

2806617

Registered provider: Northumberland County 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. It provides care for up to four children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

The manager is suitably qualified for the role and registered with Ofsted in August 2024.

There were two children living in the home at the time of the inspection. The inspector spoke with one of them.

Inspection dates: 2 and 3 September 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	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 13 January 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/01/2025	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Staff work hard to develop and maintain positive relationships with the children. Staff commitment to knowing the children and what they like helps children to feel valued. The children could easily name a member of staff they trust.

Children are making progress academically. When they refuse to attend education, staff continue to encourage them. Partnership working with schools and education providers is sound, and staff are proactive in their approach. When any issues arise or barriers to education emerge, these are dealt with immediately. This ensures that learning opportunities for children are maximised.

Staff listen to children and take time to understand how they feel. Children routinely contribute to decisions around meal planning and décor in the home. Staff advocate on behalf of children and provide the opportunity for them to speak to an independent advocate. Children told the inspector that they feel they are listened to, and their views are acted on.

Children are well prepared for when they move on from the home. Staff help children to think about the move positively and prepare them for what to expect. Staff effectively support the children leading up to and after the transition has taken place. Children see that the relationship they build lasts longer than the time at the home.

Staff ensure that damage around the home is quickly repaired. This means that the communal areas of the home are clean, tidy and well presented. However, the children's bedrooms do not replicate this ethos. Some of the rooms have bare walls and, overall, lack a homely feel.

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

Staff understand the impact children's experiences have on them. Staff recognise early indicators that children are distressed and show curiosity about why children behave the way they do. Staff demonstrate empathy and patience with the children, which contributes to them being able to help children at the earliest opportunity.

Staff use a system of rewards and consequences to help children manage their behaviour. Staff work with children to help them to understand strong emotions and make better behaviour choices. Professionals comment on this being a particular staff strength.

Children know how to make a complaint and are comfortable in doing so. The manager thoroughly investigates complaints and provides feedback to the children. The manager resolves community issues quickly, which maintains community relations and contributes to children feeling welcomed and accepted.

Staff know the procedures to follow when children are missing. Staff are curious about the reasons children go missing and work diligently with partner agencies to ensure children's safe return.

Staff are clear about their role in protecting the children. However, children's risk assessments do not consistently capture the level of risk posed. For example, one child's current risk was incorrectly downgraded in the assessment. This does not assist staff in the identification and responses of all known and emerging risks.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is qualified and experienced. The manager leads a team of motivated and committed staff who share the manager's aspirations for the children.

Staff regularly attend team meetings. This provides the manager with the opportunity to share organisational and practice changes with the staff team. Specialist professionals further support staff development to improve their skill in managing demanding situations.

Leaders and managers have a strong and consistent stance against racism and discrimination. There is a collective approach which challenges unwanted behaviour and seeks to educate children and staff about the impact this has on everyone.

The members of the staff team are stable and well known to the children. Staff are either qualified or working towards the required qualification. Staff describe an inclusive team and good management support. Staff are happy working in the home and demonstrate resilience.

The manager has systems in place to monitor and review the care the children receive. However, the manager does not consistently use this to identify or evaluate patterns and trends in the home.

The challenge made to partner agencies is not always effective. There is no agreed procedure for how to escalate matters with partner agencies. This has led to some delay in reaching decisions for one child.

Staff supervision takes place but the quality of this is varied. Staff report that they have reflective discussions in their supervision, but this is not captured in the supervision record. Therefore, actions are not routinely identified to address shortfalls.

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 leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home; demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on— research and developments in relation to the ways in which the needs of children are best met; and feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received; and use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1) (2) (f) (g)(i)(ii) (h))	1 October 2025
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff if the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority's or a relevant person's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 5 (c))	1 October 2025

Recommendations

- For children's homes to be nurturing and supportive environments that meet the needs of their children, they will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. Children's homes must comply with relevant health and safety legislations (alarms, food hygiene etc.); however in doing so, homes should seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than 'institutional' impression. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 14, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person must have systems in place so that all staff, including the manager, receive supervision of their practice from an appropriately qualified and experienced professional, which allows them to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2)
- The registered person should ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. 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

The inspector has 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: 2806617

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Northumberland County Council

Registered provider address: County Hall, Morpeth, Northumberland NE61 2EF

Responsible individual: Adam Hall

Registered manager: Eileen Gray

Inspector

Lisa Gordon, Social Care Inspector

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