

2623962

Registered provider: Durham County 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 is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to three children who may have emotional and/or social difficulties. The manager and the service were registered with Ofsted in March 2021.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020. The home has not previously had an inspection.

Inspection dates: 12 to 13 July 2021

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: not applicable

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: not applicable

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Two children live in this home. Both children have good relationships with the staff team. Children's experiences of moving into and on from the home are positive. The manager carefully considers the needs and mix of children who live together. She completes pre-admission risk assessments prior to children joining the home. This helps children to settle, and provides them with daily lived experiences that are positive.

Children receive individualised care and support from a skilled staff team. This is in line with children's care plans and risk assessments. The staff understand the needs of the children, and provide children with nurturing care. This enables children to develop a sense of belonging and acceptance. As a result, children make good progress in most areas of their lives. A child commented, 'It's great here. The best place I have been. There are loads of things I like about it and I feel safe here.'

Children's care plans are well written, and are reviewed and amended when necessary. They provide clear guidance for staff to follow. Staff use strengths-based models of practice to support children. Staff encourage children to contribute to setting targets in their care plans. This encourages children to be involved in their care planning, and helps children to develop in confidence and feel valued. Additionally, it supports the progress that children make.

Staff support children to spend time with their families and friends, where appropriate. Staff speak with children about how they wish to spend time with the people who are important to them. This helps children to maintain key relationships, and supports them to maintain their sense of identity.

Children's education is well supported. When children are not attending education, staff work with educational professionals effectively. The staff work with professionals to develop support plans for reintegrating children back into education. This supports children's learning and development, and helps children to achieve success.

Children maintain good health. Staff encourage children to engage in a range of fitness activities. This includes attending gyms, going to skateparks and doing other outdoor activities. Children say that they enjoy these activities. Additionally, staff support children to attend routine medical appointments.

The home is well maintained. Living areas provide children with a comfortable space to relax in. Children enjoy spending time with staff and each other. However, one child's bedroom is in a poor condition. There is minor damage to the walls, damage to furniture and the room requires cleaning. This provides children with negative messages about acceptable standards of care. Since the inspection, the manager has taken urgent action to address this shortfall.

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

Children's risks are identified, understood and well managed by staff. Staff supervisions and team meetings provide staff with opportunities to discuss children's risks and emerging needs. Staff focus on developing strategies to help keep children safe. Following serious or significant incidents relating to children, the manager debriefs staff. She ensures that staff are aware of any changes to children's care plans and risk assessments. As a result, children are safer and receive consistent care and support.

Children receive support and guidance from the staff on how to keep themselves safe. Targeted key-working sessions help children to discuss risks and concerns. These sessions are linked to children's risk assessments. Key-working sessions also provide opportunities to discuss children's progress with them. As a result, children's risks are reducing in some areas.

Incidents of children going missing from the home have reduced in number. When children go missing from the home, the staff follow the necessary protocols. This aids the children's safe return home. Staff ensure that children have an independent visitor to speak to on their return. Staff work well with a wide range of agencies. This helps reduce the number of incidents of missing from home, and helps prevent children from being at risk of exploitation.

The use of physical interventions to manage children's behaviour is rare. Staff use de-escalation techniques to manage children's behaviour when children are in crisis. Staff document the use of physical interventions in children's records. The manager reviews physical intervention records to ensure that staff practice is safe.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is appropriately qualified and has the relevant experience. The manager has recruited staff who have varied skills, knowledge and experience. The manager utilises the strengths of her staff team to improve children's outcomes.

The manager is well respected by her staff team and other professionals. Feedback from professionals about the leadership of the home is positive, and includes words such as 'effective', 'child centred' and 'supportive'. The manager is aspirational about developing the service and her team. Her team shares her vision and enthusiasm.

Children's parents and carers are positive about the work of the manager and staff in improving outcomes for their children. A parent commented, 'I think the staff are great. I feel that I am co-parenting with them. I can see the difference in [Name], he's made significant progress.'

The manager knows the home's strengths as well as areas that require development. She has a clear plan in place to drive improvements forward. The manager has effective monitoring systems in place. Her monitoring of the service

has informed her workforce development plan. This means that children receive better care and support.

The manager advocates well for children. She challenges external agencies when they do not provide services that children require. As a result, children's outcomes improve, and their welfare is better protected.

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, and 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 quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— understand and apply the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff— treat each child with dignity and respect; ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 6 (1) (2)(a)(b)(i)(iii)(c)(i))	12 August 2021

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: 2623962

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: Durham County Council, County Hall, Durham DH1 5UJ

Responsible individual: Claire Morris

Registered manager: Sharon Powch

Inspector

Jacqueline Tate, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
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Manchester
M1 2WD

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