

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	18/11/2015
Unique reference number	SC036726
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Nottinghamshire County Council
Registered person address	Nottinghamshire County Council, County Hall, Loughborough Road, West Bridgford, Nottingham, NG2 7QP

Responsible individual	Vonny Senogles
Registered manager	Robin Taylor
Inspector	Katarina Djordjevic

Inspection date	18/11/2015
Previous inspection judgement	Improved effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
how well children and young people are helped and protected	Requires improvement
the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement

SC036726

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- The home is judged as good overall. However, the way that the home helps and protects young people, and the leadership and management require improvement. This is mainly due to a failure by the registered provider to implement their safeguarding procedures promptly and effectively, which has the potential to place children and young people at risk of harm.
- Children and young people receive a good standard of individualised care and make good progress from their starting points. They enjoy very good relationships with staff.
- Behaviour is well managed because staff have an in-depth knowledge of individuals and are good at identifying triggers.
- Empowerment is central to practice in the home. Staff use a range of different communication strategies to enable children and young people to make choices and have a say in their day-to-day lives, as well as their future plans.
- Despite identified shortfalls in the sharing of some safeguarding information, partnership working with parents, carers and a range of professionals is generally strong. Comments from parents, carers and professionals confirm this.
- Improving children and young people's life experiences is a top priority. Staff challenge barriers to them accessing ordinary life opportunities and ensure all activities are thoroughly planned and risk assessed. Consequently, children and young people experience activities they may not have been able to enjoy before. Many of their parents confirm this. A parent commented: 'Staff do their utmost to ensure my child gets to places and activities around his interests'.
- Areas for improvement relate to implementing safeguarding procedures including notifying appropriate agencies, recruitment practices, the recording of complaints and the use of cot guards.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Statutory Requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person/s meets 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 with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The registered person must ensure that full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. This is with specific reference to ensuring that all gaps in employment are explained in writing. (Regulation 32 (3)(d))	31 December 2015
The registered person must implement a policy, which sets out the procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse or neglect, promptly and effectively. (Regulation 34 (1))	18 December 2015
The registered person must ensure that a record is made of any complaint, the action taken in response, and the outcome of any investigation. This is with specific reference to ensuring records give clear details of all concerns raised. (Regulation 39 (3))	31 December 2015
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there. (Regulation 40 (4)(c))	18 December 2015

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendations:

- Ensure that the recruitment of staff safeguards children and minimises potential risks to them. This is with specific reference to ensuring that there is written evidence that references have been verified. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 61, paragraph 13.1)
- Ensure that where there are safeguarding concerns for a child, their placement plan, agreed between the home and their placing authority, must include details of the steps the home will take to manage any assessed risks on a day-to-day

basis. This is with specific reference to obtaining written consent from a child's parents or carers and placing authority for the use of cot guards and produce a written risk assessment. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 42, paragraph 9.5)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This home is operated by the local authority. It provides a residential service for six children and young people, and a short-break service for six children and young people. All the children and young people have severe learning disabilities and challenging behaviours.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
24/03/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
10/12/2014	Full	Adequate
24/03/2014	Interim	Good Progress
27/11/2013	Full	Outstanding

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	good
<p>Children and young people receive a good standard of individualised care from a skilled and experienced staff team. They have very good relationships with staff who they know well and trust. This helps them to feel safe and secure. Children told the inspector that they like the staff and feel safe at the home. The standard of care does not differ for those living at the home or for those using the home for short-break services. Feedback from parents, carers and professionals is overwhelmingly positive about the care and support provided.</p> <p>Partnership working is key to meeting individuals' needs. Staff generally work very closely with parents, carers, schools and other professionals to inform care plans and risk assessments. As a result, care plans and risk assessments are very detailed and they are reviewed regularly. Comments received from parents and carers about staff communication include: 'Very impressed with the staff - they send emails or pictures of my child to me to reassure me that he is happy and safe', and, 'excellent feedback and support from staff.' However, this inspection identified that cot guards were fitted to a young person's bed as a safety measure without consulting with the social worker. There is also no written evidence of a discussion held with the young person's family.</p> <p>Staff have strong working relationships with schools to promote education attendance and achievement. Children and young people's attendance is very good. Learning continues within the home where young people have lots of fun as well as gaining a range of skills. For example, learning to bake cakes and improving their self-care skills. The home's commitment to education and learning helps children and young people achieve their individual potential.</p> <p>Staff work collaboratively with parents, carers and a range of health professionals to ensure that health needs are met. Children and young people learn about healthy eating and the importance of exercise. They contribute to menu planning wherever possible. Parents commented on the significant progress that their children have made in their health and personal care skills, including issues relating to continence. This progress means that children and young people are more independent, which helps to improve their dignity and self-esteem. The safe management of medication helps to protect young people from the risk of harm and meet their health needs.</p> <p>Empowerment of children and young people is a key strength. Staff are skilled at communicating. They actively listen, which helps children and young people to feel</p>	

valued. Their self-esteem and confidence improves as a result. A professional commented that staff give, 'excellent support to enable the children to communicate. This home takes communication and participation of disabled children very seriously.'

Staff are excellent at providing children and young people with a range of leisure activities and new experiences. They have opportunities that they may not have been able to experience before and they have lots of fun. The following comment made by a parent confirms this: 'My child enjoys his time there, and gets chances to access things I wouldn't attempt myself. He feels confident and secure and I can now relax knowing he is in a safe place'. Staff produce detailed plans and risk assessments to ensure children and young people can enjoy activities safely. For example, some children and young people have been to Disneyland Paris this year and a young person, who had never been on an aeroplane before, flew to Glasgow and stayed overnight. These opportunities help to improve children and young people's confidence and broaden their horizons. Photographs of activities are displayed around the home. Children and young people have their own memory books with photographs of their activities. Their achievements are also shared and celebrated because some children and young people have recently contributed to the home's newsletter by writing about their trips.

Children and young people are given excellent practical and emotional support to remain in contact with their families and people who are important to them. Staff are very supportive of families. Comments received overwhelmingly reflect parents' and carers' gratitude. A parent commented about staff, 'we cannot thank them enough for their continued support.'

There is an extensive range of leisure facilities inside and outside the home. A new media room and 'music shack' have been developed this year. Children and young people have tremendous fun using these facilities. The standard of decor and furnishings in the home is good. Children and young people are actively encouraged to personalise their bedrooms so that they reflect the interests of each individual.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement
The staff team are committed to keeping children and young people safe. They clearly understand their responsibilities and receive a range of training to ensure they can keep them safe. However, the registered provider failed to effectively and promptly implement the local authority's procedures following a safeguarding concern. There was also a significant delay in notifying Ofsted of the incident. This	

affected the regulator's ability to monitor the situation. This poor practice had the potential to compromise the safety of children and young people.

There are clear and appropriate recruitment procedures but these are not always fully implemented. An inspection of recruitment records identified that there was no recorded evidence that gaps in employment history were fully explored. There was no written evidence that some references had been verified. These shortfalls do not fully protect children and young people from the risk of harm.

Risk management systems are generally effective in keeping children and young people safe while at the same time allowing them to try new experiences. Each child and young person has detailed risk assessments and there are risk assessments for activities. However, staff did not produce a written risk assessment for the recent fitting of cot guards for an individual. Furthermore, there was no written record to confirm this action had been agreed with the individual's family or social worker.

Children and young people have trusting relationships with staff, which help them feel safe. The complaints procedure is produced in different formats to enable children and young people to raise any concerns they may have. No complaints have been received from them since the last inspection. One complaint has been received from a parent. This was dealt with promptly and issues discussed with the staff team. However, the complaints record did not give full details of the concerns raised. This has the potential to affect the monitoring of complaints by the independent visitor and the regulator.

The management of behaviour is good. Most children and young people make good progress given their starting points. A parent commented, 'the staff are fantastic with my child, her behaviour has definitely improved whilst being at the home'. Staff are particularly skilful in managing their complex and changing behaviours. This is because they know and understand children and young people very well. In addition, staff are good at analysing behaviours and identifying triggers. Behaviour management plans are detailed and are reviewed regularly. Staff only ever use physical intervention when absolutely necessary. Clear records are kept that confirm this. Effective monitoring by the registered manager helps to ensure practice is appropriate and safe and that the staff learn from shortfalls identified by the registered manager.

There have been no incidents of children and young people going missing. However, the registered manager has worked with the police missing persons co-ordinator. He has provided the co-ordinator with details of each child and young person to ensure the police understand their particular vulnerabilities should they ever go missing. This is good practice. Individual risk assessments also include actions to take should a child or young person go missing. These systems help to keep children and young people safe.

Children and young people live in a safe and secure environment because the management of health and safety is good. A member of the management team is responsible for overseeing health and safety but the whole staff team understand their responsibility for ensuring the environment is safe and secure.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement
<p>The registered manager has been in post since 1999 and has over thirty years' experience of working in residential childcare. He is a qualified social worker and has a Post-Graduate Diploma in Management in Public Services. His skills and experience inform his practice and support the continual improvement of the service.</p> <p>There is a system for notifying the appropriate authorities about significant events relating to the welfare and protection of children and young people. However, the organisation recently failed to notify relevant people, including the responsible individual and Ofsted, of a safeguarding issue. Furthermore, the registered person failed to produce a written risk assessment relating to this incident in a timely manner. These shortfalls have the potential to impact on the safety of children and young people. Despite these identified weaknesses, staff are generally good at partnership working and this is confirmed by parents, carers and social workers. This ensures that children and young people's holistic needs are met and that they achieve the best possible outcomes.</p> <p>The home's statement of purpose provides details of services provided. Staff have also produced a parents and carers guide which gives clear details about how the home operates and what to services they can expect. The children's guide is available in a range of formats appropriate to the needs of children and young people.</p> <p>Children and young people receive a good standard of care from a staff team who want the best for them and work hard to improve their life opportunities. The majority of staff have a level 3 qualification in residential care and they receive a range of training to enable them to meet individual needs. There is a clear ethos of working together as a team in order to get the best outcomes for children and young people. Improvements have been made to staff handovers and shift planning sessions since the last inspection. These are particularly effective in ensuring children and young people's needs are met including helping them to achieve their individual objectives. These handovers also ensure staff are clear about their individual responsibilities for that particular shift and who they are</p>	

working with.

Staff speak positively and enthusiastically about working at the home; they clearly enjoy their work. Interactions with children and young people are very good. Staff are nurturing and patient, giving each individual time and space to make choices and become as independent as possible.

Staff state that they feel supported and listened to by the management team. They receive regular supervision which they find beneficial. There are a range of monitoring systems which are shared by all staff. Daily monitoring takes place at handover and shift planning meetings. Designated members of the management team are responsible for monitoring specific areas such as medication practices and health and safety. The registered manager also carefully monitors staff practice. An independent visitor undertakes monthly visits and copies of their report sent to Ofsted as required. The registered provider is taking action to improve the quality of these reports to ensure they complement internal monitoring systems.

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of looked after children is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place, however, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, young people and their families. In addition the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service 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*.

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