

SC398253

Registered provider: North Lakes Children's Service 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 manager registered in May 2019.

Four children were living at the home at the time of the inspection.

The inspector only inspected the social care provision at this site.

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 March 2024

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 7 and 8 February 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
07/02/2023	Full	Good
12/05/2021	Full	Good
09/05/2019	Full	Good
15/05/2018	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children enjoy living here and are helped by a stable team of nurturing and supportive staff. Some children have lived here for a significant amount of time, and all show progress from their starting points. The children have access to a qualified nurse and a therapist to help address their physical and emotional needs.

Children's experience of education while living here is good. All children attend the provider's own school off site, and two children have recently enjoyed a few days away on a residential experience trying out many different activities, such as archery and canoeing.

Children are helped to improve their relationships with those who are important to them, and support for family time is seen as a strength by other professionals. Relationships with family members have developed slowly but effectively for all children.

Behaviour is managed through rewards, incentives and consequences. Records show that consequences are used rarely but are time-limited and appropriate when they are used. Physical intervention is used as a last resort to prevent harm, and records show that the need for such intervention is decreasing.

The home is well maintained but the children's bedroom doors need to be redecorated. There are a range of facilities within the home and on site that provide opportunities for the children to enjoy group or individual activities.

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

Children say they feel safe living at the home. Risk management plans are individual and detail clear strategies for staff to follow to minimise risk. However, the evaluation of risk is determined by the staff who develop the document rather than objective criteria.

Staff document incidents in a variety of records. These include information sheets that contain incidents of behaviour that have some element of risk to the child or others. However, staff do not always recognise the significance of the behaviour, and not all information is then transferred to the risk management plan to ensure that the evaluation of risk is current. In addition, not all the information is included in all the risk management tools, despite being relevant. A review of the records shows that some of the incidents may require notification to Ofsted when there are multiple instances of the behaviour, even when an individual incident may not require notification. This is important to ensure that the regulator is satisfied that all actions have been taken to protect children and others.

Children do not go missing from the home, but there are protocols in place for staff to follow should this occur.

Children have individual health plans that show progress for all the children in relation to their physical health. The plans are devised with input from the qualified nurse, who oversees medication and the general healthcare needs of the children.

Bedroom door alarms are used at night to help children feel safe. The use of such alarms is detailed in a document that is shared with social workers and kept under review to ensure that everyone, including children, feels it is still necessary. One document had not been reviewed alongside the others but is important to review it to ensure that the privacy needs of children continue to be met.

There are several doors, particularly in the downstairs area, that are identified as fire doors by signage with viewing panes. The manager should abide by the recommendation of the fire service and ensure that fire doors are not propped open. Action was taken during the inspection to ensure that the doors close.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

There is an experienced, knowledgeable manager in post who is supported by a deputy and two team leaders. She ensures that she works on the rota on occasion to observe practice and be involved in the children's lives.

Training for staff is comprehensive and up to date. All staff have the required minimum qualification and take opportunities to continue to develop. The therapist, who attends staff meetings monthly to discuss practice, said, 'Staff are fully engaged in discussions and in training. They are professionally curious and continue to learn.'

Supervision is regular and offers staff the opportunity to reflect on practice. Annual appraisals do take place but are currently out of date.

The manager has monitoring tools to help ensure good oversight of the practice. However, the meaning of recordings is not always clear to those who do not work in the home and therefore may cause confusion to children if they choose to read their records now or in the future.

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, The 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 protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— 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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)) In particular, ensure that criteria is identified for measuring risk and that all management plans identify the same information on which the risk is evaluated.	31 March 2024
The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— understand how children's previous experiences and present emotions can be communicated through behaviour and have the competence and skills to interpret these and develop positive relationships with children. (Regulation 11 (1) (2)(a)(ix))	31 March 2024

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the home is a homely, domestic environment. They should comply with relevant health and safety legislations; however, in doing so, they should seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than 'institutional' impression. Bedroom doors should be redecorated, and if doors are identified as fire doors, these must not be propped open. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that any monitoring in the home is suitably risk assessed, including bedroom door alarms, and that arrangements are regularly reviewed to ensure that they are still necessary. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 16, paragraph 3.16)
- The registered person should ensure that all staff have their performance appraised annually. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.5)
- The registered person should ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. Staff should make clear records when incidents occur. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)
- The registered person should ensure that incidents are reviewed with a view to deciding, where there is an accumulation of behaviours, that these may need notifying to Ofsted, even if in isolation each event would not warrant this. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 63, paragraph 14.11)

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 Service Limited

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

Responsible individual: Maxwell Turner

Registered manager: Jeanette Wilson

Inspector

Susan Atkinson-Millmoor, Social Care Inspector

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