

2570947

Registered provider: Gateshead Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The 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, four children were living in the home. The inspector spoke with two of the children.

The manager registered with Ofsted in November 2024.

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 May 2025

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 30 July 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
30/07/2024	Full	Good
13/06/2023	Full	Good
07/07/2022	Full	Good
23/08/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Some children have made good progress from their starting point. For example, one child's progress with their behaviour has been recognised by education staff and a parent. When discussing the child's progress, one parent said, 'Since being there, there have been massive changes for [name of child]. I couldn't ask for more, they are doing brilliantly.' Other children's progress is less straightforward, with staff managing risks in the community. They work exceptionally hard to meet the children's complex emotional and behavioural needs.

Children live in the home for a long time, which provides them with stability. The staff and managers have a thorough understanding of each child's background, the trauma that they have faced and the impact this has on them. Staff provide children with highly personalised care and a sense of belonging and strive to develop trusting relationships with each child. Children say that they can speak to staff about any worries and speak fondly of memories made with staff from holidays and enjoyable experiences.

Most children attend education and make progress in line with their presenting needs. Staff celebrate achievements for each child, for example one child re-engaging with attending school and another child starting an apprenticeship. The manager provides appropriate challenge when education plans need to change, so children receive the help they need.

Staff help children to develop their independence skills in line with their age and maturity. Children speak of staff enabling them to develop routines and complete tasks. Staff and the manager promote children taking age-appropriate risks to further develop the children's skills. One child said, 'Staff trust me, and I appreciate this.'

Daily recordings completed by staff give children a clear account about what their day has been like. This ensures that important details, such as birthday celebrations, are remembered. Staff complete 'All about me' profiles for each child. They give a detailed description of what is important to children. Throughout all documentation, language that cares is embedded, ensuring that the documented account of the children's lives enhances their ability to look back on their time living at the home.

Risks for one child in the community have increased. The group dynamics in the home have changed, with some children having worries in response to unsafe behaviours. Staff work tenaciously to engage all children in discussions about their feelings and offer reassurance. This enables children to have their feelings validated. Furthermore, group discussions take place with the children to address some of the issues to help children feel supported.

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

The risks for some children are extremely high and related to criminality and unsafe behaviour in the community. Staff understand the children's highly complex risks and work closely with safeguarding professionals, including the police, to manage these risks. The manager leads by example. She ensures that the children's safety plans are kept under review and are followed by staff effectively.

The manager has strong safeguarding knowledge. She completes mapping exercises of one child's associates and people of concern. Furthermore, the manager ensures that essential referrals are made to safeguarding agencies, for example to the national referral mechanism. This supports effective information-sharing between safeguarding agencies.

The group dynamics in the home are carefully considered. The manager completes group-living risk assessments to inform decision-making as to whether the home is the right environment to support some of the children. The manager puts the needs of all children at the forefront of decision-making, given the significant risks identified for some children.

Staff engage children in discussions about risk and any worries, providing children with advice and guidance. Children feel safe sharing concerns due to the positive relationships they have with the adults who care for them, enabling staff to act on safeguarding concerns. One professional said, 'They are a very nurturing team. They try to link in with children any way they can. They understand [name of child's] background and why [name of child] displays the behaviours they do. There is no blame. Each day is new. [Name of child] has a lot of respect for the staff as a result.'

Significant incidents occur. However, they are managed effectively. Staff do what they can to de-escalate situations before needing to hold children or contacting the police. Following incidents, staff or the manager engage children in discussions to support them to share their feelings and learn from incidents. Furthermore, the managers provide emotional support to staff involved to help them cope with the impact of managing challenging incidents.

There is a proactive response when children are missing from the home. Staff do not waste time and actively look for children. The manager's oversight of each incident scrutinises the event to keep the level of risk under review so staff's practice remains dynamic to each child's needs.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

Staff hold the manager and deputy managers in very high regard. Staff feel valued, listened to and included in decision-making about the children. Staff recognise the significant impact the manager has made in the home since taking over. One member of staff said, 'There was some anxieties, but the changes [name of manager] have made are incredible.'

There is an extremely positive working culture in the home. The manager leads by example and communicates to the staff team her high aspirations for the children. Supported by two deputy managers, collectively they provide excellent leadership to staff, especially during difficult times. They focus on staff's well-being alongside the children's. Staff say that they feel connected as a team. This provides children with consistent levels of care even in the most challenging of times.

The manager tenaciously advocates on behalf of the children to ensure that their views are listened to and acted on. This has helped one child's complaint to be escalated to the senior children's rights officer to consider. The manager strongly challenges shortfalls in other professionals' practice, as well as escalating concerns in the best interests of the children. The manager persistently shares her views and decision-making with senior leaders.

The manager strives to promote service improvement. The manager has driven forward a business case to ensure that this home has access to a car to meet the children's needs. Furthermore, she facilitates a partnership working group with other local authority homes, private children's home providers and commissioning, to share good practice and discuss aspects regarding the wider social care sector.

Staff receive regular practice-related supervision and have open discussions in team meetings that focus on the needs of each child. Reflective discussions help staff to learn from incidents or adapt ways of working in response to the children's changing needs and risks. Strong and aspirational leadership ensures that staff benefit from accessing a range of training linked to the children's individual needs. This helps staff undertake their roles to a very high standard.

The manager has exceptional oversight of the home. She is aware of the home's strengths and areas for continuous development. Comprehensive monitoring systems identify areas of need and track patterns from incidents to adapt strategies to care. In turn, this ensures that staff's practice remains responsive.

No requirements or recommendations have been made following this inspection.

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: 2570947

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Gateshead Council

Registered provider address: Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Council, Civic Centre, Regent Street, Gateshead NE8 1HH

Responsible individual: Lesley Thompson

Registered manager: Emma Lewis

Inspector

Jess Elliott, Social Care Inspector

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