

1233307

Registered provider: Newcastle City Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is operated by a local authority and provides care for up to four children who experience social and emotional difficulties.

At the time of this inspection, three children were living in the home. They were spoken to by the inspector.

Inspection dates: 25 and 26 June 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: 12 June 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12/06/2023	Full	Good
17/05/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
16/11/2021	Full	Good
17/02/2020	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children say that they feel safe and are happy. They enjoy stable relationships with those who care for them. One child said that moving into the home is the best thing that has ever happened to them and that they feel part of a family.

Children enjoy a range of activities. This includes celebrating special occasions, such as one child going star gazing for their birthday. The manager also identifies activities such as rafting through water rapids. This is funded creatively through charitable applications. This helps children to build their self-esteem and resilience, as well as their relationships with staff.

Children are well supported when they move into and on from the home. When it was necessary for one child to move out in an emergency, the manager allocated staff from the home to provide care until a permanent living arrangement was identified. This approach to ensuring continuity of care helps to keep children safe and make them feel cared about. Some children stay in touch with the staff and manager after they have moved on. This provides children with an additional support network.

The manager and staff support the children well with their education. They advocate to ensure that children's educational needs are kept under review and challenge professionals when progress is not being made. They are creative in their approach to engaging children with their learning. Staff have supported one child to engage with the Prince's Trust to enable them to develop new skills to help secure a place at college.

The interior of the home is in good condition. It is well decorated and furnished. However, the exterior of the home is not welcoming. For example, dirt and cobwebs can be seen around the front door, windows are particularly dirty, and there are lots of weeds growing in the largest area of the garden. Children say that they are not proud of the exterior of the home because of its appearance.

Children have access to a games room where they can play pool among other activities. This is opposite the kitchen, and although the room has a fire door, the windows are unable to be opened. Therefore, there is no means of escape in the event of a fire spreading outside of the room.

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

Staff deliver personalised care, using a therapeutic approach. This helps the children to make good progress. One member of staff, who cared for a child previously when they lived at a sister home, remarked on the progress that the child has made in this home. They said that the child demonstrates greater insight into their behaviour because of the trauma-informed approach that the staff apply. This has contributed towards a reduction in incidents for this child.

Staff understand the risks that the children face well. Risk assessments, safety plans and behaviour support plans are updated regularly. These documents provide staff with clear strategies on how best to support children when they are angry or upset. This has resulted in a reduction in incidents and in the frequency of staff calling the police for support.

When children go missing, there are effective plans in place to help keep them safe. Staff look for children and contact people who the children know to try to locate them. This helps staff to find children quickly so that they can return home safely.

When children make allegations or complaints, these are listened to and taken seriously. However, the manager does not follow the allegations policy on recording the investigations. Consequently, there is no record of the outcome or decision-making relating to concerns that children have raised.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager is determined and enthusiastic. He leads by example and is supported by an equally committed deputy manager. The impact of his positive behaviour is evidenced in the staff's standard of care and the stability of the team.

Children are cared for by a dedicated staff team. Each staff member brings a unique skill which contributes to the overall care that children receive. This includes outdoor activities, cooking and arts and crafts. The manager works with the staff's individual strengths and skills and helps them to further develop their practice. This is underpinned by a trauma-informed approach, which helps children to receive well-rounded care.

The manager implements a tracking system which provides measurable outcomes and allows him to maintain good oversight of the home. The manager constantly looks to improve processes in the home to enhance the way children's needs are met. For example, he introduced a revised approach to ensure that staff do not use police intervention when children cause damage to the home. This reduces the risk of children being criminalised.

The manager employs the expertise of the in-house therapy team well. When previously unknown needs or new risks emerge, he requests guidance from the therapy team to support staff in their practice. This enables them to provide an improved standard of care to children. Therapists have noted that the staff have grown in confidence and are now proactive in asking for support.

Staff speak positively of the support they receive, including regular supervision sessions that are reflective in nature. The manager has introduced a new approach to these sessions. He devises a safeguarding theme with his deputy manager and then discusses this with all staff in their supervision sessions. This helps to ensure that all staff are consistent in their approach.

The manager did not notify Ofsted of an allegation. Notifications of incidents are also not submitted within the required time frame. This prevents the regulator from reviewing the actions taken in a timely manner to keep children safe.

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
After consultation with the fire and rescue authority, the registered person must— take adequate precautions against the risk of fire, including the provision of suitable fire equipment in the children's home; provide adequate means of escape from the home in the event of fire; make arrangements for persons working at the home to receive suitable training in fire prevention; and ensure, by means of fire drills and practices at suitable intervals, that persons working at the home and, so far as reasonably practicable, children are aware of the procedure to be followed in case of fire. (Regulation 25 (1)(a)(b)(c)(d)) In particular, the laundry and games rooms should have a means of escape in the event of fire, and staff and children should know what this is.	1 August 2024
The registered person must prepare and implement a policy which— is intended to safeguard children accommodated in the children's home from abuse or neglect; and sets out the procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse or neglect. The procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse or neglect must, in particular— provide for records to be kept of an allegation of abuse or neglect, and the action taken in response;	1 August 2024

describe the measures which may be necessary to protect children following an allegation of abuse or neglect. (Regulation 34 (1)(a)(b) (2)(d)(e)) In particular, the registered person must have access to the organisation's allegations policy and ensure that it is followed.	
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there. A notification made under this regulation— must include details of— the matter; the other persons, bodies or organisations (if any) who or which have been notified; and any actions taken by the registered person as a result of the matter; must be made or confirmed in writing. (Regulation 40 (4)(c) (5)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(b)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that all notifiable incidents are reported to Ofsted within 24 hours of the incident happening.	1 August 2024

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that the home is maintained to a good standard. In particular, the registered person should ensure that the exterior of the property is clean so that it provides a welcoming feel and so that it encourages children to access all the outdoor areas of the home. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

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: 1233307

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered Provider: Newcastle City Council

Registered provider address: Newcastle Civic Centre, Barras Bridge, Newcastle upon Tyne, Tyne and Wear NE1 8QH

Responsible individual: Liz Spaven

Registered manager: Reinder Dam

Inspector

Julia Hagan, Social Care Inspector

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