

2565716

Registered provider: Middlesbrough Borough Council

Full inspection

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 placements. Children might stay for short or long periods of time. The home also offers outreach services to children who live with their families or in other placements.

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

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

We last visited this setting on 18 February 2021 to carry out a monitoring visit. The report is published on our website.

Inspection dates: 19 to 20 October 2021

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: not applicable

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Not previously inspected.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The quality of relationships that staff build with children is a priority in this home. Children move in to the home with a variety of background experiences. They have different expectations about how long they will live there. Staff make significant efforts to get to know all children and to learn about what matters to them most. As a result, children quickly begin to trust staff and make progress from their starting points.

Children benefit from specialist help and support provided in the home. These professionals work alongside residential staff so that there is no delay in children accessing the services they need. In addition, there is no limit on the amount of help and support that children can request. This helps them to make and sustain progress. Children speak very highly of this input.

Children's educational needs are prioritised. Staff work with specialists within the home to understand barriers to learning. Targeted support is provided to enable children to return to formal education. Staff also work with professionals, such as the virtual school head, to ensure the correct school is identified. As well as helping their academic attainment, children's social and emotional development improves. For some children, their educational progress is remarkable.

Children's physical health needs are met. Some children have complex medical histories. Staff work closely with medical professionals who contribute to children's care planning. This helps staff to provide highly effective care to very vulnerable children. For one child, this has had a significant impact on their overall health and well-being.

Staff prioritise seeking children's views about the home. Regular meetings take place where children talk about activities, menus, and other day-to-day matters. Children are also encouraged to contribute to their care planning. Some children attend their care team meetings to provide their views directly. When children are involved in decision-making, it increases the likelihood of plans being effective. It also gives children a compelling message that their voice is important. This is essential for their sense of self-worth.

Children are helped to keep in touch with friends and family. Staff reach out to those who are important to children to enable these links to be maintained. This approach works well and means that children can safely spend time with members of their family. This is not only good for their sense of identity, but it also reduces the likelihood of some children going missing.

Transitions into and from the home are well managed. Risk assessments help leaders to understand whether staff can meet a child's needs alongside children already living in the home. When children move in, residential and specialist staff

talk to children about the issues that are most important to them. This information is shared with the wider staff team. This starting point helps staff and children to build relationships, which encourages most children to settle quickly.

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

Children become safer as a result of living in this home. Staff and other specialists talk to children about their vulnerabilities. This helps them to understand their risks. Over time, children become less likely to go missing from the home. The number and severity of significant incidents reduces. Children who are subject to high levels of supervision can enjoy more freedom. For some children, their progress is significant.

Staff ensure that the physical environment helps to keep children safe. Care plans for some children require locks on doors and windows to be used. Decisions to use these restrictions are made only to safeguard children who are the most vulnerable. There is no intention to use such barriers in the long term. However, the plans to review their use are not set out clearly for staff and children to understand.

Individualised risk assessments are used by all staff, including specialists. Risk assessments are reviewed and updated regularly. This means that information within the assessments is always relevant. Staff know that these assessments contain valuable information and refer to them daily. The assessments mean that staff are consistent in how they help children to become safer.

Staff prepare individualised missing-from-home risk assessments. Staff follow relevant protocols, including going out to search for children. Police representatives work in the home and they provide staff with information about localised concerns. This approach makes a significant difference to the likelihood of children going missing. Knowing that staff make stringent efforts to find them, tells children how much staff care about them.

Children's behaviours become increasingly settled within the home. Residential and specialist staff prepare positive behaviour support plans. These plans help staff to recognise triggers for children and provide strategies to help children to become calm. The reduction in the number of incidents demonstrates that these plans are effective. For some children, this reduction is notable.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

Leaders have a clear vision for the service. They are passionate about and committed to children. Leaders have very high expectations for what children can achieve and for the way in which staff will perform. They are visible in the home and lead from the front. As a result, a culture of high aspiration is being embedded in the home.

Monitoring that is undertaken by leaders is exceptional. For example, all incident reports are reviewed by residential managers and specialist staff. Different aspects

of an incident are considered. This might include a child's understanding of staff expectations or the ongoing impact of trauma. Alternative ways for staff to respond to children are identified when necessary. This leads to improved practice and better outcomes for children.

The information that is shared between staff in handover meetings is highly effective. Communication is clear and is child centered. Managers and specialist staff attend these meetings. They provide insight and strategies for staff to use. These discussions mean that the ethos of the service is embedded daily. This helps staff to be consistent in their practice, which helps and reassures children.

The registered manager understands the home's areas for development. For example, in response to a complaint, changes have been made to the induction process for new staff. Additionally, the registered manager has changed the recruitment processes to address an issue with staff turnover. The registered manager hopes that this will strengthen the resilience of staff who care for children. It is too soon to assess the effectiveness of these new strategies.

Staff feel supported by leaders and managers. Staff view them as being both knowledgeable and approachable. Staff have regular individual, clinical and group supervision. Staff are encouraged to reflect on their practice, so that they become more effective in how they meet the needs of children. This means that children are being looked after by staff who are constantly being helped to develop in their roles.

Staff are provided with a wide range of training. Learning has continued during the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, specialists provide structured and informal coaching that is pertinent to the children in the home. The registered manager researches innovative ways of working. One such model is becoming embedded in the home. Analysis of outcomes indicates that it is having a positive impact on children. Children are being cared for by staff who are being equipped with the skills they need to perform well.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that any decisions to limit a child's access to any area of the home and any changes to the physical environment of the home, are only made to keep a child safe. All decisions should be informed by an assessment of the child's needs, be properly recorded, and be kept under regular review. ('Guide to the children's home regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.10)

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: 2565716

Provision sub-type: Children's home

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

Responsible individual: Paul Rudd

Registered manager: Robert Hamer

Inspector

Jane Titley, Social Care Inspector

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