

# SC022448

Registered provider: Nugent Care

Interim inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This secure children's home is operated by a voluntary organisation and is approved by the Secretary of State to restrict children's liberty. The children's home can accommodate up to 12 children who are aged between 10 and 17. The home provides for children accommodated under section 25 of the Children Act 1989, who are placed by local authorities.

Admission of any child who is under 13 years of age requires the approval of the Secretary of State, under section 25 of the Children Act 1989.

The commissioning of health services in this home is the statutory responsibility of NHS England under the Health and Social Care Act 2012. Education is provided on site in dedicated facilities.

The registered manager has been in post since March 2007.

**Inspection date:** 5 March 2019

**Judgement at last inspection:** requires improvement to be good

**Date of last inspection:** 20 November 2018

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## This inspection

### The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection

This home was judged requires improvement to be good at the last full inspection.

At the interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has improved effectiveness.

The decision to voluntarily reduce the overall number of children who are accommodated has allowed for a period of consolidation and the opportunity to start to implement a carefully considered improvement plan. This plan is being used as a

working document and provides a good framework to address the shortfalls identified at the previous inspection, including the requirements and recommendations. Overall, good progress has been made. However, it is reassuring that managers are realistic and recognise that there is still much more to do to bring about sustained improvement.

The standard of internal monitoring and quality assurance has improved. A range of meetings and processes have been introduced to ensure that good management oversight is maintained across a range of activities within the home. This increased diligence means that emerging shortfalls are addressed quickly. For example, inspectors noted an improvement in the quality of complaints records and behaviour management records, both requirements from the previous inspection.

Continuity of care has improved significantly. There has been a dramatic reduction in the use of agency staff, and none have been used since January 2019. Managers recognise that this is primarily because of the closure of one unit and that vacant posts need to be recruited to, before increasing occupancy. Managers are in the process of reviewing the current staffing model and have identified the need to increase the number of permanent staff if the use of agency staff is to be kept to a minimum.

The home has established a service level agreement with several agencies that can provide additional staff if required. The agreement outlines the requisite knowledge, training and set of skills for agency workers and now includes a formal induction process that is overseen by managers.

Staff report that they feel better supported and that opportunities for professional development have improved. The two deputy managers are spending more time working directly on the residential units. This has strengthened the support for staff, who are becoming increasingly confident in their management of this complex and diverse group of children.

There is a much-improved focus on training and development. Planned time is being given to staff to complete mandatory and role-specific training. In addition, one of the deputy managers has developed a range of practice-based learning opportunities for staff. These are being offered through individual and group coaching and mentoring activity, as well as formal supervision.

Staff have made every effort to make the current living environment as homely and as welcoming as possible, while keeping it risk free. At the time of the inspection, children were making plans to move to a unit that has been refurbished and completely redecorated to a very high standard. The plan is to complete the same work in the unit that will be unoccupied.

An experienced headteacher with a proven track record in running education in a secure setting has been appointed. Although not formally in post until May 2019, this person has been involved in developing an action plan. This plan is based upon the findings of an urgent review of the education provision. Progress in relation to this plan and the extent to which the significant shortfalls identified at the last inspection have

been addressed, including the education-specific recommendations, will be evaluated by an education inspector at the next full inspection.

Leaders and managers are prioritising education better. There is a clear expectation that children attend and remain in school and that care staff and their education colleagues fully support this premise. Education attendance has improved significantly because of this basic expectation and the fact that the daily routine is now being organised in a way that encourages and supports children to attend and engage in school.

There has been a concerted effort to ensure that children can engage in purposeful recreational activities. Better staffing arrangements and improved group interactions mean that staff are generally available to accommodate each child's chosen activities. The range of opportunities for children to go out on mobility has been extended to include their individual hobbies and interests better.

Confrontation and bullying between children are now more confidently challenged. Following incidents of this type, staff encourage children to understand how their behaviour affects others, to develop skills to better resolve conflict and to repair any damaged relationships. This has contributed to improved relationships between children and less reliance on separation and managing away to manage this complex and challenging group of children. Indeed, inspectors noted a much more settled and sociable atmosphere than that seen at the previous inspection, with children and staff interacting positively as a whole group.

Care planning and care practice are based on rigorous assessment, monitoring and review. These processes are further strengthened by cohesive links with a range of professionals. This includes mental health specialists, whose support is now fully integrated into formulating care plans, interventions and behaviour and risk management strategies. Staff are fully involved in these processes and demonstrate a strong commitment, when implementing these plans, to ensure that each child has their needs met and is safe.

Children continue to enjoy positive relationships with staff. These relationships are much more productive, because staff are having to control less and have more time to engage children in purposeful conversations and direct work. This enhances the opportunities for staff to influence positive change in the lives of the children in their care.

### Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/11/2018	Full	Requires improvement to be good
23/01/2018	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
04/04/2017	Full	Good
01/11/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

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

### Recommendations

- Ensure that the ethos of the home supports each child to learn. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 29, paragraph 5.18)

Specifically, undertake an urgent review of the education provision to ensure that the curriculum offer meets the needs, interests and abilities of children and helps them to develop knowledge, skills and behaviours that improve their life chances.

- Ensure that the ethos of the home supports each child to learn. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 29, paragraph 5.18)

Specifically, improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that: lessons and activities are stimulating and well-structured and engage all children so that they make good progress; the assessment of children's starting points is rigorous and accurate to enable children to follow individual learning programmes that are challenging and help them to make the progress of which they are capable; oral and written feedback is constructive and helps children to understand what they have done well and how they can improve their work even further; and assessment practices identify and correct spelling and grammatical errors and ensure that the work that children submit is commensurate with their abilities.

- Ensure that the ethos of the home supports each child to learn. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 29, paragraph 5.18)

Specifically, improve the working relationship between education and care staff to ensure that children have a continuum of learning that is supported effectively on the residential units, both outside education time and when they are justifiably unable to attend their lessons.

- Ensure that the ethos of the home supports each child to learn. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 29, paragraph 5.18)

Specifically, implement rigorous quality-assurance and quality-improvement processes that eradicate weaknesses rapidly and ensure a high-quality provision.

## 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 difference 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.

This inspection focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

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:** SC022448

**Provision sub-type:** Secure unit

**Registered provider:** Nugent Care

**Registered provider address:** 99 Edge Lane, Edge Hill, Liverpool L7 2PE

**Responsible individual:** Gary Thistlewood

**Registered manager:** Marie Higgins

## Inspectors

Paul Scott, social care inspector

Jo Stephenson, social care inspector

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