

SC034210

Registered provider: North Yorkshire Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned and managed by a local authority. It provides pre-planned and emergency short breaks as well as long-term placements for children who have learning disabilities or physical disabilities, and associated complex healthcare needs. The home can also provide extended and bespoke packages of care. The home is divided into two separate homes.

At the time of the inspection, there were children attending the short-breaks provision and no children were living in the home full time.

The manager registered with Ofsted in May 2016.

Inspection dates: 16 and 17 January 2024

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 6 December 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
06/12/2022	Full	Good
09/03/2022	Full	Good
17/12/2019	Full	Outstanding
11/09/2018	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Staff spend quality time with children, which helps children feel safe and develop close and trusting relationships with staff. One parent said, 'It is a second home for our child, who feels very happy and safe there.'

Staff have a good understanding of children's individual unique and complex health needs. Staff spend time planning how best to meet the children's needs. This helps the children feel relaxed and enjoy their short break. Another parent said their child has 'a big smile on their face' every time they stay at the home.

Professionals and parents are confident that children receive good care and make positive progress. Staff work with parents to explore their worries and reduce any anxieties they may have about their children.

Staff are attuned to children's prompts and cues. This helps staff to understand and meet the children's needs. Staff ensure that children with restricted mobility are comfortable. They provide children with regular exercises in line with their daily routines.

Staff encourage children to share their views and use different approaches to support children who are nonverbal, so their voices are heard. Children can access regular independent advocate support. Health professionals said staff are strong advocates for the children. Some children also enjoyed attending an organised event about children's participation.

Staff work in partnership with parents to support children attending education. Children are supported in school according to their individual needs. Children's attendance at school is excellent, and their attainments and progress are good.

Children access a variety of activities and enjoy sensory play, listening to music and craft activities. Staff support children to spend time outside in the woodland garden. Children with movement-limiting disabilities use specialist equipment so that they participate fully in activities. Children also enjoy individual and group activities at times such as Halloween and Christmas. These memories are captured in photographs, which are displayed throughout the home.

Children are sensitively welcomed into the home with planned transitions. Staff provide children with information about the home in line with their communication needs. The children's guide is available to children in several forms, including picture form, which helps some children's understanding. Children are supported to have positive moves from the home and staff remain in contact with children.

Six medication errors have taken place since the last inspection. The registered manager has implemented changes to strengthen medication administration

systems. However, these are yet to be fully embedded because errors have continued and not all staff have accessed the additional training provided.

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

Children seen during the inspection were happy and responded warmly in interactions with staff. Parents said they were confident leaving their children at the home and that their children receive good-quality care. Staff gain parents' written consent to ensure that children's personal care and activities are undertaken in line with parents' wishes. Parents and professionals visit the home regularly and spoke positively about the open communication with staff.

Staff understand children's risks. Risk assessments are detailed and give staff actions to take to keep the children safe. Children have accessible information regarding fire safety procedures, so they know what to do in an emergency.

Staff at the home are recruited safely. The registered manager has effective links with the children's local authority designated officers, and the registered manager addresses any concerns regarding staff practice.

Sometimes, staff hold children to keep people safe. This is used as a last resort when all other de-escalation techniques have been unsuccessful. Holds are proportionate and used when necessary. However, at the time when several holds were used, some agency staff had not received training in line with the home's behaviour management policy. This places children and staff at risk.

Staff respond to concerns around children's presentation and share any worries with parents and relevant professionals. Children's daily care records encourage staff to have professional curiosity, consider any concerns and detail any actions taken. However, on one occasion, staff recorded that a child had an injury but failed to record any actions taken because of the injury. This did not impact on the child's safety, but gaps in recordings mean it is not clear if staff consistently follow safeguarding procedures.

The physical environment of the home is safe and secure. On one occasion, a staff member was left to care for two children. This did not result in any safeguarding concerns, but this staffing ratio was not in line with the children's care plans.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The entire staff team cares about the children. Leaders and managers have high aspirations for children and want to make their experiences at the home enjoyable. The registered manager has relevant experience and knowledge to carry out their role and is aware of the strengths as well as areas for development in the home.

The registered manager understands children's care plans and arranges children's stays around their individual needs. Consideration is given to the matching of

children's friendships when stays are arranged. This helps ensure that children have the best possible time during their stay and helps build their friendship group.

Staff feel supported by leaders and managers. Staff have regular supervision, focusing on the experiences of children and staff's individual support and development. The staff carry out activities that help them understand what it is like for the children to receive care from the staff. This helps staff gain a sensitive and deeper understanding of how best to meet the children's individual needs.

The home has experienced some challenges around staffing and changes in the senior management team. Leaders and managers have recruited into vacant positions, which has made the staff feel more settled and supported.

The registered manager has auditing systems in place to monitor the quality of care provided, but these need further embedding to strengthen management oversight. Gaps in some records impact on the registered manager's ability to be confident that children are offered consistent care in line with their care plans and the home's statement of purpose. The care plans for two children are out of date and have not been reviewed in a timely manner. This does not impact on the day-to-day care provided to the children. However, gaps in children's records impact on the registered manager's ability to ensure that children's targets are progressed.

The registered manager ensures that staff access mandatory training. However, some staff have outstanding additional specific training needed to develop their knowledge regarding children's specific needs. Some staff also have outstanding additional medication training and training around whistle-blowing procedures.

The registered manager appreciates external monitoring systems. However, they have failed to challenge the fact that, on several occasions, the independent visitor has visited when no children are in the home.

Team meetings are regular and offer staff a chance to gain essential information which informs staff practice. However, the manager has no systems in place to be confident that staff not attending the meetings also have seen the information they need to be aware of.

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person 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 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>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose;</p> <p>ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;</p> <p>ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child;</p> <p>ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child;</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) (2)(a)(c)(d)(e)(h))</p> <p>In particular, the registered person must ensure that all documents relating to children's care are updated and clearly record any actions taken by staff. In addition, the registered manager must ensure that staff have all the required information and training needed to consistently meet the needs of the children.</p>	23 February 2024
<p>The registered person must prepare and implement a policy ("the behaviour management policy") which sets out—</p>	23 February 2024

<p>how appropriate behaviour is to be promoted in the children's home; and</p> <p>the measures of control, discipline and restraint which may be used in relation to children in the home.</p> <p>The registered person must keep the behaviour management policy under review and, where appropriate, revise it. (Regulation 35 (1)(a)(b) (2))</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>	23 February 2024

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that the independent visitor, where possible, visits when children are present to assist them to make a vigorous assessment to produce an opinion-based report on observations of the children's safeguarding and well-being. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.5)

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'.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC034210

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: North Yorkshire Council

Registered provider address: County Hall, Northallerton DL7 8AD

Responsible individual: Gemma Sheader

Registered manager: Katherine Clarke

Inspectors

Gina Lightfoot, Social Care Inspector

Gail McGann, Social Care Inspector

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