

SC033362

Registered provider: Peterborough City Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this secure children's home

This secure children's home is operated by a local authority and is approved by the Secretary of State to restrict children's liberty.

The home can accommodate up to 16 children aged between 10 and 17. It provides care for children accommodated under section 25 of the Children Act 1989, who are placed by local authorities. At the time of the inspection, 11 children were accommodated at the home.

Education is provided on site in dedicated facilities.

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 at this home is the statutory responsibility of NHS England under the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

The registered manager has been in post since May 2013.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

We last visited this setting on 7 September 2020 to carry out an assurance visit. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection dates: 13 to 15 October 2021

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people , taking into account	requires improvement to be good
Children's education and learning	requires improvement to be good
Children's health	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 secure 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: 5 November 2019

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
05/11/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good
16/07/2019	Full	Inadequate
30/01/2019	Interim	Improved effectiveness
22/05/2018	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

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

Children develop good relationships with the core team of staff. They actively seek reassurance from members of staff and enjoy their company. Staff celebrate the children's achievements and reward their efforts and progress. Children have a number of adults who they can go to with any concerns that they may have and are very confident in expressing their views and opinions

The use of expletives and poor language is commonplace and staff do not consistently or effectively challenge this. On occasions, members of staff also swear in front of children. These factors do not lend themselves to children seeing staff as positive role models and undermine the attempts of establishing a respectful and tolerant culture.

Children make some progress in their education. There are times when children do not attend education if they have been involved in incidents outside the school day. This raises concerns about the consistency of children's routines and has a detrimental impact on their education. This has been raised with managers by the children and the staff.

Multi-disciplinary meetings are held so that each child's needs are known and assessed. These assessments inform care plans that guide the staff in how best to support the children and describe which strategies work well.

Children enjoy a variety of activities. The staff find interesting things for the children to do. These include animal experience days, African drumming, cooking and art. Some children have been able to have their own pets when they have the knowledge and commitment to care for them safely.

Children enjoy approved trips into the community as part of their plans for moving on. These have continued throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff work hard to support children in helping them to move on to their next home. This is a carefully planned process to help children become used to returning to the community with less supervision and increased independence.

Children have been able to maintain contact with their families through visits and the use of video and telephone calls. This helps the children to maintain family relationships and lessens their sense of isolation.

There have been significant improvements to the interior of the home. Communal areas are well maintained and decorated and children can personalise their bedrooms. This creates a welcoming and domestic environment.

Children's education and learning: requires improvement to be good

A curriculum is not yet in place that is sufficiently ambitious across all subject areas. Children benefit from a well-structured curriculum in English that broadens their knowledge and helps them to make good progress over time. Tutors skilfully blend the functional skills qualification with additional reading of complex texts. Children produce pieces of high-quality creative writing and poetry, often based on their challenging personal experiences. While children make at least expected progress in mathematics, tutors rely too much on commercially produced resources that do not develop children's skills beyond the functional skills syllabus.

In practical subjects, such as art, cookery, design technology and information and communication technology, tutors do not plan children's learning logically to help children to consolidate knowledge and skills over time. Children are not supported to practise the skills they learn often enough to help them to apply them in different situations or to develop expertise. Once children have achieved their awards, they cannot repeat or remember the skills that they demonstrated. Consequently, these qualifications do not help children sufficiently in the next stages of their education, training or employment.

Children's prior attainment in education is identified accurately. However, this information is not used sufficiently to ensure that teaching addresses children's individual knowledge and skills gaps. All children complete the same work, regardless of ability, especially in practical subjects. Tutors do not use children's starting points to identify clear, developmental targets that help the children to progress as well as they can. Targets in individual education plans are too broad and lack personalisation, and are therefore not well understood by the children.

Children regularly refuse to attend education and some children choose which lessons they attend. The children have experienced traumatic lives, but the care and education staff do not have high enough aspirations regarding children's behaviour and attendance in education. Leaders do not ensure that children receive appropriate learning within their units when they do not attend education. As a result, children miss out on significant learning opportunities to achieve their potential.

On too many occasions, education staff do not challenge children's inappropriate language or behaviour. They do, however, provide activities to help children develop positive relationships with each other and with staff, such as breakfast clubs.

Some children are not provided with the specialist support that they need to access education. Children with speech and language needs, including English as an additional language, do not receive professional support from speech and language therapists or specialist courses that would help them learn English as a second language. Teaching assistants do not work effectively with children in lessons to help them to participate fully in learning.

Children do not receive appropriate impartial careers information, advice and guidance. This limits their ability to understand their options in the next stages of their education, training or employment. For example, children who wish to progress to an apprenticeship do not understand how to do so.

Education staff do not receive sufficient training and development opportunities to help them to improve the skills they need to teach and support children with a wide variety of complex needs. They do not receive regular updates on how to teach children with specific diagnoses such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. The majority of the children at the home are diagnosed with this condition.

Children's health: requires improvement to be good

Children receive age-appropriate health services. These include access to a general practitioner, dental service, immunisations and sexual health screening. There is a system in place to ensure timely access to any necessary prescriptions.

There are arrangements in place for out-of-hours services. Impressive work has been carried out with the local hospital to increase their understanding of the needs of the children using their services. The development of 'health passports' is excellent. These passports improve the experiences of children receiving treatment at the local accident and emergency department because nursing staff know how best to support the children. Progress continues to be made with Secure Stairs (a multi-disciplinary approach to assessment and planning in secure settings). Reflective sessions are offered to staff that help them to explore different ways of working with children who have complex needs.

Managers have introduced a new integrated senior leadership team (ISLT). This team focuses on the strategic oversight of the service. Staff are invested in this process and report that working relationships between health, education and care staff have improved.

Despite numerous recruitment attempts, there continue to be a number of vacancies, meaning that children's speech and language, psychology and occupational therapy needs have not always been met.

The health needs of the children have been prioritised. However, continued staff shortages have contributed to both mandatory training and formal supervision not being carried out in line with policy.

The comprehensive health assessment with children is not routinely completed within required timescales. This means that there is a risk that children's health and well-being needs are not being identified or met in a timely way.

Nurses are not always informed in a timely manner by care staff or managers of the details of all incidents. This does not help nurses to provide the most effective care and support to children. They do see children as soon possible after they are made aware of an incident to ensure their well-being.

There are times when non-critical medication has not been given to children in a timely manner, although children have not been adversely affected by these shortfalls. This is due to staff not following the correct storage processes for medication. Staff do not always follow the correct medication administration process and the policy to support staff is not clear enough. The medication fridge temperatures are taken daily, and records show that on occasions the temperature is out of range for the safe storage of children's medications. Despite this, appropriate action has not been taken. Following medication errors, a number of changes have been made to procedures and the errors have reduced as a result. Despite this, concerns remain about the effectiveness of auditing, given the concerns identified.

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

Staff are trained in what to do if they have concerns about a child's safety and well-being. However, on one occasion, a safeguarding matter was not addressed in line with the home's policy. The incident was under investigation at the time of this inspection. It related to a member of staff who had a concern about staff practice but failed to follow the proper procedure until prompted by managers.

There have been occasions when agency staff have been unaware of children's specific vulnerabilities. On one occasion, a child was given metal cutlery by an agency staff member when this had been identified as a risk in the child's plan.

Children feel able to raise any concerns they may have. Most complaints are responded to well. This gives children assurance that their concerns are listened to and acted on. However, one complaint was delayed and not resolved in a timely manner.

Weekly multi-disciplinary meetings explore the children's progress and well-being. These meetings inform risk assessments and behaviour management strategies. However, the children's views are not included in the development of their behaviour management plans. This does not give children the opportunity to feel involved or identify strategies which may help them.

Physical restraint is used appropriately in line with regulations. Incidents are monitored by managers to ensure safe and appropriate practice. On one occasion, the use of physical intervention was appropriate, however, in records of the incident, the staff failed to describe the physical intervention used. Staff and children engage in debriefing sessions to identify and learn how to avoid incidents in future. Although the debriefs are sometimes delayed, they provide the staff and children with an opportunity to reflect. Children appreciate the opportunities to discuss their feelings and emotions after incidents. They say that these discussions help them to regulate their behaviour more effectively.

Children's vulnerabilities and risks are generally understood by the core staff team. Strategies are implemented that reduce children's risk-taking behaviour. These have

generally been successful, with a significant reduction in incidents. The core staff team works hard to keep the children safe. The strength of the relationships between staff and children has helped the children to reflect on their histories and experiences. Children said that they feel safer now and have a better understanding of their risks.

The use of single separation (children locked into a room or area alone because they present a significant risk to themselves or others) or of children being managed away from the group is used in line with regulations. Managers check that the use is justified and ends without delay.

Managers share safeguarding concerns with the necessary agencies promptly so that effective action is taken to keep children safe. The designated officer reports that there is good communication and an open dialogue with the home's managers.

Recruitment procedures and auditing by managers ensures that appropriate background checks are carried out on all staff before they start work at the home.

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

The home has not been judged better than requires improvement to be good since 2017. Managers develop action plans to show how they will improve the provision; however, improvements are not sustained. This means that good experiences and outcomes for vulnerable children are not consistently achieved.

Managers have missed opportunities to identify shortfalls. A practice issue raised by a member of staff in supervision was not appropriately responded to. The staff sometimes use inappropriate language in front of the children. This undermines the other good efforts made to improve practice and consistency.

There is a thorough training programme, ensuring that core staff have the skills and knowledge to care for and support the children. There are several staff vacancies leading to significant use of agency and 'bank' staff. These staff are not trained to the same level as the core staff. This places a burden on the established permanent staff to work extremely hard in order to maintain consistency and stability for children. The local authority continues to recruit to staff vacancies.

Despite the shortfalls identified, it is acknowledged that the staff and managers work extremely hard to support children to make progress. The established staff team has shown resilience and determination throughout the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The registered manager monitors significant events closely, including the use of closed-circuit television. Careful scrutiny helps to identify learning points that improve practice.

There is a diverse staff team and a diverse group of children. Staff practise the principles of acceptance and tolerance, and celebrate difference. Staff challenge children if racist or unkind remarks are made. The staff model tolerance and kindness, to act as good role models for children.

Managers advocate strongly for children and appropriately challenge relevant authorities when they do not uphold their duties in regard to the children's care.

External professionals, such as social workers and local authority professionals, report good liaison and communication. This demonstrates collaborative working relationships with professionals, to help and support children to achieve their potential.

The home is developing a multi-disciplinary senior leadership team involving managers from social care, health and education. This has not yet had time to embed and demonstrate any impact.

What does the secure 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 education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>help each child to achieve the child’s education and training targets, as recorded in the child’s relevant plans;</p> <p>support each child’s learning and development, including helping the child to develop independent study skills and, where appropriate, helping the child to complete independent study;</p> <p>understand the barriers to learning that each child may face and take appropriate action to help the child to overcome any such barriers;</p> <p>help each child to understand the importance and value of education, learning, training and employment;</p> <p>promote opportunities for each child to learn informally;</p> <p>raise any need for further assessment or specialist provision in relation to a child with the child’s education or training provider and the child’s placing authority;</p> <p>help a child who is excluded from school, or who is of compulsory school age but not attending school, to access educational and training support throughout the period of exclusion or non-attendance and to return to school as soon as possible;</p>	<p>28 February 2022</p>

<p>help each child who is above compulsory school age to participate in further education, training or employment and to prepare for future care, education or employment;</p> <p>help each child to attend education or training in accordance with the expectations in the child's relevant plans; and</p> <p>that each child has access to appropriate equipment, facilities and resources to support the child's learning. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vii)(viii)(ix)(x)(b))</p> <p>In particular, leaders must urgently revise the curriculum to ensure that it is ambitious and provides sufficient structure, support and interest to ensure that children attend education regularly.</p>	
<p>The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on—</p> <p>mutual respect and trust;</p> <p>an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and</p> <p>positive responses to other children and adults.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>help each child to develop socially aware behaviour;</p> <p>encourage each child to take responsibility for the child's behaviour, in accordance with the child's age and understanding;</p> <p>communicate to each child expectations about the child's behaviour and ensure that the child understands those expectations in accordance with the child's age and understanding;</p> <p>understand how children's previous experiences and present emotions can be communicated through behaviour and have the competence and skills to interpret these and develop positive relationships with children;</p> <p>are provided with supervision and support to enable them to understand and manage their own feelings and responses to the</p>	<p>30 November 2021</p>

<p>behaviour and emotions of children, and to help children to do the same. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(ii)(iii)(v)(ix)(x))</p> <p>In particular:</p> <p>ensure that staff are provided with supervision and support to manage their feelings and emotions;</p> <p>ensure that children are provided with clear guidance regarding the expectations around their use of inappropriate language;</p> <p>ensure that staff seek children’s views to identify strategies to help them to manage children’s behaviour.</p>	
<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>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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(iii)(v)(vi)(vii))</p> <p>In particular, staff should share their concerns with managers or other agencies if they are aware of staff conduct which could be seen as poor practice or make children feel unsafe.</p>	30 November 2021
<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> <p>In particular the registered person must ensure that—</p>	15 November 2021

<p>medicine which is prescribed for a child is administered as prescribed to the child for whom it is prescribed and to no other child; and</p> <p>a record is kept of the administration of medicine to each child. (Regulation 23 (1) (2)(b)(c))</p> <p>In particular:</p> <p>ensure that medication is administered when it has been prescribed;</p> <p>ensure effective and timely actions are taken when fridge temperatures are outside the acceptable range;</p> <p>ensure medication is stored at appropriate and safe temperatures.</p>	
<p>The registered person must ensure that—</p> <p>within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes—</p> <p>a description of the measure and its duration; and</p> <p>within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(iv)(c))</p> <p>In particular:</p> <p>ensure that there is consistent and timely recording of meaningful debriefs with the staff and children when such incidents have occurred;</p> <p>ensure that, in the records of the incident, staff describe the method or hold used during the restraint.</p>	<p>30 November 2021</p>

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that children must be consulted regularly on their views about the home’s care, to inform and support continued improvement. In particular, respond promptly to complaints raised by children. (Guide to the

children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.11)

- The registered person should ensure that the ethos of the home supports each child to learn. In particular:
 - use children's starting points to set targets and plan learning logically to help children develop their knowledge, skills, behaviours and confidence sufficiently so that they know more, remember more and can do more over time;
 - ensure that children achieve qualifications that help them to progress successfully to the next stages of their education, training or employment;
 - ensure that children receive high-quality, impartial careers information, advice and guidance so that they understand the options available to them for their next steps;
 - ensure that education, care and health staff work together to promote high and consistent expectations of what children can achieve, working collaboratively when children are not in education so that there is continuity and consistency of approach.

(‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 29, paragraph 5.18)

- The registered person should ensure that staff can access appropriate facilities and resources to support their training needs and should understand the key role they play in the training and development of staff at the home. In particular, leaders and managers must ensure that education staff receive high-quality and relevant training and development activities to enable them to teach children with complex needs effectively. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 53, paragraph 10.11)

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people, 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’.

Secure children's home details

Unique reference number: SC033362

Provision sub-type: Secure unit

Registered provider: Peterborough City Council

Registered provider address: Town Hall, Bridge Street, Peterborough PE1 1PJ

Responsible individual: Wendi Ogle-Welbourn

Registered manager: Jeannette Winson

Inspectors

Paul Taylor, Social Care Inspector

Barnaby Dowell, Social Care Inspector

Natalie Burton, Social Care Inspector

Catherine Raycraft, Health & Justice Inspector, Care Quality Commission

Suzanne Wainwright, Her Majesty's Inspector, Further Education and Skills

Martin Ward, Her Majesty's Inspector, Further Education and Skills

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