

1252120

Registered provider: Paddock House Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned and managed by a private provider. It provides care for up to six children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

There were six children living at the home at the time of the inspection. The inspectors spoke to five of them during the inspection.

The registered manager post is vacant.

Inspection dates: 3 and 4 June 2025

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	inadequate
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	inadequate
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	inadequate
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There are serious and widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded. Inspectors found the care and experiences of children and young people are poor and they are not making progress.

Date of last inspection: 17 July 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
17/07/2024	Full	Good
07/06/2023	Full	Good
07/12/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
15/03/2022	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

There are significant concerns regarding the management team's decision-making and safeguarding practice, impacting on some children's sense of safety and experience of living in this home. When a serious incident occurred, details about it were minimised, preventing safeguarding professionals from having all the information needed to safeguard children. This has had an impact on the overall judgement for this home.

Care planning for children is poor. Before children move in, the management team does not consider the child's individual needs and vulnerabilities or whether they can live alongside the children already living in the home. Two of the children are friendly with each other. However, the other children are not helped to develop their relationships with one another. They have little to do with each other, preferring the company of the staff or to stay in their rooms.

Children's progress in education is variable. One child has completed their GCSE exams and is now in college. One child has a tutor for a few hours a week at the home, which is progress. However, for those refusing to go to school or further education, there is little evidence about how staff are supporting or encouraging them, limiting the children's options for the future.

Children's health needs are not always met. Most children vape, and some are not of the legal age to do so. There is no evidence about how staff help children understand the risks of smoking or vaping to enable them to make informed choices. One child is accessing support for their emotional well-being, and this is going well.

There are some items in the home environment that make it feel institutionalised, such as hot water signs over taps and paperwork on the walls of the living room. This detracts from the homely feel. Also, children do not have access to all the areas they need as the laundry door is locked, meaning they must ask staff to let them in to do their washing. This does not help to promote their independence.

The children spoken to said they like living in the home. Most have stability as they have been there for a long time and have trusting relationships with staff. Children will speak to staff when they have a problem, and staff respond. Also, staff ensure that children see family and friends, helping them keep connected with those people most important to them.

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

A child was left feeling scared after being threatened by an adult who lives close by. This person, who is related to the responsible individual, was able to come into the

home unchallenged by staff. A referral made to the local authority designated officer did not include the specific information about the alleged threat. The acting manager at the time and some staff were aware of the threat made to the child. However, staff withheld this information, meaning they did not follow safeguarding procedures. There has been no investigation by the management team into what the child alleged. This left the child feeling vulnerable and does not give confidence in the home's ability to safeguard children.

Staff do not consistently apply the house rules and consequences to all the children. This has left one child feeling unfairly treated. Some consequences used are punitive and not restorative, for example, children not being transported in the home's car for several days. When money is taken from children to pay towards breakages in the home, this is not recorded as a consequence, meaning there is no understanding about how many consequences are given to children or their rationale or impact.

When physical intervention occurs, management oversight is poor. Two incidents involving an acting manager were signed off by the manager themselves. This lack of independent scrutiny to assess that the use of physical intervention is proportionate and warranted to keep the child safe, risks poor practice going unchallenged. After a distressing event when police were called, there was no follow-up conversation with a child after the child had been physically held, meaning staff had no idea about the child's well-being or if the child wanted to make a complaint.

When children go missing from home, staff are clear about what they need to do to find them. However, records do not always detail efforts made by staff to locate children when they are missing from home. This prevents management oversight of staff practice, and it is unclear if staff are following missing-from-home protocols to help keep children safe.

Risk assessments are vague and do not accurately reflect the children's risks or what staff should do to keep children safe from harm. For example, one child was missing for several days. This was not reflected in their risk assessment even though that risk is high. There is no rationale about how the assessed level of risk is reached. Additionally, behaviour support plans are not individualised. Some children have the same information recorded for self-injurious behaviours, demonstrating a lack of consideration about what individual help children need to cope with difficult emotions.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

There has been no registered manager in post since September 2024. Various people have stepped in to help manage in the interim. This has led to a period of instability. There has been inconsistent decision-making, which has been confusing for children and staff. Some children said there have been too many changes at once, and this was overwhelming for them.

There has been a lack of effective support or influence from senior leaders in the running of the home. Poor decision-making has not always been adequately challenged. Twice-weekly meetings with managers have not provided them with the support or guidance needed. This has contributed to the poor leadership of the team.

Records are disorganised and increase the amount of recording staff complete, detracting time from their other care duties. Oversight from leaders and managers of the recording system is poor. There are gaps in recording that make it difficult to know what has happened for children or what staff have done. For example, during a serious incident with a child, the police were called. Information is missing in the record, preventing managers from evaluating the effectiveness of staff's practice.

Some staff have said they feel unable to challenge the leadership and management team's decision-making for fear of reprisals. This does not encourage open discussion and reflections on practice or give staff confidence to escalate concerns they may have about others working in the home.

Some staff have left suddenly, preventing children from having an appropriate ending with people they have developed close relationships with. There is a lack of understanding about how this impacts on the children.

There have been medication errors. A senior member of staff completed an investigation into the error made. However, they were on shift with colleagues the same day the error occurred. This prevented independent oversight and evaluation of the situation. There was no impact on children but this demonstrates poor process when short falls in staff practice are found.

When there have been issues with staff practice, there is lack of information about how decisions are reached. It is impossible to see whether the disciplinary policy is followed or whether staff have been able to challenge outcomes. Although supervisions are happening, any identified learning is not progressed with staff.

Staff have continued to work hard through a difficult, unsettling time. The feedback from the professionals around the children continues to be positive.

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 protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(v)(vii)) In Particular, the registered person must ensure that: policies and procedures provide staff and managers with the knowledge and guidance to safeguard children systems are in place so that leaders and staff respond to allegations in a way that prioritises children's safety and well-being those external to the home have full information to be able to scrutinise the arrangements to safeguard children risk assessments and children's plans must reflect children's risks and be reviewed and updated as risks change.	28 July 2025
*The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that—	28 July 2025

helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— 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; understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home; demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on— feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(f)(g)(ii)) In Particular, the registered person must ensure that: policies and procedures are developed, understood and followed by all working at the home, to address the potential harm of closed cultures policies must take account of family relationships, and the proximity of staff members’ living accommodation relevant professionals in the children’s lives have access to policies and procedures to address the potential harm of closed cultures they develop monitoring and review systems to enable them to have an accurate understanding of how the home is operating, including the quality of children’s experiences staff have the skills to complete accurate records that reflect children’s care.	
The care planning standard is that children—	29 August 2025

receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home's statement of purpose. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a))	
The registered person must prepare and implement a policy ("the behaviour management policy") which sets out— how appropriate behaviour is to be promoted in the children's home; and the measures of control, discipline and restraint which may be used in relation to children in the home. The registered person must ensure that— within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person")— has spoken to the user about the measure; and has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (1)(a)(b) (3)(b)(i)(ii)(c))	29 August 2025
The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff—	29 August 2025

support each child's learning and development, including helping the child to develop independent study skills and, where appropriate, helping the child to complete independent study; promote opportunities for each child to learn informally; help each child who is above compulsory school age to participate in further education, training or employment and to prepare for future care, education or employment; help each child to attend education or training in accordance with the expectations in the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(ii)(v)(ix)(x))	
The health and well-being standard is that— the health and well-being needs of children are met; children receive advice, services and support in relation to their health and well-being; and children are helped to lead healthy lifestyles. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff help each child to— achieve the health and well-being outcomes that are recorded in the child's relevant plans; understand and develop skills to promote the child's well-being. (Regulation 10 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(iv))	29 August 2025
The registered provider must appoint a person to manage the children's home if— there is no registered manager in respect of the home; and (Regulation 27 (1)(a))	29 August 2025

*These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the home is a nurturing and supportive environment that meets the needs of their children. The registered person must

comply with relevant health and safety legislations. However, in doing so, they should seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than 'institutional' impression. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

- The registered person should ensure that children are able to access all shared areas of their home. This includes laundry facilities, unless there are specific reasons why this would not meet a child's needs. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.10)
- The registered person should ensure that children are supported to understand how to build friendships with other children living in the home. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 38, paragraph 8.7)

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: 1252120

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: B3 Kingfisher House, Team Valley, Gateshead NE11 0JQ

Responsible individual: Susan Lincoln

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Miriam Dolman, Social Care Inspector
Mark Cryer, Social Care Inspector

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