

2723795

Registered provider: Darlington Borough Council

Monitoring visit

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is operated by a local authority. It provides care for up to 3 children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

The registered manager post is vacant. An interim manager is in place and they have made an application to register with Ofsted.

At the time of the inspection, 2 children were living in the home. The inspector spoke with one of the children.

Inspection date: 4 March 2026

This monitoring visit

Following an assurance inspection on 22 January 2026, compliance notices were issued under regulation 12, the protection of children standard, regulation 13, the leadership and management standard, and regulation 35 the behaviour management standard. A monitoring visit took place on 4 March 2026 to monitor the provider's response to the compliance notices. Leaders had taken action to address the steps in the compliance notices.

Since the assurance inspection, 2 children have returned to live in the home, and one child has moved out of the home. Staff supported the child well to understand their plan to move and helped the child to have positive introductions to their new home and the staff who work there.

Training to support staff and managers to respond when a safeguarding concern arises has taken place. Team meetings have been purposeful and enabled learning and discussions about how best to support children and keep them safer when risks present. This ensures that staff understand their roles and responsibilities.

Children's plans have been updated and the quality and content have improved. The children's risks and vulnerabilities are clear in their plans. Strategies for staff to respond to children are detailed and provide staff with clearer guidance on what to do when a child needs additional support.

The oversight of children's records and practice in the home has improved. The manager has put systems in place to monitor and review the quality of care in the home. This includes improved systems for staff handovers and oversight of children's daily records and information. This ensures that the manager understands how staff are supporting children in all aspects of their care, and that all children's records have been completed appropriately.

There have been no occasions when a child has been physically held by staff since the last inspection. Although the compliance notice for behaviour management identified a need for additional staff training, this has not been completed. Opportunities to learn from previous incidents were not recorded or evaluated to understand what steps have been taken to prevent further occurrences of staff holding a child in a way they have not been trained to do or included in the child's plan. Therefore, a requirement has been raised.

Staff are offered regular supervision sessions. The manager has taken responsibility to ensure that all staff are offered regular reflective time to discuss emerging themes, changes to children's plans and staff development. The records of supervision have also improved and provide an overview of discussions and actions agreed.

Fire doors in the home need repair or replacement. A requirement about fire safety was raised at the full inspection on 14 October 2025 and is yet to be fully actioned. Likewise, not all children's essential records are accessible and up to date on children's files, therefore the previous requirement and recommendation are restated.

As a result of the improvements made since the last inspection, it was decided that the compliance notices have been met.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
14/10/2025	Full	Good
21/01/2025	Full	Good
23/01/2024	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 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 registered person must ensure that— within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes— the date, time and location of the use of the measure; a description of the measure and its duration; the name of the person who used the measure ("the user"), and of any other person present when the measure was used; the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(iii)(iv)(vi)(vii))	17 April 2026
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; provide adequate means of escape from the home in the event of fire; make arrangements for persons working at the home to receive suitable training in fire prevention; and ensure, by means of fire drills and practices at suitable intervals, that persons working at the home and, so far as reasonably practicable, children are aware of the procedure to be followed in case of fire.	17 April 2026

In this regulation, “the fire and rescue authority” means the fire and rescue authority under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004(2) for the area in which the home is located. (Regulation 25 (1)(a)(b)(c)(d) (3))

In particular, the registered person must ensure that a fire risk assessment is updated so that this accurately reflects how the home is used.

In addition, the registered person must take actions identified in the fire risk assessment to ensure that internal doors provide the protection required.

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that all children’s case records are kept up to date and stored securely while children remain in the home. Case records should be kept up to date and signed and dated by the author of each entry. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 62, paragraph 14.3)

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this visit was to monitor the action taken and the progress made by the children’s home since its last Ofsted inspection.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 2723795

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Darlington Borough Council

Registered provider address: Town Hall, Feethams, Darlington DL1 5QT

Responsible individual: Christopher Bell

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Joanne Wallis, Social Care Inspector

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