

# SC036740

Registered provider: Nottinghamshire County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this secure children's home

A local authority operates this secure children's home. 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 it has up to eight places for children accommodated under section 25 of the Children Act 1989.

Nine 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 in dedicated facilities.

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: 23 to 25 January 2024

<b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people,</b> taking into account	<b>good</b>
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Children's education and learning	good
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Children's health	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

The secure children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

**Date of last inspection:** 24 to 26 October 2023

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** inadequate

**Enforcement action since last inspection:**

The home was judged as inadequate at the full inspection carried out between 24 and 26 October 2023. Following this inspection, Ofsted issued two compliance notices, one under regulation 20, the restraint and the deprivation of liberty standard and one under regulation 13, the leadership and management standard.

Ofsted monitored compliance with the notice issued under regulation 20 on 22 November 2023 and deemed this to be met. The remaining notice was considered as part of this full inspection.

## Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
24/10/2023	Full	Inadequate
18/07/2023	Full	Inadequate
19/07/2022	Full	Good
05/01/2022	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

## **Inspection judgements**

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good**

Children said that they are happy and settled living in this home, and they enjoy good relationships with their peers. Staff know the children well and are quick to form positive trusting relationships with them. Children who spoke with inspectors said that they have adults that they can go to if they have any concerns or worries.

Care plans and records are of a good quality and include children's views. The regular review of these records by managers and care staff ensures that the information held is current and reflective of children's individual needs. This supports children to make good progress in key areas of their lives.

The interventions team carries out key-work sessions with all children. It provides children with information to make better-informed decisions in the future. These sessions help children to talk about sensitive issues, reflect on their past experiences and move forward with their lives.

Some children benefit from mobility sessions. These are organised time-limited trips for education or activities outside the home with staff supervision. These help children to prepare to leave the home. Children also engage in a varied range of activities that reflect their interests and help them learn important life skills.

When children come to the end of their time in the home, their moves are well planned and implemented to give them positive endings and the confidence to leave the home. As a result, children's moves are successful, whether they are returning to the community or going to other provisions in the secure estate.

Children benefit from regular visits and phone calls from their family, others who are important to them and professionals. This helps children to maintain essential relationship connections and their support network. Children's families said that they felt that their children were well looked after and supported, and that communication from staff was effective. This collaboration helps children to make good progress.

### **Children's education and learning: good**

This area was not inspected during this inspection.

### **Children's health: good**

This area was not inspected during this inspection.

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

Children told inspectors that they feel safe. There have been no safeguarding referrals, and there have been no bullying incidents since the last inspection.

Children benefit from being kept safe within safe boundaries and practices. Good progress has been made in ensuring that physical restraint, single separation and managing away practices are appropriate. Managers have improved systems enabling close oversight and scrutiny of staff practice. Although the quality of records has also improved, managers continue to work to detect all shortfalls.

The individual risk assessments of children are detailed, setting out their vulnerabilities. These are routinely reviewed to ensure that they are kept up to date. The risk assessments inform staff of the actions required that they then implement to help keep children safe, including those with very complex needs.

When children need to be physically restrained to keep them and others safe, this is used in line with regulations. Any shortfalls or identified learning is acted on. Importantly, good practice is acknowledged and reflected back to staff. Inspectors saw some examples of good staff practice where staff were sensitive, thoughtful and calm when supporting children in crisis.

Children's daily life experience has changed over several months with regard to the use of single separation and managing away. The use of single separation and managing away practice to support children when in crisis and emotionally upset and to keep them and others safe has reduced. When used, these measures of control are now used appropriately.

The implementation of safe recruitment procedures ensures that suitable staff are employed at the home to work with vulnerable children.

## **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

The manager and senior leaders have built on their oversight and scrutiny of the service. The quality assurance systems are now more detailed with clear evaluation. Managers take action when shortfalls are identified, including with regards to the use of behaviour management strategies. Consequently, the steps set out in the compliance notice issued at the time of the last inspection under regulation 13 have been met.

The recommendations from the last inspection have been carried forward. These will be reviewed at the next inspection and relate to health, education and the use of child-friendly language in children's case records.

The children continue to benefit from appropriate staffing levels. This makes sure that children receive the direct care, support and supervision required to meet their individual needs.

There are a wide range of meetings across the service that assist and support the delivery of consistent care to children. Records of these meetings demonstrate children's progress and experiences within a multi-disciplinary forum (care, education and health). These meetings aid the dissemination of crucial information and the decisions made about the care of children, practice and the running of the home to the wider staff team.

Staff benefit and value regular formal supervision sessions. These focus on meeting children's needs and care practice, staff welfare and training and development. Staff say that the leadership team is more visible around the home. They are well supported by managers and colleagues, and this in turn brings good teamwork.

Staff continue to build on their knowledge and skills through the training they receive, including induction programmes and mandatory and more-specialist training. In recent months, they have received training and guidance on delivering supervision, record-keeping and the newly introduced 'restore and repair' restorative approach. This assists staff to better support children and enables staff to meet children's individual needs.

There are currently new initiatives being introduced to enhance children's experiences, some of which have been supported through funding from the Youth Custody Service. Some of the ideas have not been put into practice as of yet, and those that have are in their infancy. Therefore, the full benefit for children and the impact of these initiatives are not yet known.

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

### **Recommendations**

- The registered person should ensure that 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 they have done well and what they need to do to improve the quality of their work. ('Guide to the Children's Homes 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, they should ensure that terminology and language used in records are always appropriate. ('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

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Gary Turney, Social Care Inspector  
Gemma McDonnell, Social Care Inspector (shadow)  
Kristen Judd, Quality Assurance Manager



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