

SC416599

Registered provider: North Lakes Children's Service Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is one of a number of homes owned and operated by a private organisation.

This home provides care for up to five children with social and emotional needs. At the time of the inspection, there were three children living in the home.

There is a manager in post who has submitted their application to register with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 December 2022

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 June 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
07/06/2021	Full	Good
23/10/2019	Full	Outstanding
25/04/2018	Full	Outstanding
13/06/2017	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The children have positive relationships with the staff supporting them. Children said that they feel safe and that they can talk to staff if they have any worries. Each child has individualised plans that are detailed and give clear guidance to staff. Staff have a good understanding of what the plans are.

The children have good attendance levels at school. The manager has taken swift action to ensure that a child who is new to the home is quickly enrolled in a school that is suitable for their needs.

Children are supported to develop their independence in line with their age and individual needs. Children who have left the home did so in a positive and planned way, in line with their individual plans.

Staff are proactive in seeking health advice when needed. They work in partnership with health professionals to ensure that the children's health needs are met and children have access to necessary health services.

The physical environment is maintained to a high standard and meets the needs of the children; it feels and looks like a family home for children. Children have the opportunity to share their views, wishes and feelings and have an input into decisions about their lives. However, staff do not always provide a response to the children's views, meaning that they don't always feel listened to.

The children are supported to develop skills and strategies to manage their own conflicts and difficult feelings through 'feelings meetings'. This helps to build a positive relationship between the children.

The manager and staff work with placing authorities and families to promote positive and meaningful time with family in line with agreed plans. Children are also supported to engage in local groups and clubs. This means that children have age-appropriate social interactions and can build skills and strategies to form and maintain relationships and gain a sense of their own identity.

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

Each child's individual risks are detailed in their risk assessments. These are robust documents that are frequently updated and give clear guidance to staff to ensure consistent responses to children's behaviours. Staff understand these documents and follow them to keep children safe.

Children have not been missing from home; however, there are plans in place to give guidance to staff should this occur.

Restraints are reasonable and proportionate and are recorded appropriately, with all relevant professionals notified. The manager has evaluated each incident, and children are given the opportunity for a debrief following an incident. However, these focus on the child's behaviour and do not ensure that the child understands the reason that a hold was necessary.

Leaders and managers have responded well to complaints and have taken all necessary action to investigate and address all complaints, ensuring the needs of the children were prioritised throughout the process.

There is a robust referral process that is used to assess the needs of children who already live in the home and those who may be new to the home. This ensures that there is a child-centred approach when making decisions about whether children should live together.

Imposed consequences are not evaluated for effectiveness. The manager does not ensure that all incidents of control and discipline are recorded and have regular scrutiny to ensure that their use is fair and effective.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

There is an experienced manager in post who has applied to register with Ofsted. The manager shows an ambitious vision, with high expectations for what all children can achieve. The manager has a good understanding of the children's progress and needs and instigates appropriate action when needed.

There have been several changes to the management of the home, and this has caused some unrest in the team. The manager in post is having a positive impact; however, it will take some time for this to embed into the ethos and culture in the home. Staff describe the manager as supportive and readily available to provide advice and guidance.

Rotas have been difficult to manage due to a high turnover of staff; however, the manager has ensured consistency for the children. Rotas do not include staff members' full names and do not adhere to regulation.

Team meetings are well attended and occur monthly, covering topics that are relevant to the current matters arising in the children's lives. They are attended by the home's nurse and psychotherapist, who use these meetings to deliver training to the staff team.

Staff receive regular supervision sessions; however, they are not always practice-related. There is a missed opportunity to support staff to understand how their feelings impact their responses to children's behaviour.

Training, development and induction activities are effective. They are focused on ensuring that staff can meet the specific needs of the children who they are

responsible for. However, not all staff have completed training to support children with asthma, despite this being a child's health need.

Leaders and managers use internal and external monitoring of the home effectively. The manager has a good vision of the development she wants to achieve in the home. However, oversight has not ensured that records are always legible.

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 children's views, wishes and feelings standard is that children receive care from staff who— take their views, wishes and feelings into account in relation to matters affecting the children's care and welfare and their lives. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff help each child to understand how the child's views, wishes and feelings have been taken into account and give the child reasons for decisions in relation to the child. (Regulation 7 (1)(c) (2)(a)(iii)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that when children express their views, these are responded to, ensuring that children feel listened to.	27 January 2023
The registered person must ensure that all employees— receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(b))	27 January 2023
The registered person must ensure that— within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes— the name of the child; details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of the measure;	27 January 2023

the date, time and location of the use of the measure; a description of the measure and its duration; details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure; the name of the person who used the measure ("the user"), and of any other person present when the measure was used; the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)) This relates specifically to the use of consequences. The registered person must ensure that these are recorded and reviewed for effectiveness and that the child is spoken to about the imposed consequence.	
The registered person must ensure that— within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(c)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that children are supported to understand the use of any holds used.	27 January 2023
The registered person must— maintain in the home the records in Schedule 4. (Regulation 37 (2)(a)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that the full names of staff are recorded on the rota.	27 January 2023

Recommendations

- 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. The registered person should ensure that staff record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third-party information. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 14.4)
- The registered person should ensure that staff have the relevant skills and knowledge to be able to respond to the health needs of children. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 34, paragraph 7.12)

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: SC416599

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: Joanne August

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Katie Tomlinson, Social Care Inspector

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