

2596897

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 three children with social and emotional difficulties.

The manager registered with Ofsted in December 2020.

At the time of the inspection, three children were living in the home. The inspector spoke briefly to one child.

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 December 2023

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	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 28 July 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
28/07/2022	Full	Good
17/08/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Two of the children have lived in the home for nearly three years. This gives them stability and helps children to form relationships with staff. Staff know the children well. The well-being of the children is at the centre of staff practice, and staff treat children with dignity and respect. A child who used to live in the home commented to a professional that staff never gave up on them, no matter what they did.

There has been progress for children going to school and college. One child was refusing school and now manages two or three days a week. Staff advocate for children. For example, when children struggle in school, the staff ask for individualised support. Recently, the manager and staff have asked a school for a temporary reduced timetable to encourage a child to return to education more quickly and to help them feel less overwhelmed.

There are some days when children refuse to go to school. On these days, children spend significant periods of time in their bedrooms. Although staff check on them, they do not always encourage other learning opportunities.

A child who moved out this year was well supported by staff to learn to cook, clean and budget. The child could remain at the home for a few weeks longer after there was a delay in their new home being ready. This avoided an unnecessary move into temporary accommodation. Furthermore, staff continue to be an important part of this child's network, helping them to cope with significant life events such as a bereavement.

Children attend important health appointments, including those sessions which provide them with emotional support. One child attends all their appointments after previously refusing to go. Having access to the medical and emotional care that they need makes sure that children stay healthy.

The views of the children are important. There are lots of opportunities for children to share their views through chats and informal discussions. All the children express what they want and how they feel.

The staff support the children to maintain their important relationships with others. Some children stay overnight with family or friends, ensuring that those emotional bonds continue. Families are also welcome to come to the home and have tea. One parent commented, 'Although we all sit together [to eat dinner with staff], it feels like a family.' This allows staff to also get to know the families well.

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

Children have individualised risk assessments. These contain important information for staff, such as behaviours that children are likely to exhibit at times of crisis. The

children's plans are easy to follow and understand, especially the level and evaluation of risk. The clear guidance helps staff to consistently support the children.

The issues that the children are coping with are well known to staff. Staff allow children to take age-appropriate and calculated risks. Staff provide additional support during these times, such as going into the community to do extra welfare checks if children are suspected of using illegal substances. Additionally, staff sometimes complete bedroom searches. Children are provided with information about why this action is necessary. These steps by staff help to keep children safer.

Staff praise children or give reinforcements such as incentives for their positive behaviour. Expectations for children are clear and staff encourage them to do the right thing. Staff communicate to children and use their positive relationships so that the use of consequences is rare.

Staff follow a detailed missing from care protocol to find children when they go missing to help with their swift return. Staff welcome children home in a kind, friendly manner to try and deter further absences from the home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

The information about children is held in both an electronic and paper file system. This makes it difficult to locate the information, which is held in various places. For example, daily records are in two different formats. This means that staff currently duplicate records, and the information is not always the same. This lack of consistency in recording makes it unclear which record is the correct one.

Furthermore, the staff's recording varies in quality. Some documents lack detail and contain minor errors. This makes it difficult to see what action has been taken, why staff took the action they did and the impact on children. The manager's monitoring and oversight has not addressed these issues effectively.

Although some progress has been made with staff talking about children in a more child-friendly way in documents, this is still not consistent practice.

The manager has high aspirations for children. She is a good advocate and is keen for them to have the support that they need. When necessary, the manager challenges other professionals. This supports children receiving the support that they need from partner agencies.

The team is cohesive, and staff are supportive of each other. The induction and training process is good, ensuring that all permanent and agency staff have the same knowledge and skills. There are regular team meetings to ensure that staff practice is reflective.

The manager and staff work collaboratively with other professionals. There is positive feedback from those professionals and families spoken to. All were complimentary about the staff, their approach and the care provided.

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 must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— help each child to achieve the child's education and training targets, as recorded in the child's relevant plans; and promote opportunities for each child to learn informally. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(i)(v)) In particular, the staff need to ensure that they are providing an informal learning environment in the home when children are refusing to go to school, to deter them from spending time alone in their bedroom.	29 February 2024
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(h)) In particular, the leaders and managers should determine which recording system to use to avoid the duplication by	29 February 2024

staff, which makes it difficult to determine which is the up-to-date and most current recording. The manager should use the monitoring and reviewing systems in place to address the inconsistency in paperwork to ensure that records are clear and easy to follow.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

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: 2596897

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Gateshead Council

Registered provider address: Adults, Children and Families, Gateshead Council,
Group Secretariat, 1st Floor, Regent Street, Gateshead NE8 1HH

Responsible individual: Claire Morris

Registered manager: Danielle Nicol

Inspector

Miriam Dolman, Social Care Inspector

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