

SC033362

Registered provider: Peterborough City and Cambridgeshire County Councils

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this secure children's home

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

The home provides care for up to four children aged between 10 and 17 who are placed by local authorities, under section 25 of the Children Act 1989. At the time of this inspection, three children were living at the home.

Admission of any child who is under 13 years old 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. Education is provided on site in dedicated facilities.

The registered manager has been in post since May 2013.

Inspection dates: 29 and 30 November 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
Children's education and learning	not judged
Children's health	not judged
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 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: 13 September 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: inadequate

Enforcement action since last inspection:

The home was judged inadequate at the last full inspection carried out between 13 and 15 September 2022. Following this, Ofsted agreed to vary the conditions of registration in relation to the maximum number of children accommodated at the home. Following the inspection, Ofsted served compliance notices in respect of the protection of children, leadership and management, and restraint. A monitoring visit was carried out on 2 November 2022 during which these notices were assessed as met.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/09/2022	Full	Inadequate
10/03/2022	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
13/10/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good
05/11/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

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

Managers have made some progress in addressing the shortfalls identified at the last full inspection. Consequently, the experiences and outcomes for children have improved. Changes to practice are not yet embedded. The impact on sustaining improvement and achieving consistently good care for children is therefore unknown.

Managers and staff have reviewed the format of children's care and support plans. Although the plans are designed to be written with children, they are incomplete. The plans do not reliably inform staff how to look after children in line with their needs and preferences.

Meaningful joint working between the care, health and education teams leads to a shared understanding of children's progress. There is an improved focus on direct work with children to help them understand the reasons why they need secure care.

Children are supported to recover from past traumatic events in their lives, which enables them to improve their emotional well-being. For one child, their self-harming behaviour has dramatically reduced because they have learned other ways of coping and expressing their feelings.

Staff understand the importance of predictable routines and daily structure for children. Staff support children to engage in education. However, children frequently struggle to maintain a healthy routine. They spend significant time with the care staff when they should be in school.

Staff make good use of the on-site facilities to ensure that children can participate in activities that they find comforting and enjoyable. Children engage in new activities that support their talents and interests. One child has been supported to set up and run a tuck shop.

Several areas of the home have been redecorated, which has made the environment more homely, comfortable and welcoming. However, some communal areas need refurbishment. Managers have recognised this and have improvement plans in place.

Children's education and learning: not judged

The requirement and recommendation in relation to children's education and learning made at the last full inspection will be considered at the next full inspection.

Children's health: not judged

The requirement in relation to medication made at the last full inspection will be considered at the next full inspection.

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

Staff increasingly use a therapeutic approach with children. This approach has significantly reduced the need for the use of physical restraint and single separation (when children are locked in an area when they meet the legal criteria of being a significant risk to themselves or others). There has been no use of single separation since the last inspection. One incident led to a physical restraint. Improved managerial monitoring identified that the physical restraint could have been avoided. The learning from this incident is being discussed with the staff involved.

Managers are reviewing the incentive scheme that encourages children's positive behaviour. In the meantime, staff are using this scheme as a way of imposing consequences in response to children's poor behaviour. This approach does not support children to learn what is unacceptable behaviour and why, and how to make amends. A requirement that was made in relation to this shortfall at the last full inspection is restated.

Policies about searching children describe the actions which staff are permitted to take to reduce the risk of children being in possession of harmful items. However, the records of searches do not demonstrate that a proportionate approach is taken. The record of the rationale to justify a search is unclear. Therefore, a requirement that was made about children being searched is restated.

Staff recruitment and retention have been an ongoing challenge. Managers are actively recruiting to fill care staff vacancies. Positively, it has not been necessary to employ agency staff to fill gaps due to the reduced number of children living at the home. Consequently, children are being looked after by familiar staff who understand their vulnerabilities and know how to meet their needs.

Changes to recruitment practices and safer recruitment training have taken place. These reduce the risk of unsuitable adults being employed. There have been no new staff appointed since the last inspection. Therefore, it is not possible to confirm that safe recruitment practice is being implemented and having an impact.

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

Senior local authority leaders have put a range of measures in place to address gaps and shortfalls relating to leadership. These include nominating a new responsible individual, developing an action plan with clear goals and making sure that team leaders are spending more time working alongside children and staff. The early

indications are that the measures are positive in terms of a sharper focus on management oversight and clearer expectations of staff.

Managers have introduced an improved tool to thoroughly assess a child's needs before admission. This tool includes assessment of the likely impact of the child moving to the home on the existing children. This will ensure that staff have the skills and experience needed to look after the child. This reduces the risk of children experiencing a placement breakdown and unplanned moves.

Managers are committed to ensuring that children's views inform decisions about the running of the home. Children's meetings are held regularly, and children write to the manager with ideas and requests. Children receive a written response that includes information about how to escalate concerns if they are unhappy about the outcome. There have been no formal complaints since the last inspection.

Managers have recognised shortfalls in the level of scrutiny provided by the previous independent person's monthly visits to the home. As a result, the independent person has recently changed. At the time of this inspection, the new independent person's reports had not been submitted to Ofsted. Therefore, the requirement in relation to monitoring by an independent person is restated. Managers understand the importance of making good use of the independent person's reports to improve practice and the care provided to children.

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 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>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>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)(viii)(x)(b))</p>	<p>31 January 2023</p>

<p>Specifically, leaders and managers must continue to develop an ambitious education curriculum in all subjects. This should be supported by an ethos of high expectations that values children’s attendance and participation in education.</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.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>encourage each child to take responsibility for the child’s behaviour, in accordance with the child’s age and understanding. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(iii))</p> <p>Specifically, ensure that consequences are linked to the incident and support restorative practice.</p>	<p>31 January 2023</p>
<p>The care planning standard is that children—</p> <p>receive effectively planned care in or through the children’s home. (Regulation 14 (1)(a))</p> <p>This is with specific reference to making sure that children’s care and support plans reliably inform staff about how to look after children in line with their needs and preferences.</p>	<p>31 January 2023</p>
<p>The registered person must ensure that—</p> <p>the privacy of children is appropriately protected. (Regulation 21 (a))</p> <p>Specifically, ensure that: all staff follow the home’s prohibited items policy; records of searches demonstrate that searches are being carried out in line with the policy and are proportionate to risk; actions which compromise children’s privacy are taken only when there is a risk of significant harm.</p>	<p>31 January 2023</p>

<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> <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>31 January 2023</p>
<p>When the independent person is carrying out a visit, the registered person must help the independent person—</p> <p>if they consent, to interview in private such of the children, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home as the independent person requires; and</p> <p>to inspect the premises of the home and such of the home’s records (except for a child’s case records, unless the child and the child’s placing authority consent) as the independent person requires.</p> <p>The independent person must produce a report about a visit (“the independent person’s report”) which sets out, in particular, the independent person’s opinion as to whether—</p> <p>children are effectively safeguarded; and</p> <p>the conduct of the home promotes children’s well-being. (Regulation 44 (2)(a)(b) (4)(a)(b))</p>	<p>31 January 2023</p>

Recommendations

- The registered person should seek, as far as possible, that the home maintains a domestic rather than ‘institutional’ impression. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that the ethos of the home supports each child to learn. In particular: use children’s starting points and identified learning and support needs to plan learning logically in all subjects, to help children develop their knowledge, skills, behaviours and confidence sufficiently so that they know more, remember more and can do more over time; in vocational subjects, plan and teach a curriculum that enables children to develop, consolidate and master the subject-specific knowledge and practical skills that

they need. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 29, paragraph 5.18)

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 and Cambridgeshire County Councils

Registered provider address: Scott House, 5 George Street, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire PE29 3AD

Responsible individual: Post vacant

Registered manager: Jeannette Winson

Inspectors

Helen Simmons, Social Care Inspector

James Tallis, Social Care Inspector

Shaun Common, His Majesty's Inspector, Quality Assurance Manager

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