

2565716

Registered provider: Middlesbrough Borough Council

Assurance inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned and managed by a local authority. It provides care for up to six children who may have emotional and/or social difficulties.

At the time of the inspection, the home was providing care for five children.

The home currently does not have a registered manager. A new manager has been in post since June 2023 and has made an application to become the registered manager.

Inspection date: 24 October 2023

Date of last inspection: 4 September 2023

Judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Information about this inspection

At this inspection, the inspector evaluated:

- the care of children
- the safety of children
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers.

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children, using the social care common inspection framework. This assurance 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'.

Outcome from the inspection

The assurance inspection took place to look at specific concerns that were notified to Ofsted following a significant bullying incident in the home. Inspectors evaluated how children were affected as well as the actions of leaders and staff.

We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns about the care or protection of children at this assurance inspection.

Findings from the inspection

Bullying in the home was raised as a concern at the last full inspection. The manager and senior leaders took action to address this concern, including their training of all staff focusing on the different types of bullying, the impact of bullying on children's physical and emotional well-being, as well as expectations of staff on how to manage any bullying incidents. Individual and group sessions have also been completed with all the children living in the home with a plan for these to continue.

Following a period of stability, a serious bullying incident took place in the home where one child was targeted by three other children over a two-hour period. While the staff's actions ensured the physical safety of the child, the verbal bullying and taunting resulted in the child becoming extremely distressed and causing damage to the home.

Decisive action was taken by senior leaders to ensure the immediate safety of the child who was being bullied by moving them out of the home for a maximum of 28 days. Staff from the home continue to care for the child to ensure consistency of care and to maintain the long-standing relationships with staff. Ongoing support, including psychological support, is being provided to the child.

Clear care planning and contingency planning is in place as the manager and senior leaders recognise that the child cannot return to the home without some changes in which children are currently living in the home. The manager has been proactive in working with the children's social workers to identify suitable long-term homes for the children.

Significant progress has been made to make the home a welcoming and homely environment for the children to live in, including the purchase of soft furnishings. Photos of the children are now present throughout the home. The outdoor space has been tidied and garden furniture purchased, which allows the children to spend time outside with each other and the staff. This promotes the children's identity and sense of belonging.

Complaints forms along with addressed envelopes are now readily available in the home for the children to access. This means that children can raise a complaint confidentially should they wish to.

All smoke alarms are now working in both parts of the home. Should a fire occur in the home, staff and children would now be alerted to this in the other part of the home, thus keeping staff and children safe.

Staff no longer lock the kitchen door on an evening. This means that children now have access to all areas of the home.

Since the last inspection, safeguarding incidents have been appropriately notified to the regulator without delay. This allows Ofsted to review the incidents and take appropriate steps to ensure the safety and well-being of the children.

The requirements previously issued under regulations 11 and 12 were not met so are restated.

The requirements previously issued under regulations 13, 35 and 46 were not reviewed during this visit. For this reason, they are restated.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
04/09/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
14/02/2023	Full	Good
19/10/2021	Full	Good

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(s) must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— encourage each child to take responsibility for the child's behaviour, in accordance with the child's age and understanding; help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone; communicate to each child expectations about the child's behaviour and ensure that the child understands those expectations in accordance with the child's age and understanding; help each child to develop the understanding and skills to recognise or withdraw from a damaging, exploitative or harmful relationship; strive to gain each child's respect and trust; understand how children's previous experiences and present emotions can be communicated through behaviour and have the competence and skills to interpret these and develop positive relationships with children; are provided with supervision and support to enable them to understand and manage their own feelings and responses to	24 December 2023

the behaviour and emotions of children, and to help children to do the same; de-escalate confrontations with or between children, or potentially violent behaviour by children; understand and communicate to children that bullying is unacceptable; and have the skills to recognise incidents or indications of bullying and how to deal with them; and that each child is encouraged to build and maintain positive relationships with others. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(iii)(iv)(v)(vii)(viii)(ix)(x)(xi)(xii)(xiii)(b))	
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; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; 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; that the effectiveness of the home’s child protection policies is monitored regularly. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(iii)(v)(vii)(e)) This specifically relates to dynamic risk assessments and safety plans.	24 December 2023
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children’s home that—	24 December 2023

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; ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; 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; and use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(c)(g)(ii)(h))	
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 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes— the date, time and location of the use of the measure; a description of the measure and its duration; details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure; the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and	24 December 2023

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)(a)(ii)(iv)(v)(vii)(b)(i)(ii)(c)) This specifically relates to physical intervention records. This also specifically relates to consequence records.	
The registered person must review the appropriateness and suitability of the location of the premises used for the purposes of the children’s home at least once in each calendar year taking into account the requirement in regulation 12(2)(c) (the protection of children standard). When conducting the review, the registered person must consult, and take into account the views of, each relevant person. (Regulation 46 (1) (2))	24 December 2023

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that when a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from the home without permission, the responsible local authority provides an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. Homes should take account of information provided by such interviews when assessing risks and putting arrangements in place to protect each child. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 45, paragraph 9.30)
- The registered person should ensure that staff are familiar with the home’s policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. Staff should record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way that will be helpful to the child. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 62, paragraph 14.4)

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: Robert Hamer

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Paula Shepherd, Social Care Inspector

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