

SC036726

Registered provider: Nottinghamshire County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is a local authority children's home. It provides a residential service for seven children and young people and a short-break service for five children and young people. All the children and young people have moderate to severe learning disabilities.

Inspectors were aware during this inspection that serious child protection allegations were being investigated by the appropriate authorities. While Ofsted does not have the power to investigate allegations of this kind, inspectors considered the actions (where appropriate) taken by the setting in response to the allegations alongside other evidence available at the time of the inspection to inform judgements.

Inspection dates: 1 to 2 August 2018

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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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: 30 January 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
30/01/2018	Full	Outstanding
01/02/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
01/09/2016	Full	Outstanding
17/03/2016	Interim	Improved 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 protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff—</p> <p>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;</p> <p>help each child to understand how to keep safe;</p> <p>have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm;</p> <p>are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies.</p> <p>(Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(vii))</p> <p>This is with specific reference to ensuring that staff understand the particular vulnerabilities of disabled children to abuse and neglect. Managers must be aware of the effectiveness and impact of safeguarding training, and understand the quality and effectiveness of the work required to help disabled children keep themselves safe.</p>	10/10/2018
<p>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that the effectiveness of the home's child protection policies is monitored regularly.</p>	10/10/2018

(Regulation 12 (1)(2)(e))	
<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</p> <p>promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose;</p> <p>ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child;</p> <p>understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home.</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)(a)(d)(f)(h))</p>	10/10/2018
<p>The registered person must ensure that all employees—</p> <p>receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience.</p> <p>(Regulation 33 (4)(b))</p>	10/10/2018

Recommendations

- Children should be supported to express themselves as individuals and should be given an appropriate degree of freedom and choice in relation to day to day arrangements for their care. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 17, paragraph 3.21)

This is with specific reference to the gender of staff providing personal care and consulting with children regarding their preferences, if personal care is required.

- For children's homes to be nurturing and supportive environments that meet the needs of their children they will in most cases be homely, domestic environments. Homes should seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than institutional impression. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

This is with reference to reviewing the staff use of two-way radios (walkie-talkies) while caring for children.

- Children must be consulted regularly on their views about the home's care, to inform and support continued improvement in the quality of care provided. Due consideration should be given to the child's cognitive ability in the development and implementation of any consultation processes. Children should be able to see the results of their views being listened to and acted upon. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.11)

Inspection judgements

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

There has been a reduction in staff capacity due to an ongoing safeguarding investigation which has not yet concluded. Managers have sought to recruit relief staff from within the service, and agency staff. As a result, there has been a reduction in the short-breaks offer for children and families. Children have experienced both fewer and shorter stays, which affects their routines and their friendship groups. In addition, there have been reduced opportunities for activities for children who are living or staying at the home.

Staff use two-way radios (walkie-talkies) to communicate while providing direct care for children. There was no policy available to the inspector to provide a rationale for this. However, staff and managers referred to their use as being a safeguarding measure. A recommendation has been made to review this practice, taking into account the quality standard to provide a nurturing and homely environment when caring for children.

Children have detailed residential action plans which are informed by the children's needs and histories. There is significant health and development information that informs children's care, including information about preferred methods of communication. Families and children are consulted with about each child's needs as part of preparation for moving into and/or staying at the home.

Children and families are asked about their preference for male or female staff if children

require personal care. At a recent monitoring visit, and at this inspection, inconsistent practice was found in respect of consulting with families and ensuring that preferences are taken into account when staff rotas are drawn up. A recommendation has been made for managers to review and develop guidance to support consistent practice. This should include revisiting this consultation as children get older.

There is some evidence of consultation with children and celebration of their achievements. This includes 'this is me' information and child-centred photographic evidence of activities and occasions. Greater evidence is needed of how children's views and wishes have influenced their care, and shaped developments at the home. An independent advocacy service visits the home regularly but there were no records available regarding the outcome of these visits.

Positive and successful transitions from the home have been achieved for young people as a result of good planning, preparation and support by staff, and proactive joint working with transitions teams and adult services.

The inspector observed children participating in a swimming activity. Staff were skilled in meeting their individual needs, keeping them safe and ensuring that they had fun enjoying the activity.

Children benefit from positive relationships with staff. Social workers and families report that staff are committed and skilled, and know children's needs well.

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

Given the complexities of children's needs, there are relatively few incidents of concern. However, some incidents reviewed during the inspection raised concerns about practice and about staff and managers adhering to policies and guidance.

There has been an incident of a child's door being locked in order to manage disruptive behaviour. This was identified as a concern by a manager and was shared with family, the local authority designated officer and the child's social worker. There was no harm to the child and action has been taken in respect of staff practice.

There has been a review of practice following inappropriate sleeping arrangements for children during a short holiday. Risk assessments were not detailed, did not sufficiently safeguard children and had superficial management oversight. Staff had not fully considered peer relationships and how to keep each child safe. A requirement has been made to ensure that staff fully understand risk and are supported to think about the particular vulnerabilities of disabled children. Managers need to consider the effectiveness and impact of safeguarding training, and consider the quality and effectiveness of the work to help disabled children keep themselves safe.

A manager providing support to the home has delivered training in team meetings addressing risk assessments, behaviour management and safeguarding disabled

children. This training is ongoing.

Improvements in recording have been achieved through the use of daily logs, incident forms and physical intervention forms. These records include staff discussion to highlight any learning, and review by the duty manager.

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

Temporary changes have been made to the management team to ensure that there is sufficient management capacity. An experienced interim manager has very recently joined the team.

This inspection identified gaps in monitoring and evaluation by managers. There is reference in records to medication errors. However, there has been no audit of medication administration to establish the potential harm to children or to ensure that practice is changed to prevent future errors. There are no recent concerns regarding the administering of medication. The interim manager is reviewing medication records and practice.

Most staff have an appropriate qualification for working with children. One recently appointed member of staff will be enrolled on an appropriate course. Some staff also have a range of additional qualifications which complement and enhance their practice. Staff report that they receive mandatory training, and some staff records evidence this. Team meeting records refer to additional training to meet the specific needs of children living and staying at the home. The review of quality of care up to March 2018 lists training that has been provided and training planned. However there was no information available to the inspector that detailed which staff had undertaken the training. Managers would benefit from improved information about the effectiveness of staff training in relation to staff performance.

There have been shortfalls in safeguarding training for staff, specifically in safeguarding disabled children, including peer relationships and supporting children to understand how to keep themselves safe. Staff would also benefit from training to enhance their understanding of allegations against adults who work with children.

The arrangements for supervision have been affected by shortfalls in staff and management capacity. The interim manager is undertaking a supervision audit. A requirement has been made to ensure that supervision standards are maintained as an important check and balance to support staff and ensure best practice.

Some children in receipt of short breaks have stayed over 75 days in a year. There was no monitoring information available to understand the reasons for this, and whether this was being addressed in care planning meetings.

Staff report that they feel supported by managers. There has been some impact to the service as a result of an ongoing investigation that has not yet concluded. However, staff and managers are committed to improving practice to ensure that children have positive

experiences and are kept safe.

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: SC036726

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Nottinghamshire County Council

Registered provider address: County Hall, Loughborough Road, West Bridgford, Nottingham NG2 7QP

Responsible individual: Vonny Senogles

Registered manager: Robin Taylor

Inspector(s)

Cathey Moriarty, social care regulatory inspector

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