, which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, workbased learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It inspects services for looked after children and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2015