

SC457254

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 home is owned by a private company. This home provides care for up to four children with social and emotional difficulties.

At the time of the inspection, there were four boys living in the home.

There is a manager in post who has been registered with Ofsted since 2019.

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 January 2023

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: 30 September 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
30/09/2021	Full	Outstanding
07/01/2020	Full	Outstanding
12/06/2018	Full	Outstanding
24/05/2017	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children have trusting and positive relationships with staff. The children said that if they have a problem they can talk to staff and they feel listened to. Staff ensure that the children understand how to make a complaint, and they are responsive to any issues or concerns. This positive response ensures that the children feel that their views are valued.

Each child has individualised plans, which are detailed and give clear guidance to staff. Staff have a good understanding of what the plans are for each child.

The children all have good attendance in school and are making progress with their academic goals. The staff team communicates well with the school and shares relevant information to ensure positive partnership working.

Staff ensure that children's health needs are met and that they have access to local health services. Children are provided with therapeutic care, which is informed by the company therapist. This means that staff are able to effectively support the children's complex behaviours.

Children enjoy access to a range of social, educational and recreational opportunities, including activities in the local community. Children attend groups and clubs and have time with friends. 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.

Family time is supported in line with relevant plans, ensuring that it meets the individual needs of each child so that they can maintain relationships that are important to them. One parent said that their child is 'settled, happy and healthy and the staff always make sure family time goes ahead'.

One child recently moved back to their family home. Staff and the manager worked collaboratively with the placing authority and the child's family to ensure a successful transition for the child.

Children who are new to the home are welcomed sensitively and with the best possible planning. However, the referral process does not assess the children's compatibility or take into account their risks and the impact they may have on each child. This means that there is not a child-centred approach when making decisions about whether children should live together.

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

Staff keep the children safe and their 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 supporting children. Staff understand these documents and use the strategies in their practice.

Staff complete direct work with children around relevant topics. This helps children to learn how to keep themselves safe. These sessions are proactive. However, they are also completed in response to new risks that occur, when needed.

Staff respond to children with clear boundaries about what is acceptable behaviour. Staff seek to understand the children's individual needs and support the children to manage their own behaviours and emotions appropriately.

Staff ensure that positive behaviour is consistently promoted and use effective de-escalation techniques. As a result, there have been very few incidents of behaviours that are challenging to staff, and children do not go missing from the home.

When restraints have been necessary, they were reasonable and proportionate. Staff record any incidents of restraint appropriately and notify all relevant professionals. The manager has oversight of each record and evaluates the record, ensuring that children are given the opportunity for a debrief following an incident. However, debriefs focus on the child's behaviour instead of informing children that they were held to keep them and others safe.

The provider ensures that health and safety requirements are met. However, the fire risk assessment was out of date. This means that the provider has not taken adequate precautions against the risk of fire.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

There is a registered manager in post who has high expectations for what all children can achieve. The staff are positive about the manager and describe a supportive environment. Staff spoken to describe the manager as being readily available to provide advice and guidance.

The manager effectively uses internal and external monitoring of the home, and has a clear vision of the developments she wants to achieve in the home. Team leaders and the manager have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of all aspects of the care provided. This enables them to take effective action when required.

Staffing is consistent. There is a core team of staff in place who are suitably trained in mandatory subjects. However, not all staff have training that is tailored to the specific, individual needs of the children.

The manager ensures that plans for children comprehensively identify their needs. However, staff do not take into account the local authority care plan for the child as they do not have access to the plans.

Staff receive regular supervision. However, this is not always practice related and managers miss the opportunity to support staff to understand how their feelings impact their responses to children's behaviour. Not all staff have had their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised.

Team meetings take place monthly and are well attended with a clear agenda. The company's therapist attends these meetings to discuss the children's needs and provide strategies that staff use when caring for children.

The manager ensures that the home environment is maintained to a high standard, meets the needs of the children, and feels and looks like a family home. It is a nice home for children to spend time in, and the children said that they like living there.

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; manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(iv)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that when new children arrive at the home, their compatibility with the other children living there has been assessed, specifically ensuring that any risks that may impact the children have been explored and strategies to manage these risks identified.	13 February 2023
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c))	13 February 2023

Specifically, the registered person must ensure that staff have appropriate training to meet the individual needs of the children.	
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that each child's relevant plans are followed. (Regulation 14 (1)(a) (2)(c)) This specifically relates to ensuring that up-to-date placing authority plans are available to staff.	13 February 2023
After consultation with the fire and rescue authority, the registered person must— take adequate precautions against the risk of fire, including the provision of suitable fire equipment in the children's home. (Regulation 25 (1)(a)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that fire risk assessments are completed and updated in the required timescales.	1 February 2023
The registered person must ensure that all employees— receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience; and have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33 (4)(b)(c))	13 February 2023
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 following a restraint the child is spoken to about the reason why the restraint was necessary.	13 February 2023

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: SC457254

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: Sandra Seggie

Inspector

Katie Tomlinson, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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