

SC035352

Registered provider: Northamptonshire County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home accommodates up to seven young people, irrespective of gender. The criterion for admission is that young people are aged over 15 at the time of admission.

The home is a residential home for young people aged between 15 and 18 whose emotional and behavioural difficulties are such that they are unable to live within their own or a substitute family setting.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since October 2012.

Inspection dates: 27 to 28 June 2018

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account

requires improvement to be good

How well children and young people are helped and protected

requires improvement to be good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers

requires improvement to be good

The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: 26 July 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
26/07/2017	Full	Good
25/01/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
23/08/2016	Full	Good
23/03/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

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, 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
<p>The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who—</p> <p>understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children;</p> <p>use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>help each child to understand and manage the impact of any experience of abuse or neglect.</p> <p>(Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b)(2)(v))</p> <p>In particular, direct work should be carried out with young people in order to assist them to recognise and understand the impact of current and historical abuse.</p>	27/07/2018
<p>The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on—</p> <p>mutual respect and trust;</p> <p>an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and</p> <p>positive responses to other children and adults.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>understand and communicate to children that bullying is unacceptable.</p>	27/07/2018

<p>(Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c)(2)(a)(xii))</p> <p>In particular, that young people are helped to understand the impact of violence and bullying between peers.</p>	
<p>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>(2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>(b) that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm.</p> <p>(Regulation 12 (1)(2)(b))</p>	<p>27/07/2018</p>
<p>The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that—</p> <p>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.</p> <p>(Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(h))</p> <p>In particular, the registered manager should review systems within the home to ensure that they are safeguarding young people.</p>	<p>27/07/2018</p>

Recommendations

- When a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from the home without permission, the responsible local authority must provide an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. Homes should take account of information provided by such interviews when assessing risks and putting arrangements in place to protect each child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 44, paragraph 9.30)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

The home environment is chaotic at times. Often, it is not calm enough to be a nurturing home for the young people, who have experienced early childhood trauma and are coping with a range of emotional difficulties. Young people are feeding off each other's unpredictable behaviours to the detriment of their emotional well-being. The volatility of the home means that young people's day-to-day experience is not good.

Educational progress is varied. Some young people are on apprenticeship schemes and are doing well. Others are not accessing any form of training or further education.

A designated family liaison officer helps young people to maintain links with their family and friends. Crucially, this ensures that upon leaving the home, young people have a support system in place.

Young people are making progress in relation to their independence skills. Tailored support packages give young people the skills to live independently. This is a strength of the home.

Young people are given opportunities to share their views. They know how to make a complaint and who to talk to if they have a concern.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

Young people are not always safeguarded in the home. One young person said, 'I feel OK most of the time and I know staff are there for me. However, when incidents occur, they are scary and I do not feel safe.'

For one young person, incidents of going missing, substance misuse and self-harm have increased. Notwithstanding this, a substance misuse worker said, 'The young person does engage with staff and they understand her needs. I cannot fault the staff they go over and beyond in trying to support her.' The resilience of staff when supporting young people in crisis is admirable.

When young people go missing, staff persistently search for them. However, return home interviews by an independent person are not consistently carried out. Additionally, the failure by staff to speak with young people following such incidents is a lost opportunity to learn any lessons and implement strategies to try and prevent such behaviours reoccurring.

The volatility of relationships between young people means that there are incidents of violence and bullying in the home. Although staff work hard to address any difficulties

and minimise the adverse effects on young people, good strategies are not yet in place.

The mix of young people has compromised the staff's ability to effectively and safely manage young people's distress and challenging behaviours. Behaviour management strategies require significant improvement.

Regular checks of young people's bedrooms are not carried out. Given the concerning histories of young people, including the possession of weapons, this leaves young people and staff at risk of harm.

Young people are not consistently helped to understand the impact of their behaviours. The quality of key-working sessions varies. Some sessions are weak and fail to properly explore the young people's risk-taking behaviours.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

Effective, robust monitoring and review systems need to be developed by the manager. This will ensure that shortfalls in the home are immediately addressed and acted upon. In turn, this will help to drive improvements to the service.

The manager is a committed and child-focused individual. He has now completed his level 5 diploma in leadership and management, which was a requirement at the last inspection.

Partnership working between the manager and a host of external agencies is very good. The manager organises regular multi-agency meetings in order to share essential information regarding young people.

The manager and staff advocate strongly on behalf of young people. They challenge professionals when necessary in order to ensure that young people receive the services that they need.

Some staff spoke positively about the support that they receive from the management team. Other staff members felt unsupported and raised concerns about the ongoing demands being placed on them. The management team is aware that morale is low among some staff.

Staff are either qualified to the appropriate level or are currently undertaking the relevant course. This means that young people receive support from suitably qualified staff.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and 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 whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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: SC035352

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: Northamptonshire County Council, John Dryden House,
8–10 The Lakes, Northampton NN4 7YD

Responsible individual: Andrew Logie

Registered manager: Timothy Morrison

Inspector(s)

Davinia Lawton: social care inspector

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