

2623842

Registered provider: Newcastle City Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is operated and managed by a local authority. The home can provide care for up to three children with social and emotional difficulties.

The manager registered with Ofsted in March 2021. There were three children living in the home at the time of the inspection.

Inspection dates: 15 and 16 August 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	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 11 October 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
11/10/2022	Full	Good
14/09/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The staff are trained to understand how a child's previous experiences and trauma can have an impact on the child today. Additionally, staff have access to specialist support to talk about the children's individual needs and to help the children understand their past. This helps children make progress from their starting points.

The staff support the children to access education. The home has a dedicated person who makes links with education providers and completes individual work with the children. This helps those children who have not consistently accessed education to have the best opportunity to get back into education, skills training or employment.

The staff have conversations with the children covering a wide range of subjects relevant to each child. The children are helped to understand the impact of their behaviours on others, and to explore their feelings safely. This helps the children to build trusting relationships with the staff.

The staff reward children for positive behaviour, however small this may be. An example of this is that staff use a 'dip in the box' for children to gain individualised tokens of appreciation for acts such as being kind, or a simple positive action. This helps to build the children's confidence and captures positive interactions in a spontaneous way.

When possible, new children have a planned move into the home. However, even when a child has to move in more quickly, the staff are very supportive. This helps new children to settle more quickly and allows them and children already living in the home to get to know each other.

The staff understand the importance of capturing children's experiences and they prepare journey books for the children. These contain photos of the children throughout their time at the home. Individual letters and poems for the children provide personalised messages from the adults who have cared for them.

Additionally, the staff help the children to develop skills for independence and are active in supporting the children to prepare for their new home. The staff maintain links with those children who have left the home. When speaking about the staff's ongoing care, one professional said, 'They were fantastic, they really cared.'

The property is generally well maintained. Communal areas have a homely feel and children have lovely, personalised bedrooms and access to shared bathrooms.

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

The staff understand the children's individual risks. Risk assessments are thorough and provide strategies for staff to try to manage and reduce risks for the children.

Safety plans to manage risks are reviewed and updated regularly in response to children's changing needs. This supports staff to take effective action to help keep children safer.

An assessment is completed when consideration is given to a child moving into the home. This allows managers to explore the impact of each child joining the home on those children already resident and how staff will manage the changing needs and risks.

Staff rarely have to hold the children to keep them and others safe. When this does happen, the staff provide clear reasons for their intervention. The manager reviews the staff's actions and both the children and the staff involved have the opportunity to discuss what has happened. This ensures that the need to hold the child was necessary. However, on one occasion, a child was spoken to by a member of staff who was directly involved in the intervention. This prevents children from having someone independent to listen to their views.

There has been an increase in the number of times that children go missing from the home. Staff are proactive in following procedures to try to return the children home as soon as possible. However, there is limited information within the children's risk assessments and safety plans to guide staff on when to report each child missing to the police. This lack of information leads to an inconsistent approach by staff. When found, the staff welcome the children back and they are supported to speak with an independent person.

The home has arrangements in place to safeguard children, staff and visitors should there be a fire in the home. However, not all fire extinguishers were easily accessible at the time of the inspection. This was not detailed in the fire risk assessment.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is managed by an experienced manager who has support from an experienced deputy manager. Staff said that they are supported well by managers.

The managers know the children well. Professionals said that managers advocate for children and provide appropriate challenge when this is necessary and in a child's best interests.

New members of staff are subject to safe recruitment procedures. This ensures that adults who come to work in the home are safe to do so. Once in post, staff are supported through a planned induction, with opportunities to shadow more experienced staff members while completing mandatory training.

Managers ensure that staff have the relevant training and qualifications to help them provide good-quality care to children. Specific training aimed at supporting children in their care is provided to develop understanding of children's individual needs and how best to care for them.

Staff receive regular supervision sessions. The children are the focus of discussions and there are opportunities for staff to reflect on their practice and the impact this has on the experiences of the children.

The manager has made improvements following the recommendations made at the last inspection. This includes improved systems to ensure that the regulator is notified and updated about any serious incidents in the home.

The care plans for children do not contain up-to-date information. This means that children's records are incomplete.

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 registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which— include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child; are kept up to date. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)) In particular, this relates to obtaining current local authority care plans for children.	6 October 2023
After consultation with the fire and rescue authority, the registered person must— take adequate precautions against the risk of fire, including the provision of suitable fire equipment in the children's home. (Regulation 25 (1)(a))	6 October 2023

Recommendations

- The registered manager should ensure that any child who has been restrained is given the opportunity to express their feelings about their experience of the restraint as soon as is practicable, ideally within 24 hours of the restraint incident, taking the age of the child and the circumstances of the restraint into account. In some cases, children may need longer to work through their feelings, so a record that the child has talked about their feelings should be made no longer than 5 days after the incident of restraint (regulation 35(3)(c)). ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 50, paragraph 9.60)
- The registered person should specify the procedures to be followed and the roles and responsibilities of staff when a child is missing from care or away from the home without permission and how staff should support the child on return to the home. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.28)

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: 2623842

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Newcastle City Council

Registered provider address: Newcastle Civic Centre, Barras Bridge, Newcastle upon Tyne, Tyne and Wear NE1 8QH

Responsible individual: Liz Spaven

Registered manager: Hayley Carr

Inspector

Joanne Wallis, Social Care Inspector

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