

1272220

Registered provider: Tees-Valley Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is operated by a private provider. It provides care for up to three children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

The manager registered with Ofsted in August 2022.

Three children were living in the home at the time of the visit. The inspector spoke to two of the children.

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 July 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/or widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted and/or safeguarded and the care and experiences of children and young people are poor and they are not making progress.

Date of last inspection: 3 September 2024

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
03/09/2024	Full	Requires improvement to be good
13/04/2023	Full	Good
25/07/2022	Full	Good
05/01/2022	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

The overall experiences and progress judgement is impacted by the significant shortfalls identified in help and protect and leadership and management. There are serious failures that mean children are not protected and their welfare is not safeguarded. This impacts on children's progress and their experience of living in the home.

When children are moving into the home, the manager does not consider the child's individual needs and vulnerabilities and if the staff can meet these needs. The manager does not consider the impact that a child moving into the home may have on those who are already living there. Furthermore, this poor care planning has resulted in children experiencing a lot of change, which impacts on their sense of stability.

Staff support children with their education in a variety of ways due to the children's significant vulnerabilities. This includes accessing tutors and specialist provisions that are designed to meet the children's individual needs. This means that children can access some formal education while staff support them with their emotional well-being.

Staff do not ensure that the home is kept in a good state of repair or that redecoration takes place following any changes. This means that some areas of the property do not reflect a homely environment for the children. The manager has not been proactive in identifying these actions, but is responding to the recommendations of the independent visitor.

Children build trusting relationships with core staff. Staff use social stories to help children who struggle to communicate. Children spoken to say that they feel able to talk to staff, with one child saying that the staff really care about them.

When children move on from the home, staff support them to have positive endings. Staff have supported one child with a planned transition, helping them to gain the skills to manage independently. Following the child moving out, staff have provided an ongoing package of care for a period to help them with their emotional well-being and building important relationships in the community.

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

Children are at risk due to self-injurious behaviours and staff do not take the necessary action to keep them safe. Risk assessments and court orders clearly set out what is required to maintain a safe environment for children. However, the manager does not ensure that staff carry out their responsibilities effectively. For example, one child who is at risk of ingesting hazardous objects was provided with a restricted item by staff. This resulted in the child requiring hospital treatment.

Staff do not take effective action to ensure that children receive the care they need following incidents. For example, when a child was found using a ligature to harm themselves, staff did not seek medical advice or make any checks for injuries. This does not provide assurances that children are appropriately safeguarded when they are experiencing negative thoughts and feelings. Furthermore, staff are not proactive in removing items that children use to harm themselves. This leaves children at an increased risk of harm.

Staff use restraint and restrictive measures to keep children safe. Staff attempt to de-escalate situations prior to using these measures, which can include using chemical restraint to help children regulate their emotions. When physical restraint is used, children are not always spoken to following an incident. This does not provide children with an opportunity to reflect on the intervention and share their views about the actions that staff have taken.

Staff did not follow the organisation's whistle-blowing policy when a member of staff spoke to a child in an inappropriate way. The manager became aware of the incident when the child raised an allegation about comments that had been made to them by the staff member. This impacted on the child's emotional well-being, who said that they felt mocked by the staff member. Furthermore, it does not assure the manager that staff will act in line with the home's policies to safeguard children effectively.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

The manager does not have effective oversight of staff practice or the experiences of children living in the home. Consequently, the children are not protected effectively, and some children have suffered harm.

Leaders and managers do not always consider the staffing capacity of the home in meeting the needs of children moving in. A child was admitted to the home without there being enough staff to provide support to the child in line with their plan. Consequently, a number of new staff were employed to work in the home. However, this means that there is now a high percentage of staff without the necessary skills, qualification or experience to meet the needs of children. The manager has raised this issue with leaders and managers. However, leaders have not taken effective action to address this shortfall. This lack of experience in the staff team impacts on their ability to provide safe and consistent care to children.

Staff do not receive supervision in line with the organisation's policy. For example, new staff should receive supervision fortnightly, but this is not taking place regularly. Consequently, the manager is without sufficient oversight of staff's progress, any issues with staff practice or what their learning needs might be. This increases the risks to children and also leaves staff vulnerable in their new role.

Leaders and managers do not manage complaints or allegations raised by children appropriately. One complaint from a child was not fully investigated by the manager and

others involved were not spoken to. The manager recorded an allegation against a member of staff as a complaint and therefore did not address the allegation appropriately. This does not provide assurances that allegations are managed safely, or the children are protected from ongoing risk of harm.

The manager does not keep a record of the safer recruitments checks made for new staff. This includes there being no evidence of references being verified or information to show the individual's suitability for the role. This has been identified by the responsible individual and new documentation has been implemented.

The manager does not notify Ofsted of all events that they consider to be serious, for example when children make allegations against staff working in the home. This prevents Ofsted from maintaining oversight of how the home responds to safeguarding concerns.

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person 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 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— have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies; that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm; that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(iii)(vi)(vii)(b)(d))	31 August 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— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—	31 August 2025

ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child; 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)(c)(d)(f)(g)(ii))	
The care planning standard is that children— 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. that arrangements are in place to— ensure the effective induction of each child into the home. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(i)) In particular, that the home is able to meet the needs of each child effectively with sufficient staffing in place.	4 September 2025

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 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 (3)(b)(i)(c))	4 September 2025
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; and there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(c)(e))	4 September 2025

* These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the children's home is a nurturing and supportive environment that meets the needs of their children and is a homely, domestic environment. In particular, maintenance to the home must be actioned in a timely manner. ('The Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should maintain good employment practice. They must ensure that recruitment of staff safeguards children and minimises potential risks to them. ('The Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)

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: 1272220

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Tees-Valley Care Limited

Registered provider address: Tees-Valley Care, PO Box 547, Middlesbrough TS1 9HG

Responsible individual: Ann-Marie Henderson

Registered manager: Helen Prescott

Inspector

Natalie Clark, Social Care Inspector

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