

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 operated by a private provider. It offers care for up to four children who experience social and emotional difficulties.

The manager registered with Ofsted in November 2019 and is experienced and qualified.

At the time of this inspection, four children were living in the home.

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 July 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: 27 September 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
27/09/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
10/01/2023	Full	Good
30/09/2021	Full	Outstanding
07/01/2020	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children say that they are happy living in the home and can identify staff members who they trust and enjoy spending time with. Family members speak positively about the manager and the staff team and say that their children are safe and well cared for.

Children are making good progress with their education. One child recently left school and has a place at college to pursue their interest in electronics. Staff provide further support and encouragement for children to develop their interests outside of school. The manager and her team have worked creatively with another school to ensure that there is a consistent approach to supporting one child's complex needs.

Children's health needs are well met. They receive support from the company nurse, who knows them well. There is therapeutic input from a psychologist who supports the staff team to understand children's trauma and how best to support their behaviours. The manager is working with professionals to ensure that the necessary assessments are carried out for children to support their care and education.

Children are supported to explore their individual and shared interests and activities which benefit their physical and emotional well-being. The team recently supported children to take part in competitions in the local agricultural show, which has helped them to feel a sense of achievement and involvement in their community.

Two children who have lived in the home for a significant length of time are being prepared to move on from the home. Staff are sensitive to the impact of such significant changes for the children and talk to them in a reassuring way. The children have made memory books to take with them to remind them of their experiences.

Children regularly share their views and feelings with staff, which includes making complaints. The manager takes children's views seriously and provides timely responses. The manager has recently recruited a male member of staff to the team in response to children's feedback.

Staff support the children to spend time with the people who are important to them. Children's relationships with their family members have progressed. Records of family time are written in a child-friendly way. However, they do not help the staff team and the psychologist to consider any impact on children's emotional well-being.

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

Staff make use of their positive relationships with children to help them to understand unsafe behaviours. This takes place through regular informal discussions and key-work sessions.

Staff have a good understanding of safeguarding concerns and practices. They understand the specific risks to children and how to support children to keep themselves safe. Risk assessments recognise that children have different perceptions of risk in relation to their age and stage of development, and they provide clear guidance to staff on measures to take to reduce risk. Leaders and managers are revising assessments to improve their effectiveness and to encourage all staff to take responsibility for keeping them up to date.

Staff manage children's behaviours well. The use of consequences is appropriate and tailored to individual children. However, the manager does not record a review of measures used to ensure that they are appropriate and effective.

There are clear routines and boundaries in place for children, which are tailored to their individual circumstances. Staff are consistent in their approach and help children to understand what is expected.

Children do not go missing from the home. Staff rarely need to use physical restraint to prevent children from harming themselves or others. The records of restraint are thorough and demonstrate how measures are fair and proportionate. However, the manager reviewed an incident when she was involved, and records are handwritten, which means that they are difficult to read.

Staff recruitment practices are safe. Leaders and managers make sound decisions about staffing concerns, which ensures that children's safety is a priority.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager understands the needs of the children in her care. She has high aspirations for what the children can achieve and advocates well for them. Staff, professionals and parents commend the manager on how she goes the extra mile for children to improve their outcomes.

The manager works confidently to bring professionals together to ensure that any concerns for children are shared and acted on. The manager and staff team communicate effectively with education staff to ensure that children's needs are understood. This has involved sharing strategies and insight with school staff for one child, which has led to a reduction in incidents at school.

The staff team has completed all mandatory training as well as specific training, such as asthma awareness, to meet the needs of the children. One new staff member said that training was thorough and was delivered at the right time to help her to understand her role.

Team meetings take place regularly. They provide opportunities for staff to reflect on how they practice therapeutically to meet each child's needs with input from the company psychologist. The manager uses team meetings to address practice issues, such as improvements required in records to ensure that they are child friendly.

Staff receive regular formal supervision. Sessions are reflective, with the manager and senior staff providing an environment where staff can share any concerns and discuss their own performance, their relationships with children and their well-being.

Leaders and managers have a good awareness of the strengths and areas for development in the service. The manager works with the provider's quality assurance team to make improvements. However, independent scrutiny of the home by the independent person is not always rigorous.

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 leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(b) (2)(h)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that there is effective review of physical restraints after all staff involved have received robust debriefs from someone not involved in the incident.	31 July 2024
The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ("a quality of care review") at least once every 6 months. In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating— the quality of care provided for children. (Regulation 45 (1) (2)(a)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that the review of care is evaluative.	30 September 2024
The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month. When the independent person is carrying out a visit, the registered person must help the independent person—	31 July 2024

if they consent, to interview in private such of the children, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home as the independent person requires. (Regulation 44 (1) (2)(a))

In particular, the registered person must ensure that the independent person is helped to speak with children.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that information recorded during children's supervised time with their family is detailed and recorded in a way that will be helpful to the children and any professionals working with the child or their family. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)
- The registered person should ensure that any consequences used to address poor behaviour are subject to regular scrutiny to ensure that their use is fair and effective. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.36)

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: Maxwell Turner

Registered manager: Sandra Seggie

Inspector

Andrea Foreman, Social Care Inspector

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