

SC022448

Registered provider: Nugent Care 2019

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this secure children's home

This secure children's home is run by a voluntary organisation and is approved by the Secretary of State to restrict children's liberty. The home can accommodate up to 12 children aged between 10 and 17 years who are placed by local authorities under section 25 of the Children Act 1989. There were seven children living at the home at the time of the inspection.

Admission of any child under 13 years of age under section 25 of the Children Act 1989 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 is registered with Ofsted and has managed the home since July 2022.

Inspectors were aware during this inspection that a serious incident that occurred at the setting is under investigation by the appropriate authorities. While Ofsted does not have the power to investigate incidents of this kind, actions taken by the setting in response to the incidents were considered alongside other evidence available at the time of the inspection to inform inspectors' judgements.

Inspection dates: 30 January to 1 February and 14 March 2024

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
Children's education and learning	good
Children's health	outstanding
How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding

The secure children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 11 October 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
11/10/2022	Full	Good
19/01/2022	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
14/09/2021	Full	Outstanding
21/01/2020	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children have positive experiences and make excellent progress living at this home. They have developed trusting and strong relationships with staff who know them well and enjoy caring and fun interactions with them. Children say that they can share any worries or concerns they have with staff and express how happy they are, with many of them saying they did not want to leave.

Staff put children at the heart of everything they do. Care plans and records are of an excellent quality. Records are child-focused and the child's input and voice is heard throughout.

Key workers spend meaningful and purposeful time with children. Staff are able to discuss sensitive issues and have difficult conversations with children to alleviate their worries and to help children to feel reassured and confident in their outlook and when preparing to move on from the home.

In line with their plans, children spend time in the community with staff. This enables staff to further build relationships and trust with children and allows children to take part in activities that reflect their individual interests and hobbies. For example, one child has joined a local football team. Staff understand the importance of taking children out into the community and how it impacts positively on children's physical and emotional well-being. Staff go above and beyond when using these times away from the home to help children spend meaningful time with their families and loved ones, building and repairing relationships effectively.

Children's views, wishes and feelings are always taken into account in all aspects of their care. They know how to make a complaint should they need to. Any concerns they raise are dealt with quickly and sensitively, and a meaningful, well-thought-out response is provided for children. Children say that they are taken seriously and that their concerns are acted on.

Each child's move from the home is well thought out and bespoke. Everything known about the child is well considered, and a plan is devised with the child and all relevant professionals to achieve success. This approach to planning for children moving on results in positive outcomes.

Feedback from professionals and families is extremely positive. There is exceptional praise for the staff and their caring and compassionate nature. All professionals spoke about the vast progress children have made.

Children's education and learning: good

Leaders and managers ensure that children study a broad education curriculum. All children study a suitable array of core subjects, such as mathematics, English, science, physical education and information and communication technology (ICT). However, children cannot take accredited qualifications in ICT.

Teachers assess children's starting points to identify gaps in their knowledge effectively. In most cases, teachers then plan subject curriculums well. Teachers also plan the order of topics logically. For example, English teachers organise coherent series of activities to help children write grammatically accurate sentences. Children's personal tutors focus well on building children's reading stamina.

In a few cases, teachers structure their curriculums less effectively. They do not plan sufficiently thoroughly the theoretical elements of the curriculum so that they fit well with practical activities. A few teachers focus too closely on the demands of the final assessment, rather than on the knowledge and skills that will most benefit children.

Education managers and teachers understand children and their specific needs well. They involve children appropriately in the planning of their curriculums and track their progress closely. They work closely with other professionals at the home. For example, with the support of care staff, they improve children's readiness for school in the mornings and their motivation to attend lessons.

In most cases, children make good progress from their starting points. The practical and theoretical work that they produce is of at least the expected standard. Most of those who take accredited qualifications in functional mathematics and English pass their examinations.

Children develop positive relationships with teachers. Attendance is high. Children show respect to their peers and take pride in their work. In a small number of cases, teachers do not challenge inappropriate language.

Children study a more limited vocational training curriculum. Leaders and managers rightly recognise this. They have recently taken appropriate steps to broaden this aspect of the curriculum.

During lessons, teachers teach their subjects well. They use demonstrations and explanations to introduce new materials effectively, and they also provide opportunities for children to practise their skills and knowledge. In ICT and music, teachers have access to too narrow a range of resources, due largely to issues with the ICT infrastructure.

Most teachers give children clear and direct feedback. This helps children to make appropriate corrections. On a few occasions, however, the marking of theoretical work is overly generous, which does not lead to children making the necessary improvements.

In almost all cases, teachers have appropriate subject-specific backgrounds and experience for their roles. They also complete a considerable range of training to help them better understand children's needs. When children struggle to cope in lessons, teachers and support staff work diligently and sensitively to successfully re-engage them in their studies.

Staff with specific responsibility for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have suitable qualifications and experience. They use their expertise to identify well children's individual needs and the support needed. Teachers plan support for children with SEND carefully. As a result, these children meet their targets, such as concentrating on tasks for increasingly longer periods in class.

Children develop their personal skills through the curriculum, such as studying the importance of healthy lifestyles. They also take part in events such as Anti-Bullying Week, and benefit from guest talks on topics such as knife crime. Staff link mobility to educational opportunities for children, although they do not link mobility to children's career goals.

In most cases, children receive suitable careers information, advice and guidance. This includes a focus on their specific career goals, and exploration of their potential next steps. In a few cases, staff who provide guidance do not have accurate information about children's current levels of ability.

Children's health: outstanding

Children's needs are assessed quickly when they arrive at the home, using the comprehensive health assessment tool. Formulations (plans) are produced by the psychology team through understanding the child's history ('My Story') and then utilising a whole-team approach. This means that all staff understand the needs of the children and are therefore able to support them in a child-centred, holistic way.

Healthcare provision is child-centred, trauma-informed and psychologically led. A trauma-informed, multi-agency collaborative approach to assessment, planning and care, including mental health, is well embedded in day-to-day practice. Staff speak very positively about the model of care. A member of staff said, 'Trauma-informed formulation care is a way of life here – not just words on paper.'

Health, education and care staff work closely together to support children. During their time at the home, children's physical and emotional health improve significantly. There is effective on-site therapeutic support from a well-led multi-disciplinary health team, which includes clinical psychologists, physical and mental health nurses, an occupational therapist and a speech and language therapist. A consultant psychiatrist who specialises in children's mental health, a local GP, a dentist and an optometrist are also key members of the health team accessible to children. There are clear processes for accessing medical help if children need this when health professionals are not on site.

A mental health nurse and a physical health nurse visit the home every morning to offer a clinic for any child who would like to see them. Nursing staff see children after every incident of physical restraint, self-harm or single separation. As well as checking on children's well-being, this provides children with an independent adult they can talk to if they have any worries or concerns.

Moves are planned very effectively. A transition worker ensures that children have access to health services when they leave the home. Discharge plans convey strategies to community professionals effectively in order to meet children's needs. This means that when children move on from the home, they continue to benefit from the child-centred, trauma-informed approach. There is ongoing advice for children on healthy living, including sexual health, right up to the point children leave the home, to assist them in the future.

Staff work hard to ensure that education, health and care plans are in place for children who require the extra support that these plans determine. The health team ensures that, when required, medicines are prescribed for children to address any health concerns.

Leaders have assessed the health service provided in the home. They have identified three areas for improvement and these are being implemented. A specialist team has been commissioned to build on work already completed. Feedback from external stakeholders is used by leaders to continually improve health provision for children.

Staff's well-being is a priority. Health staff said that they were very well supported in several ways. Staff spoke positively about a training course they have attended on compassionate minds, about their formal supervision and about the supportive nature of the team.

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

Staff develop and work to high-quality risk assessments and safety plans, and children's voices are central to the development of the documents. Strategies to help keep children safe are specific to each child. When a child begins to struggle with their emotions, a personalised approach means that the children receive good-quality support when they need it.

Staff manage any incidents between children appropriately and sensitively. Children receive a consistent approach from staff and, in most cases, staff are able to mitigate escalation in children's behaviour. This reduces the risk of harm to the children and others.

Staff do not tolerate bullying. Staff have done some remarkable direct and group work with the children in a way that is non-blaming. This helps children to understand the effect that bullying has on people. Consequently, incidents of

bullying are reducing in number, which allows children to have a strong sense of safety living in the home.

Staff teach the children how to keep themselves safe. They use age-appropriate interventions to help the children to understand risks such as carrying knives and knife crime. Individual sessions are repeated and group work is carried out to reinforce these important messages.

Staff only use physical restraint as a last resort and prioritise helping children to develop greater resilience to manage their anger and frustrations. Comprehensive debrief sessions, for both children and staff, mean that the registered manager is able to review these incidents and identify what helps children, including areas for staff's development. This learning culture ensures that practice continues to evolve to deliver highly effective care that helps to protect children.

Single separation and managing away, where children are locked into an area of the home to protect children and others from serious harm, are used appropriately and for the minimum time necessary, with robust management oversight. During these times, children receive the support they need from staff to help them to understand what happened, to learn how to manage difficult situations better and to learn how to keep themselves and others safe.

Safer recruitment processes ensure that the right staff are employed to work with vulnerable children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

Leaders, managers and staff know the children and their needs in intricate detail. Children know managers well, and this is because managers are highly visible to them. Managers are able to talk in great detail about children's histories, what brought them to the home and the progress and experiences of each child.

The home has had 50% occupancy over the last 12 months. This has been due to looking after children with highly complex needs. This has required children to need higher staffing ratios to look after them safely and effectively.

An appropriate focus on training needs is ensuring that staff have the qualifications, skills and knowledge to provide highly effective care to children. Research-informed practice adds further benefit, such as the compassionate mind training.

Staff are exceptionally well supported. They said that they love working at the home and, importantly, that they feel they have a real impact in helping vulnerable children. They feel highly valued and included and can access a range of opportunities for development.

Monitoring systems are highly effective in ensuring that positive practice and any learning are identified, shared and acted on. Through monitoring processes,

children's needs are identified and plans revised to ensure that children receive the right level of care. Children's progress, experiences, wishes and views are well understood.

Managers lead by example. They set high standards and expectations for children's care and are excellent role models for staff. They model an effective, positive, inclusive and child-centred culture.

Managers and staff in all disciplines work effectively as one team, sharing information, good practice and learning. The registered manager leads a healthy, transparent and open culture where all staff at all levels can be professionally curious and can challenge.

Vulnerable children benefit significantly from a skilled and integrated workforce. The positive culture supports stability and consistency of learning and creates an environment that supports continuous improvement.

Complaints made by children are responded to quickly and appropriately and overseen by managers. The records are very child-centred, are non-judgemental and show that children are satisfied with the outcome.

The home's environment is of a high standard and child-centred. Children help to choose fixtures and decoration, which is reflected in the personalised touches throughout the home.

Staff and managers have highly effective relationships with stakeholders and professionals. Social workers speak positively about communication and collaboration. Families and social workers speak very highly about the excellent care that children receive.

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

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that the ethos of the home supports each child to learn. In particular, leaders should ensure that all curriculums are well planned, so that children develop substantial knowledge, skills and behaviours. This should include, where appropriate, accredited qualifications. ('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: SC022448

Provision sub-type: Secure unit

Registered provider: Nugent Care 2019

Registered provider address: Nugent, 99 Edge Lane, Edge Hill, Liverpool L7 2PE

Responsible individual: Suzanne Murray

Registered manager: Andrea Marshall

Inspectors

Shaun Common, His Majesty's Inspector, Social Care Lead Secure Estate

Thirza Smith, Social Care Inspector

Gary Turney, Social Care Inspector

Saul Pope, His Majesty's Inspector, Further Education and Skills

Louise Holland, Inspector, Care Quality Commission

Louise Redfern, Regulatory Inspection Manager

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

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