

SC030967

Registered provider: Hartlepool Borough 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 short-breaks and three longer-term residential placements for children with special educational needs and/or learning disabilities.

The manager registered with Ofsted in March 2021.

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 March 2024

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 22 November 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
22/11/2022	Full	Outstanding
08/06/2021	Full	Outstanding
30/07/2019	Full	Outstanding
06/11/2018	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The home provides residential care for three children and short-break services for children from the local authority. This is a valuable service for the children and their families.

Children who live and stay in the home make good progress. This is because staff know the children they care for well. Children's care plans and risk assessments are detailed. This ensures staff know how to provide children with continuity of care.

Children develop trusting relationships. These relationships flourish due to the staff's understanding of each child's preferred way to communicate. Children are therefore helped to express themselves. Staff speak fondly and passionately about the children they care for. Observations of children showed they are confident and comfortable in the care of staff.

Children are engaged in positive and new experiences in the home and community. This is because staff take time to support children to engage in activities to enhance and broaden their experiences.

Families feel confident in leaving their children for short stays. Staff communicate well with parents to ensure they are kept up to date about their child. A newsletter is provided to parents to update them about any changes or upcoming events.

The children who live in the home are supported by staff to access education. Staff are strong advocates for children to ensure they receive the learning and support they need. One child has made considerable progress in his education since living in the home.

Children receive well-planned introductions to the home for short breaks. Staff take time to meet with children's families and speak with professionals involved before the children visit. Children attend the home for short visits to familiarise themselves with the home, other children and staff before staying overnight.

Staff prepare memory books for children. Photos are taken of children to capture their special occasions, achievements and activities. This captures children's memories of their time living or staying at the home.

Children are helped to learn new skills and work towards being more independent. When children make progress, they are rewarded with certificates for their achievements. Children are learning new life skills such as road safety and stranger danger.

Children do not have access to all areas of the home. This is because one child who lives at the home has their own spaces that other children do not freely access.

Other rooms, such as the kitchen, are locked, although children can access them with staff support if needed. However, some restrictions in the home are not assessed or reviewed regularly to decide if they are necessary for each child.

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

Children have detailed risk assessments. This ensures that staff understand children's vulnerabilities and behaviours and how to respond when children need extra support.

Children are rewarded for positive behaviours, such as being kind to others. The children can earn points for good behaviour and use those points towards rewards. The reward system is visual, so children can see the progress they are making. Children's achievements are celebrated and recorded so that staff can track their progress.

Staff are trained to intervene and physically hold children to keep them and others safe. This only happens as a last resort, as staff engage and distract children to help reduce any incidents that may be upsetting for them or others. After a child is physically held, staff give them an opportunity to communicate about what has happened.

The staff record when children have injuries and complete a body map. However, information recorded on the body maps did not provide enough information to understand how a child may have been injured. The manager's oversight of injuries to children was not evident on the body maps completed. This could hinder the manager's ability to identify any concerns and ensure children are safeguarded effectively.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is managed by an experienced manager who knows the children well. Staff said they are well supported by the leaders and managers. Professionals and family were consistent in their praise about the management of the home.

The registered manager promotes an environment for staff to focus on children and learning. Staff regularly attend team meetings and group and individual supervision sessions. This provides staff with an opportunity for reflective practice and for the manager to explore any training and development needs.

The manager has not fully considered the impact on children who are living in the home alongside those who attend for short breaks. This includes not responding effectively to address issues as they arise, such as one child who lives in the home struggling with sharing their home with other children visiting. As a result, the child has made changes to their usual routine to avoid areas of the home where other children are present.

Not all staff who work in the home have an appropriate qualification. Three staff members have passed their relevant date to gain a qualification to work with children in a residential setting. Leaders and managers were aware of this shortfall.

The home's statement of purpose is out of date. It does not accurately reflect the arrangements for how the staff will care for children who live there alongside those who attend for short breaks.

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 care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that arrangements are in place to— manage and review the placement of each child in the home. (Regulation 14 (1)(a) (2)(b)(ii))	26 April 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— promotes their welfare. 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; and use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(b) (2)(f)(h))	26 April 2024
The registered person must ensure that— children can access all appropriate areas of the children's home's premises; and any limitation placed on a child's privacy or access to any area of the home's premises—	26 April 2024

is intended to safeguard each child accommodated in the home; is necessary and proportionate; is kept under review and, if necessary, revised; and allows children as much freedom as is possible when balanced against the need to protect them and keep them safe. (Regulation 21(b)(c)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv))	
The registered person may only— employ an individual to work at the children's home; if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). The requirements are that— the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform. For the purposes of paragraph (3)(b), an individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification if, by the relevant date, the individual has attained— the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (England) ("the Level 3 Diploma"); or a qualification which the registered person considers to be equivalent to the Level 3 Diploma. The relevant date is— in the case of an individual who starts working in a care role in a home after 1st April 2014, the date which falls 2 years after the date on which the individual started working in a care role in a home. (Regulation 32 (2)(a) (3)(b) (4)(a)(b) (5)(a))	26 April 2024

Recommendation

- The registered person should be responsible for ensuring that the home's statement of purpose is child-focused, indicating how the home provides individualised care to meet the Quality Standards for the children in their care. In particular, it should accurately reflect the care arrangements for all children. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 14, para 3.5)

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: SC030967

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Hartlepool Borough Council

Registered provider address: Civic Centre, Victoria Road, Hartlepool TS24 8AY

Responsible individual: Jane Young

Registered manager: Natasha Salmon

Inspectors

Joanne Wallis, Social Care Inspector

Lisa Gordon, Social Care Inspector

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