

2565716

Middlesbrough Borough Council

Monitoring visit

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned and operated by a local authority. It is registered to provide care for up to six children who may have social, emotional or mental health difficulties. The home cares for children who cannot live with their families or who need a short break to remain in their current placement. Children might stay for short or long periods of time. The home also offers outreach services to children who live with their family or in other placements.

The suitably qualified and experienced manager was registered with Ofsted in September 2020, when the home opened.

Inspection date: 18 February 2021

This monitoring visit

The monitoring visit was carried out to investigate potential breaches of regulation. This included whether staff can manage behaviour without help from the police. The visit also considered whether staff build effective relationships with children who are in short-term placements. Due to the restrictions in place relating to the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic, this monitoring visit combined both on- and off-site activities. The visit to the home included speaking to staff and children. The review of documents and telephone calls took place off site.

This home was registered in September 2020. It has not yet been inspected by Ofsted. Four children were living in the home at the time of the visit. Although several staff and one child tested positive for COVID-19 at the beginning of 2021, children and staff are currently well. Several clinicians and other staff are employed at the home, including a speech and language therapist and a psychologist. They, and other personnel, support the care team to look after children.

Children quickly build positive, trusting relationships with staff. Many children who live in the home have previously met staff through outreach work. This helps them to feel comfortable when they move in to the home. Children say that they value the efforts that staff make to learn about their experiences and the issues that matter to

them the most. As a result, children begin to respond positively to the care that they receive.

Children become safer while living in this home. For some, this means a reduction in self-harming behaviour. Other children go missing from home less often. Clinicians help staff to have effective conversations with children about their vulnerabilities. Children begin to respond well, because they trust that their carers want the best for them. For some children, this is significant progress in a relatively short period of time.

Children are involved in their own care planning. For example, one child attends weekly care team meetings to provide their views about their progress. Professionals amend care plans, when this can be done safely, in line with children's wishes and feelings. Children know that they have been listened to and this helps them to engage in their plans.

Physical intervention is used as a last resort in this home. One child confirmed this, saying that it is 'much better' than their previous experiences. Staff complete training to improve their skills in understanding and responding to children's behaviour. The voice of the child is included in written records and staff reflect on incidents to identify any learning. This approach to physical restraint empowers children and helps staff to manage challenges effectively.

On a small number of occasions, staff have called the police to help manage behaviour. When this happens, managers help staff to reflect on their actions and the impact on children. Children should not be exposed to police involvement needlessly. When this occurs, it diminishes the effectiveness of the staff team.

Monitoring by managers is effective. Where gaps in practice are identified, the registered manager takes action quickly. This might include capability procedures or new training events. Managers invite clinicians to provide oversight of some processes. This helps to strengthen staff knowledge and skills. As a result, staff develop their ability to understand and meet the needs of children.

On one occasion, documentation for a missing episode did not contain important information. The resulting record was misleading. These documents are important aspects of the child's experience. The registered manager accepts the shortfall.

Recent inspection history

Not previously inspected.

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

Recommendations

- The registered provider should ensure that staff do not use the police to manage children's behaviour if that behaviour would not lead to police involvement if it occurred in a family home. ('Guide to the children's home regulations including the quality standards', page 47, paragraph 9.40)
- The registered provider should ensure that staff understand the importance of careful, objective, and clear recording. Staff must make sure that written records accurately reflect what has happened, in a way that is helpful to the child. ('Guide to the children's home regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this visit was to investigate potential breaches of regulation.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 2565716

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Middlesbrough Borough Council

Registered provider address: Middlesbrough House, 50 Corporation Road,
Middlesbrough TS1 2RH

Responsible individual: Paul Rudd

Registered manager: Robert Hamer

Inspectors

Jane Titley, Social Care Inspector
Noel Cooper, Social Care Inspector

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