

1155757

Registered provider: Northumberland County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is operated and managed by a local authority. It provides care for up to three children who may have social and emotional difficulties.

The manager registered with Ofsted in May 2015.

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 May 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: 26 September 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
26/09/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
07/06/2022	Full	Good
25/01/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
10/09/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The home is furnished and decorated to a good standard, and the children have personalised bedrooms that are clean and tidy. There is a large outdoor space that is well cared for and has ample seating. The children are involved in the planting and upkeep of flowers and plants. This helps them to develop a sense of belonging.

Staff are nurturing and help children to develop trusting and meaningful relationships. Staff encourage the children to share their views and contribute to decisions made in the home. This helps the children to build trust and know that staff will listen to them and respond to their feedback. The children feel confident in turning to staff when they have issues or are in need of help, and they can identify who they would speak to.

Children have a positive experience of moving into the home. The move is well planned and at each child's pace. Staff take the time to get to know the child through a variety of planned visits and outings. Children receive a guide that sets out what they can expect on arrival at the home. This helps children to settle quickly into their new home.

Most children have good school attendance and are making progress. When children are not attending school, the staff work in partnership with professionals to find appropriate support for children. For one child, there has been no progress made to encourage their attendance in education. Staff have been consistent in continuing to help them to understand the importance of education and find a suitable provision.

Children are supported to live a healthy lifestyle and seek appropriate help through routine health appointments. Children sometimes refuse to attend appointments, but staff provide consistent encouragement. Staff have discussions to help the child understand the impact of not attending. As a result, children are up to date with their health appointments.

The children plan and enjoy a range of activities in the home and local area, such as bicycle riding, gardening and going on themed trips. This helps children to explore their interests and develop skills and hobbies.

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

Risk assessments are clear and outline the known concerns for children and the steps staff should take to reduce those risks. The risk assessments help staff to understand each child's vulnerabilities, and they are clear about what is needed to support children to be safer.

Staff are alert to bullying in the home. When incidents occur, they are quick to address them and are proactive in safeguarding the children. Staff support children through direct work to help them understand the impact of their actions on others in the home. Accurate records are kept so that the manager can maintain oversight and monitor when and how often bullying occurs. This has contributed to a significant reduction in the number of bullying incidents.

Staff support children to reflect on their behaviour and the choices they make. This approach is restorative in nature and helps the children take responsibility for their actions. Children are encouraged to make amends for actions that have impacted negatively on others. This teaches them to take responsibility for their actions.

Children rarely go missing from the home. When children do go missing, staff know what action to take. Staff are proactive in searching for children and assess when to contact the police, as detailed in each child's care plan. Staff make detailed records of the steps that they take to help children return home safely. This enables the manager to maintain oversight of practice and evaluate the effectiveness of the actions taken to safeguard the children.

There is a robust process in place to ensure that the people who work with children are checked and vetted before working in the home. New staff undertake a structured induction and benefit from ongoing training related to their role. This safer recruitment process means that those who are employed are assessed as suitable to work with children.

Bedrooms are fitted with door alarms that are used to monitor the children's movements following bedtime. This measure is not routinely reviewed to ensure it is still proportionate to safeguard the children. Consequently, children may be subjected to unnecessary surveillance.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is run efficiently by an experienced and enthusiastic manager. The manager and staff are committed to giving children opportunities to reach their full potential. The staff team feels well supported by the manager.

The manager ensures that all staff complete the required qualification within the relevant timescales. Staff also complete a programme of mandatory training and learning that is specific to the individual needs of children. This provides staff with the skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively and meet the needs of those in their care.

Team meetings take place regularly and are well attended by the staff. They are reflective in nature and provide a platform to explore and review children's progress. There is a strong focus on providing consistency in the care and support that children receive.

The manager has processes in place to monitor the development and progress of the home. The monitoring is effective in supporting the manager to maintain oversight of staff practice and assess where improvements may be needed. As a result, children continue to be given the opportunity to develop and make progress.

Staff attend regular team and case management meetings that help to ensure children are receiving consistent care. A clinical psychologist supports staff to assist their understanding of the children's needs. This also provides a safe space to discuss their practice. This means that staff can better understand their own emotional responses and how these can impact on the care they provide.

Supervision records do not reflect the discussions that have taken place. Additionally, not all records are signed and dated as an agreed account of those discussions. This hinders the manager's oversight of the progress and areas for development of their staff team.

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, 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
The registered person may only use devices for the monitoring or surveillance of children if— the monitoring or surveillance is for the purpose of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the child concerned, or other children; the monitoring or surveillance is no more intrusive than necessary, having regard to the child's need for privacy. (Regulation 24 (1)(a)(d))	30 June 2024

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that notes are recorded of the content and/or outcomes of supervision sessions, and they should ensure that both the person giving the supervision and staff member have a copy of the record. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.4)

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'.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 1155757

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Northumberland County Council

Registered provider address: County Hall, Morpeth NE61 2EF

Responsible individual: Adam Hall

Registered manager: Stephanie Scott

Inspector

Lisa Gordon, Social Care Inspector

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