

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 experience social and emotional difficulties.

At the time of the inspection, there were three children living in the home.

The manager registered with Ofsted in December 2023.

Inspection date: 29 October 2024

Date of last inspection: 23 April 2024

Judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: not applicable

Information about this inspection

At these inspections, 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'.

Findings from the inspection

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

Children have experienced poor transition planning when moving into or on from the home. Leaders and managers responded to escalations in the children's behaviours by moving them to alternative, temporary accommodation. One child was moved from the home the day after visiting a new placement, with no transition planning to make space for a new child. Leaders and managers are aware of this and have implemented changes in practice, which include a robust assessment of children's needs. This is helping children to feel included in their plans.

Children have had access to illegal substances contained in vapes. The actions of some staff have not been effective in preventing children from obtaining these substances, and this has led to disciplinary action being taken. Staff have received training in how to respond should a child require emergency treatment as a result of their substance misuse. This allowed staff to take the correct action when a child was found in an unresponsive state. These actions saved the life of this child.

Children have access to support and advice from experienced staff who were previously employed by substance misuse services. This has been effective in supporting children to stop using substances. Consequently, there have been no incidents in the last three months.

The staff are developing good relationships with the children. Key-work discussions take place regularly to talk about important issues or give support during difficult times. This work shows that children are accepting of and benefiting from adult support.

Staff are supporting children to increase their school attendance and engagement with their studies. One child has completed their exams and is making good progress at college. Children who experience difficulties are supported by staff, who work with professionals to find solutions that motivate and encourage children to re-engage. This support shows children that their education is a priority for staff.

Staff regularly engage children in activities that they enjoy. These include attending the gym, boxing training and socialising with friends. Children take part in activities with their peers on visits to theme parks, cultural events and local football games. The group activities are supporting positive relationships and shared experiences for the children.

Staff receive alerts each time children's bedroom doors are opened. There are no assessments in place to demonstrate the need for such restrictions to each child's privacy. As a result, the use of these alarms is not regularly reviewed to ensure they are appropriate.

When allegations are made, senior leaders act quickly to keep children safe, and inform the appropriate agencies when thresholds are met. If appropriate, investigations take place, in a timely manner, and points for improvement are identified. Reflective learning aims to address any concerns, and plans are developed to improve practice and keep children safer.

Staff have been unable to prevent children in the community from entering the home. There have been incidents where staff and children living in the home have been threatened and police have had to be called. This issue has been ongoing, and staff have not been able to ensure the safety of the children.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
23/04/2024	Full	Requires improvement to be good
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(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— take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(vi))	10 December 2024
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; manage and review the placement of each child in the home; and plan for, and help, each child to prepare to leave the home or to move into adult care in a way that is consistent with	10 December 2024

arrangements agreed with the child's placing authority. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(i)(ii)(iii))	
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The registered person may only— employ an individual to work at the children's home; or if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home, if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). The requirements are that— full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3)(d)) This requirement has been reissued from the last inspection.	10 December 2024

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the use of bedroom door alarms is only to support the safeguarding and well-being of children. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards' page 16, paragraph 3.16)

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 2565716

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Middlesbrough Borough Council

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

Responsible individual: post vacant

Registered manager: Jade Pybus

Inspector

Lee Riley, Social Care Inspector

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