

SC036726

Registered provider: Nottinghamshire County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is operated by the local authority. It provides a residential service for up to seven children and a short-break service for up to five children. All the children have moderate to severe learning disabilities. The home manager is in the process of applying to be registered.

Inspection dates: 5 to 6 June 2019

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: 1 August 2018

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
01/08/2018	Full	Requires improvement to be good
30/01/2018	Full	Outstanding
01/02/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
01/09/2016	Full	Outstanding

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>have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm;</p> <p>understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person;</p> <p>take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and</p> <p>are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies.</p> <p>(Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(i)(iii)(v)(vi)(vii))</p> <p>This is with particular reference to staff training in procedures relating to allegations against professionals who work with children.</p>	05/08/2019
<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>	05/08/2019

<p>ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate;</p> <p>ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;</p> <p>ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child;</p> <p>ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child.</p> <p>(Regulation 13 (1)(b)(2)(b)(c)(d)(e))</p> <p>This is with specific reference to providing training and development to improve team cohesion, shift planning and medication administration systems.</p>	
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Inspection judgements

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

There continue to be changes in the staff group that have an impact on the experiences of children living and staying in the home. Managers have not ensured that there is enough staff capacity or a sufficient balance of skills, experience and gender to support all children to have positive experiences.

For a period of time, a lack of access to transport meant that children had fewer opportunities to take part in activities. This issue has been addressed, and there is now more flexibility for staff to plan outings and activities with children.

The home environment has been improved. It is more comfortable and less institutionalised. For example, there has been a significant reduction in the use of walkie talkies by staff. Managers are in the process of replacing walkie talkies with less intrusive communication aids.

Children have detailed placement plans. Children's information is well organised, up to date and regularly reviewed. Case management meetings have been introduced. These meetings help key workers to assess progress and discuss any emerging information or concerns.

Staff liaise with schools and families to identify helpful, consistent objectives for children. Care plan objectives often include supporting children with independence skills. These can range from small steps, such as helping to clear the table at meal times, to

encouraging and supporting children to try new activities. One child has become involved with a local art project and was asked to interview the artist. Staff are good at helping children to celebrate achievements and progress. For example, 'wow boards' are placed throughout the home so that examples of children's success can be displayed.

Good planning prepares children well, as they move into the home or have short stays. Staff work well with families and partner agencies to ensure that everything the child needs is in place to enable a positive transition. In addition, children are supported to move on from the home in a positive way. One child is in the process of moving to an adult short-breaks provision. He has been to see his new home. In addition, staff from the new home have visited him at this home. This enables them to better understand his routines, preferences and objectives.

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

Since the last full inspection, the management team has made significant changes to the administration of medication processes so that a robust policy and auditing system are in place. Most staff have received training that includes an assessment of their competency to dispense medication. However, there continue to be medication errors.

There have been a small number of allegations against staff. In all cases, allegations have been referred to the designated officer. One recent concern was not reported in a timely way, and child protection procedures were not immediately followed. Some staff have expressed concerns about the impact of investigations on staff morale and on staff capacity. Relevant training on the allegations process has not been delivered to staff.

Detailed and thoughtful behaviour management plans are in place. They demonstrate careful consideration of children's communication needs and their emotional and physical health needs. They include advice to staff about how to promote positive behaviours and reduce children's vulnerabilities. Staff continually assess the impact and suitability of behaviour management plans.

Risk assessments are also kept under constant review. They are discussed in shift handovers and team meetings. For some children, this has resulted in fewer incidents of potentially harmful behaviours. Where behaviours are not changing or there are increased incidents of concern, managers and staff request multi-agency meetings to assess the level of concern and agree strategies. For example, one child has had their medication altered. Staff are monitoring the impact of this change closely.

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

There has been a lack of stability in the home as a result of changes to the management team. There have also been changes in the staff group, and there has been staff sickness. However, senior managers have now successfully recruited to management

and staff posts. This is likely to lead to a reduced use of agency and relief staff. This inspection found that shift planning and rota planning require more effective oversight.

Since the last inspection, an investigation into care practice has concluded. A number of learning points were identified through the investigation. The management team has implemented a range of improved quality assurance mechanisms. These include improved incident reporting and analysis, and a rigorous case file audit tool. These are likely to better support managers to assess and evaluate the quality of care, children's day-to-day experiences and the progress children are making.

It is too soon to assess the impact of these developments. However, the frequency of supervision has improved. Staff reported that supervision adds value because there is opportunity to reflect on practice, and safeguarding is always discussed.

The investigation had, and continues to have, an impact on staff morale. Some staff have expressed concerns about management responses to medication practice and allegations. These concerns have not been wholly addressed by managers to ensure that all staff know and understand their responsibilities within child protection procedures.

The whole staff group requires training and development to ensure that members work together as a team. Managers need to consider how to further improve communication in the home.

Managers and staff are working well with families and partner agencies. Managers challenge professionals if there is a delay in receiving essential information or progressing a child's plan. The independent visitor provides critical challenge, which is useful.

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 address: Nottinghamshire County Council, County Hall,
Loughborough Road, West Bridgford, Nottingham NG2 7QP

Responsible individual: Devon Allen

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Cathey Moriarty, social care inspector

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