

SC398253

Registered provider: North Lakes Children's Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home provides care for up to five boys who experience social and emotional difficulties due to early childhood trauma or periods of disrupted care. The home is part of a private organisation.

The registered manager has been in post since May 2019.

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 February 2023

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

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 12 May 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12/05/2021	Full	Good
09/05/2019	Full	Good
15/05/2018	Full	Good
10/05/2017	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children have positive relationships with the manager and staff. Children have lived at the home for a long time and say that they feel happy and safe. Children speak fondly of the staff and the activities they enjoy doing together, such as riding their bicycles and playing football, and they are particularly looking forward to an upcoming trip to seaside together. Children are cared for by a consistent, committed staff team, which means that they have formed positive attachments to support their overall progress. One parent stated, 'All staff are excellent, I cannot fault them.'

Children's complex health needs and emotional difficulties are understood by staff and are managed consistently in line with their relevant plans. The staff and the manager benefit from working closely with the home's dedicated nurse and psychotherapist. They offer support, advice and guidance to the staff, leaders and managers and have individual sessions with the children. They have input into the planning and reviewing processes for the children and attend regular team meetings whereby the staff and the manager benefit from clinical supervision. One professional stated, 'The staff team and manager go above and beyond for the children, I'm confident that they are able to manage often complex situations.'

All children attend the organisation's independent school, and most of the children have 100% attendance. The manager and staff are proactive in their approach to support the teaching staff with the children's emotional needs so that there is minimal disruption and children can achieve their educational targets.

The staff speak about the children with warmth and positive regard. They seek to gain their views, wishes and feelings prior to staff meetings, and the outcomes are shared with the children. The child's voice is paramount in the home and evident throughout the children's plans and documents. This ensures that the children feel listened to, valued and respected.

Staff support children to build and maintain relationships with their families and see them regularly. They encourage the children to attend clubs and have hobbies to build friendships and make connections away from the home. The children enjoy attending a variety of clubs, including cadets, sea cadets, football and swimming. Staff will often go along and support the children in their chosen hobby and recently supported two children to attend parades for the cadets. This allows children to build a sense of pride and identity and to feel part of a community and family.

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

Managers and staff have a good understanding of the children's risk-taking behaviours and follow robust plans to reduce risk. Staff are trained in issues such as self-harm, ligatures, online safety and sexualised behaviours, which supports the staff to manage some of the children's challenging behaviours. The manager and

staff look for new and enjoyable ways to educate the children around dangers to them, which has had a positive impact on the children.

On occasions, children have gone missing from home. However, staff have been proactive in their approach to try and locate the child and return the child home safely in line with protocols. Return home interviews are offered and staff speak to the children to look for triggers to enable strategies to be put in place to reduce the risk. Due to the consistency of staff and the level of care and attention given to the children, the missing-from-home episodes are reducing.

Staff have had to physically intervene at times of crisis with the children to keep the children and staff safe. This is in line with the children's plans and is proportionate and effective. Staff are all trained in physical intervention and de-escalation techniques, and records are thorough and show that debriefs have taken place with the children and staff and how situations can be managed differently in the future. Incidents are managed well but not all serious incidents have been notified to Ofsted, which leaves the regulator unable to have sufficient oversight and scrutiny.

The home is welcoming, clean and decorated to a good standard. Children's bedrooms are personalised to their own choosing. In accordance with children's plans, some items are removed from their bedrooms for safety. All children, as standard, have bedroom door alarms set at night, which is not in line with regulation as not all children have been assessed as requiring this or given consent.

The home has a large garden area for the children to play in. However, there were numerous cigarette butts lying on the ground, where staff members had discarded them. This makes the garden area uninviting for the children. The home's boiler cupboard had stationery stored in it, which could be a potential fire hazard. The managers rectified both issues on the day of the inspection.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is experienced and holds a relevant childcare qualification. She has worked in the home for several years and has high aspirations for the children in her care. She takes appropriate action and advocates for the children when the need arises. This ensures that the children's views, wishes and feelings are heard.

On occasion, the home has used an agency worker, but there is a stable staff team in place, which means that the children are receiving consistent care from adults who they know and trust. Staff meetings take place regularly in which they discuss the children and reflect on practice.

Staff speak highly of the manager and say that they feel well supported. All staff receive regular supervision and have recently had an annual appraisal. Staff make use of their clinical supervision with their psychotherapist and are offered a one-to-one session if they require it. One staff member stated, 'It's the best decision I have ever made to come and work here.'

The manager has good monitoring systems in place and evaluates practice in the home reflectively. She has also carried out a review of the quality of care. However, the review lacks feedback from children and professionals. This is combined with a lack of feedback from children, families and professionals in the independent person's reports. This means that the manager's review of the care is not well rounded to identify areas of development and growth for the team.

Staff training is up to date and the registered manager has established systems in place for monitoring and review. She has a good understanding of the home's strengths and areas for development. She uses monitoring systems effectively to ensure that standards of quality of care and safety remain high. The requirements made at the last inspection have all been successfully met.

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
The registered person may only use devices for the monitoring or surveillance of children if— the monitoring or surveillance is for the purpose of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the child concerned, or other children; the child's placing authority consents in writing to the monitoring or surveillance; so far as reasonably practicable in the light of the child's age and understanding, the child is informed in advance of the intention to do the monitoring or surveillance; and the monitoring or surveillance is no more intrusive than necessary, having regard to the child's need for privacy. (Regulation 24 (1)(a)(b)(c)(d))	24 March 2023

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the home is a nurturing and supportive environment that meets the needs of the children. The home must comply with relevant health and safety legislations, such as alarms and food hygiene. However, in doing so, it should seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than 'institutional' impression. In particular, ensure that the grounds are free from cigarette butts and the boiler cupboard is free from potential hazards. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should actively seek independent scrutiny of the home and make best use of information from independent and internal monitoring (including under regulations 44 and 45) to ensure continuous improvement. They should be skilled in anticipating difficulties and reviewing incidents, such as learning from disruptions and placement breakdowns. They are responsible for proactively implementing lessons learned and sustaining good practice. In particular, the home's manager should seek feedback from children and stakeholders to inform the action plan in the regulation 45 report and to ensure that targets set are clear

and measurable. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph 10.24)

- The registered person should ensure that they notify Ofsted and other relevant persons if one of the situations specified in regulation 40 (4)(a)(b)(c)(d) occurs, or if there is an incident relating to the protection, safeguarding or welfare of a child living in the home which the registered person considers to be serious. In particular, ensure that Ofsted is notified of police being called to manage behaviour. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 63, paragraph 14.10)

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: SC398253

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: North Lakes Children's Services Limited

Registered provider address: Malvern View Hanbury Road, Stoke Prior,
Bromsgrove, Worcestershire B60 4AD

Responsible individual: Joanne August

Registered manager: Jeanette Wilson

Inspector

Julie Elder, Social Care Inspector

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