

SC036740

Registered provider: Nottinghamshire County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this secure children's home

This secure children's home is managed by a local authority. It is approved by the Department for Education to restrict children's liberty.

The home can accommodate up to 20 children aged between 10 and 17 years. It provides accommodation for up to 12 children placed by the Youth Custody Service and has up to eight places for children accommodated under section 25 of the Children Act 1989.

Eight children were living at the home at the time of the inspection.

Admission of any child under section 25 of the Children Act 1989 who is 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.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since May 2018.

At this inspection, the judgement areas of children's education and learning, and health, were not inspected. These will be inspected in the next inspection year, 2024/25.

Inspection dates: 24 to 26 October 2023

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

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 inadequate

The effectiveness of leaders and managers inadequate

There are serious failures that mean children's welfare is not promoted or safeguarded.

Date of last inspection: 18 July 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: Inadequate

Enforcement action since last inspection: Yes

Following the full inspection carried out between 18 and 20 July 2023, a compliance notice was issued in respect of Regulation 20, restraint and deprivation of liberty. This related to the use of restraint, physical interventions and single separation.

This compliance notice was deemed to have been met at the subsequent assurance inspection on 6 September 2023.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/07/2023	Full	Inadequate
19/07/2022	Full	Good
05/01/2022	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
22/06/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

The inappropriate use of restraint, in particular managing away with children, impacts negatively on this judgement area. Children have been managed away when the legal criteria are not met or are no longer evident. During these incidents, some children have rightly questioned why they were being managed away and their movements restricted. These incidents have had a significant impact on them.

Overall, children benefit from strong and trusting relationships with staff. Staff work hard to develop these relationships, and they recognise how their relationships impact positively on children's experiences. As a result of this, children feel able to go to staff if they have worries or concerns. Children say they are happy living at the home and they feel safe. Positive and jovial interactions are observed between staff and children. From the point of their admission, children make progress.

Children take part in meaningful key-work sessions with staff. This work is not always documented in a way that clearly reflects the quality of the work. Some of the records include stigmatising language that is not helpful to children. Some of the terminology used in records and in the home is not child-friendly. For example, the children said that an area in the home named 'the goldfish bowl' is not appropriate.

Children new to the home are sensitively welcomed, and there is a clear process to help them to settle in quickly. A child who has recently come to live at the home has already told his social worker that he has staff he can talk to. Additionally, a child said that the staff are the best thing about living there.

Children are helped to prepare for moving on. Their moves are well planned, and importance is placed on finding the right next placement. This makes sure that children are provided with the right support to meet their needs and gives them the best chance to succeed going forward.

Children going to their next placement benefit from the staff working with the new carers before the move. This ensures that the new carers are better equipped to provide suitable support and care for the child. However, this positive work is not always clearly documented. Consequently, there is little evidence of all of the good work carried out.

Children enjoy their meals enormously. Children say that the food is very good. Children can make suggestions about meals, and changes to the menu are quickly made. This is an example of children's views being listened to and acted on.

Feedback from professionals and parents is very positive. Children benefit from seeing and/or having telephone contact with their families routinely. Parents feel that their children are safe. This regular contact helps children to maintain important relationships and essential support networks.

Children's complaints are taken seriously. If a child makes a complaint, swift action is taken to look into it. The outcome of the complaint investigation is sent to the child in a written form that clearly explains whether the complaint has been upheld or not and the reasons why.

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

This area was not inspected during this inspection.

Children's health: requires improvement to be good

This area was not inspected during this inspection.

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

There are times when staff use restraint inappropriately. Children have been managed away when the legal criteria are not met or are no longer evident. During these incidents, some children have rightly questioned why they were being managed away and their movements restricted, particularly if the periods of being managed away have been excessive. These incidents have had a significant impact on children and their experiences in this home.

Children are physically restrained only when required to keep themselves and others safe. Staff make concerted efforts to avoid restraint and physical interventions, using a range of de-escalation strategies. However, the new restraint and physical intervention policy has not yet been implemented effectively. Management monitoring systems do not detect and address all of the practice shortfalls. In addition, learning from such incidents is not always identified and taken forward. This is serious because the opportunities to prevent a recurrence of such incidents are not realised.

Consequences imposed on children are not restorative. This practice does not assist children in understanding the impact that their behaviour has on others. Neither does this help children to develop positive social skills and behaviour. A number of consequences are financial, with the amount not recorded. The majority of consequences do not consider the effectiveness of the measure. The requirements made at the last inspection relating to restorative practice and managers' monitoring have therefore not been implemented.

Children's experience of the use of single separation is mainly appropriate. One incident, where two children were attempting to fight, led to a prolonged period of the two children being separated intermittently to keep them apart. There was no explanation of how staff tried to resolve this matter to end this situation as soon as possible.

Safeguarding concerns are referred to local authority children's services in a timely manner. Records are detailed and show that actions are taken to keep children safe.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

The registered manager does not consistently ensure that all children's experiences are positive. Management monitoring systems remain weak. However, there have been further developments in the monitoring and oversight of physical intervention incidents.

A serious deficit remains in the thoroughness of the oversight and scrutiny of the use of managing away practices. A review is needed to ensure that their use meets the legal criteria. Records for managing away, and the use of sanctions are not evaluated effectively. This results in the registered manager not taking all suitable action in the best interest of children.

Safe recruitment practices are in place. This ensures that the staff employed to care for children are suitable to do so. The recommendation made at the July 2023 inspection has been met. Positive disclosure interviews and records are now in place. This evidences that appropriate considerations for employment have been undertaken when Disclosure and Barring Service checks include information that requires further examination.

Suitable staffing levels are maintained. This makes sure that children receive the direct care, support and supervision required to meet their needs.

Consistent care of the children is achieved as a result of the regularly held and purposefully planned meetings. These meetings are used to disseminate crucial information and share the decisions made about the care of children, practice and the running of the home.

Staff are able to routinely access managers for support and guidance. The staff value regular formal supervision sessions, where there remains a focus on staff welfare, care practice, training and development.

Staff knowledge and skills are extended through the provision of induction, mandatory and more specialist training. This enables the staff to meet the individual needs of the children who come to live at the home.

Since the inspection in July, two requirements and six recommendations have been implemented and met.

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered persons must take to meet the Care Standards Act 2000, The 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</p> <p>promotes their welfare.</p> <p>use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(h))</p> <p>The registered manager must implement an effective monitoring system to ensure the efficient service analysis and oversight of children's day-to-day care arrangements.</p> <p>In particular, they must oversee the use of the restriction of liberty, including managing away and the use of sanctions.</p>	19 January 2024
<p>* Restraint in relation to a child is only permitted for the purpose of preventing—</p> <p>injury to any person (including the child);</p> <p>serious damage to the property of any person (including the child); or</p> <p>a child who is accommodated in a secure children's home from absconding from the home.</p> <p>Restraint in relation to a child must be necessary and proportionate. (Regulation 20 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2))</p> <p>In particular, make sure that the legal criteria to manage children away are met, that the registered manager, staff and leadership team fully understand the legal criteria and that accurate records are kept. Managers must routinely monitor</p>	19 November 2023

such incidents thoroughly to ensure these measures are used appropriately.	
<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>details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of the measure;</p> <p>the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(ii)(vii))</p> <p>In particular, physical intervention, managing away and sanction records should be accurate; these records must fully detail the incident and the action taken. The registered manager must effectively review and evaluate their use. This is to ensure that the use is appropriate, proportionate, restorative and effective.</p>	28 December 2023

* These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the progress in education can be measured and evidenced in various ways, including but not limited to: success in academic, vocational and other awards and qualifications; other formal attainment tests that are part of national assessment arrangements; and teachers' ongoing assessments. Measurements of progress should include qualitative information such as how well the child is being prepared for their next stage of education, training or employment, and quantitative data where available. In particular, leaders need to improve the quality of feedback that children receive so that children know what that they have done well and what they need to do to improve the quality of their work. ('Guide to the Children's Home Regulations', including the quality standards', page 26, paragraph 5.2).
- The registered person should ensure that they make suitable arrangements for the safe administration of children's medication, and the storage and disposal of controlled drugs, and that fridge temperatures are checked daily and escalated when out of range. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 35, paragraph 7.15)
- The registered person should ensure that children's records are clearly recorded. Staff should record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way

that will be helpful to children. In particular, ensure that terminology and language used in records is appropriate, including considering the use of such words as dysregulated, compliant and the goldfish bowl. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

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: SC036740

Provision sub-type: Secure Unit

Registered provider: Nottinghamshire County Council

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

Responsible individual: Jennifer Whiston

Registered manager: Paul Thomas

Inspectors

Debbie Foster, Social Care Inspector
Gary Turney, Social Care Inspector
Shaun Common, Social Care Inspector
Jo Stephenson, Quality Assurance Manager

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