

SC022448

Registered provider: Nugent Care

Full 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 young person under section 25 of the Children Act 1989 who are under 13 years of age requires the approval of the Secretary of State.

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 dates: 21 to 22 January 2020

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

How well children and young people are helped and protected **good**

Health services **Not judged**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

Outcomes in education and related learning activities **not judged**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 15 October 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: inadequate

Enforcement action since last inspection:

Three compliance notices, relating to the protection of children, leadership and management, and behaviour management records, were issued at the full inspection on 15 and 16 October 2019. A notice restricting accommodation was also served.

A monitoring visit was completed on 14 November 2019. Ofsted assessed that suitable action had been taken to meet all three notices and the notice restricting accommodation was lifted.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
15/10/2019	Full	Inadequate
09/07/2019	Full	Inadequate
05/03/2019	Interim	Improved effectiveness
20/11/2018	Full	Requires improvement to be good

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

Recommendations

- Staff should record information on individual young people in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes fact, opinion and third-party information. Information about young people should always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to them now or in the future. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4 and 14.5)
Specifically, adapt electronic records to ensure that they are child-friendly and purposeful for children.
- The registered person should ensure that all incidents of control, discipline and restraint are subject to systems of regular scrutiny. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.36)
Specifically, ensure that staff maintain a detailed record of post-incident debriefs with the child.
- 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)
Strengthen all staff's understanding of the importance of education through a multi-disciplinary and cross-working approach so that they have the highest expectations of what the children can achieve.
- 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)
Ensure that all staff across the centre are involved in the education and behaviour management of children to ensure that they establish clear boundaries and a consistent implementation of rules.
- 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)
Improve attendance and reduce the amount of time that children spend away from learning, to ensure that all children value their learning and make good progress.
- 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)
Enhance the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to ensure that it is at least good across the whole provision and that teaching staff evaluate learning support strategies regularly to ensure that all children achieve their full potential.
- 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)

Implement robust quality-improvement processes urgently, so that leaders and managers rectify weaknesses rapidly to ensure that children receive a consistently high quality of education.

- 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)
Further improve teachers' performance management arrangements to ensure that they focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning and that these are supported through staff development activities.
- 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)
Ensure that appropriate governance arrangements are in place to hold education managers to account for the quality of the provision.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Ofsted inspected the home on 15 and 16 October 2019 and judged the home to be inadequate for the second time. This was because of significant weaknesses in risk management and ineffective leadership and management that seriously compromised children's safety, well-being and progress.

Outcomes for education and learning-related activities and health services have not been inspected at this visit. This is because at the previous inspections they were judged to be requires improvement and good, respectively.

Children said that they are receiving good care that helps them to make progress and keeps them safe. Inspectors experienced a calm, comfortable, child-centred environment in which children were seen to be receiving nurturing, sensitive care. This is contrary to what inspectors saw at the previous inspection.

Staff are more proactive in their approach to managing this highly complex and potentially challenging group of individuals. They have established positive relationships with the children and are better using these to manage group dynamics. This is contributing to children developing more positive relationships with each other.

There is a much-improved approach to care planning. Continuous assessment involving health, education and care staff means that each child's known and emerging needs are captured in their plans and risk assessments. These are regularly reviewed, and any changes are communicated well throughout the centre. As a result, staff demonstrate a good understanding of each child and are effective in their efforts to deliver individually tailored programmes of support. Consequently, children are making good progress in line with their plans. A social worker said, 'Staff really know the children. They are a credit to the home.'

Education attendance and engagement have improved. The introduction of school uniform reinforces that attending school is part of the home's daily routine. Care and education staff work together. They support good transitions between home and school and help children to overcome entrenched fears from poor experiences in education settings.

A strength of the home is the efforts made to ensure that there are good-quality, safe arrangements in place for children to maintain relationships with family and significant others. Staff support children to repair relationships where there may have been difficulties in the past. One parent reported: 'Absolutely wonderful staff who are attentive and caring. Nothing is too much trouble. Things are much improved between [name of child] and me because of them.'

A great deal of effort has been put into seeking the views of children. There is strong evidence of how children have influenced the changes made since the last inspection. The most significant in terms of impact is the introduction of pets. It was wonderful for inspectors to hear children talk about how they are caring for these animals. More pertinently, there are lots of examples of when these animals have been used therapeutically to help children to keep calm or engage in situations that they find difficult. For example, one child spoke about taking her pet rat into her secure accommodation review meeting, which helped her to keep calm and contribute to the discussion.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

Children told the inspectors that they feel safe at the home. They spoke positively about the staff and expressed a confidence that they can talk to staff if they have any worries or concerns.

Staff and managers present as knowledgeable and confident in implementing the home's safeguarding policies. When necessary, swift action is taken to report and address any safeguarding concerns and allegations, including the involvement of external safeguarding agencies. Furthermore, when staff are alerted to any bullying behaviour they are much more proactive in instigating measures to keep children safe and complete work to repair damaged relationships.

Children's risk management plans have been reviewed and improved. These documents now reflect in detail children's behaviours, risks and vulnerabilities. Professionally informed strategies for managing risk-taking behaviours such as self-harm are clear, understood by staff, and consistently put into practice. These strategies are regularly reviewed and discussed as standard agenda items at handovers, meetings and staff supervision. Consequently, children are much safer because staff are successfully managing potentially harmful situations.

Children's daily living experiences have significantly improved. Consistently applied boundaries and expectations mean that children are less chaotic in their behaviour.

Positive relationships and good role modelling are used to encourage pro-social behaviour, which is rewarded through the home's incentive scheme.

Staff are taking an increasingly positive and trauma-informed approach when responding to negative and challenging behaviour. They are making good use of respectful relationships and de-escalation techniques to help children better manage their emotions. As a result, there has been a reduction in both the frequency and severity of incidents of negative behaviour.

Physical restraint is only used when all other strategies have failed. Detailed records are kept of all incidents of restraint. In the main, these are of a good quality. However, the recording of post incident debriefs requires further improvement. It is clear from speaking to children that staff talk to them following restraint, but this is not always captured in the home's record.

Managers review all incidents of physical restraint using closed-circuit television (CCTV). This process is being used effectively to evaluate staff practice and to ensure that interventions are necessary, proportionate and lawful.

Single separation and managing away are used appropriately when children are presenting a risk to themselves or others. Detailed records are kept and confirm that staff maintain appropriate levels of supervision and make every effort to reintegrate the child back into the group.

Health services: not judged

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The decision to voluntarily reduce the number of children who are accommodated has enabled a period of consolidation. A senior manager from within the organisation has maintained responsibility for the day-to-day management of the home. She has taken the lead in developing a comprehensive and child-focused improvement plan. This is being implemented effectively by managers and staff who are contributing to and taking ownership of this improvement agenda. This includes addressing the requirements from the last inspection. Consequently, this is a better and safer place for children and staff.

Staffing arrangements are significantly stronger than previously seen. There has been a strong focus on recruiting staff using an improved format that better assesses competency and suitability to work in a secure setting. Most vacancies have been filled and new staff have benefited from a better planned and supportive induction. One staff member said, 'I have worked in residential settings for a long time and this is the best induction I have ever had. I was given time to meet and get to know the children while shadowing and learning from experienced staff. This has given me a good start and I love it here.'

Staff morale is high. Inspectors were pleased to talk to staff who were exceptionally positive about the changes so far. Staff were complimentary about the support they have

been given by senior managers, both informally and through processes such as professional supervision, clinical supervision and mandatory and needs-specific training. They spoke about feeling much clearer about their roles and responsibilities and empowered to make sensible decisions about how to care for, and keep safe, the children in their care. This was evident throughout the inspection, during which the inspectors saw some extremely good, trauma-informed approaches to supporting children with complex needs and challenging behaviour.

The standard of internal oversight and monitoring has improved. Deputy managers have been given specific areas of responsibility, which provides a more focused approach to maintaining and developing standards in areas such as care planning, risk management and security. Several systems and processes have been introduced to promote good communication at all levels and ensure that there is effective oversight of the home. This increased diligence means that emerging issues are now being identified and addressed in a planned manner.

There has been a significant improvement in the standard of accommodation. The refurbishment of children's bedrooms and bathrooms is now fully complete and communal areas have been redecorated in vibrant colours and refurnished to a high standard. Staff are striking a good balance between maintaining a child-friendly and risk-free environment. Children are taking pride in the home and it was nice to see highly personalised bedrooms containing personal items.

The home is in the process of transferring records onto an electronic system that is used in the organisation's adult services. While this has brought about many positives, such as staff access to information, the system has not yet been adapted to make it child-friendly. Consequently, some of the language in the records, such as reference to incontinence, is not useful for children. Senior managers have recognised this and are in the process of commissioning the necessary improvements.

Outcomes in education and related learning activities: not judged

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: SC022448

Provision sub-type: Secure Unit

Registered provider: Nugent Care

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

Responsible individual: Sarah Swanson

Registered manager: Marie Higgins

Inspectors

Paul Scott, social care inspector

Elaine Allison, social care inspector

Cathey Moriarty, social care inspector

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