

SC036726

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

This is a local authority children's home, providing care for up to 12 children with sensory impairment, learning disabilities, emotional and/or behavioural difficulties and/or physical disabilities. There are currently eight children living in the home.

Visit dates: 30 September to 1 October 2020

Previous inspection date: 1 October 2019

Previous inspection judgement: improved effectiveness

Information about this visit

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), Ofsted suspended all routine inspections in March 2020. As part of a phased return to routine inspection, we are undertaking assurance visits to children's social care services that are inspected under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF).

At these visits, inspectors evaluate the extent to which:

- children are well cared for
- children are safe
- leaders and managers are exercising strong leadership.

This visit was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000, following the published guidance for assurance visits.

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills is leading Ofsted's work into how England's social care system has delivered child-centred practice and care within the context of the restrictions placed on society during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Findings from the visit

We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance visit.

The care of children

Children are receiving good-quality care and they settle well in this home. One child, who has recently moved in, refers to living in the home as his 'big adventure'.

Children present as happy and excited to see staff on their return from school. Staff use humour and positive encouragement strategies to ensure that hygiene routines are completed smoothly and in a caring manner.

All the children have benefited from good education arrangements during the COVID-19 period when they were unable to attend their schools. There is purposeful communication between each child's education setting, the home and social workers. This ensures that children's education needs are identified and reviewed. Children, who have recently returned to school, benefit from good morning and evening routines. This supports good attendance and progress.

Staff are skilled at using information about children's personalities, preferences and methods of communication to develop effective care plans. Managers and staff seek information from a range of sources to ensure that they understand children's needs before they move into the home. Good care planning means that children make progress. For example, one child is healthier as a result of a more balanced diet, better exercise and effective health screening.

Children have clear arrangements in place to support them to maintain relationships with family. Staff have supported the development and implementation of children's plans, including shared care arrangements with parents. Staff have also supported children to move on from the home in a planned way. They have helped to reduce children's anxieties about change by ensuring that there are opportunities for children to familiarise themselves with new carers and new environments.

This visit identified some shortfalls in the recording and administering of medication. In addition, there was one occasion when a child's medication was not available to them during their journey to school. These shortfalls have not had an impact on children's health, but medication systems are not yet robust enough to ensure consistently good practice.

The safety of children

Information about children's behaviours and vulnerabilities is shared effectively between families, professionals and care staff. This promotes the safety of children and reduces risk.

Staff provide consistent routines and clear boundaries. This helps children learn how to regulate their own emotions and behaviours. The relatively low level of physical interventions demonstrates that staff are using distraction techniques effectively.

Although incidents and safeguarding issues have generally been managed appropriately, opportunities to learn lessons and improve practice have not always been taken quickly enough. Managers are currently revisiting two incidents so that they can identify and address any training and development needs of the staff involved. Management monitoring and review systems are not yet strong enough to consistently recognise opportunities to improve safeguarding systems.

Leaders and managers

Managers and staff have responded well to the challenges of COVID-19 restrictions. Staff have worked flexibly to ensure safe staffing levels.

Since the last inspection, there have been a number of changes to the staff, management and senior leadership team of the home. These changes have had an impact on staff morale. Some staff are responding to change better than others. The management team recognises that continued consultation and engagement is essential to achieving a cohesive staff team.

There is now a more robust and committed management team in place to support the registered manager. The management team is aware of the areas of practice that need strengthening and has plans in place to improve the home.

The quality of record-keeping and the management oversight of records is not consistently good. Some assessments have not been updated with new, relevant information. Some essential plans are not dated.

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 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>	09/11/2020

<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>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>ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate.</p> <p>(Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(b))</p>	09/11/2020
<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 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>understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person.</p> <p>(Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(v))</p>	09/11/2020
<p>The registered person must make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the children's home.</p>	09/11/2020

In particular the registered person must ensure that—
medicine which is prescribed for a child is administered as
prescribed to the child
and
a record is kept of the administration of medicine to each
child.

(Regulation 23 (1)(2)(b)(c))

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC036726

Registered provider: Nottinghamshire County Council

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

Responsible individual: Devon Allen

Registered manager: Linda Simmons

Inspectors

Cathey Moriarty, Social Care Inspector
Zoey Lee, Social Care Inspector

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