

SC033326

Registered provider: Kirklees Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned and run by a local authority. It provides care for up to four children who experience social and/or emotional difficulties.

There were four children living at the home at the time of the inspection.

The deputy manager is in day-to-day charge of the home and is supported by the service manager.

Inspection dates: 3 and 4 July 2023

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	inadequate
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	inadequate
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	inadequate
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There are serious and widespread failures that mean children are not protected and their welfare is not safeguarded and the care and experiences for some children are poor and they are not making progress.

Date of last inspection: 30 August 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
30/08/2022	Full	Good
06/01/2022	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
13/09/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good
13/11/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

Children's overall experiences and progress are inadequate because of serious shortfalls in the help and protection of children and the leadership and management of the home.

Children's routines and boundaries are poor. Some children are awake in the early hours of the morning making meals, on their mobile phones, and they are allowed to leave the home. The lack of structure for one child is a contributing factor to their poor sleep pattern.

Some children's experiences and progress in education are poor. When children struggle with education, multi-agency meetings are held to discuss the next steps. For one child, this resulted in a change to their learning. Nevertheless, children do not have structure during the day and during school hours as they are either in bed or out in the community. Poor attendance in education inhibits the children's social and academic progress.

Staff carry out one-to-one sessions with the children about their health and lifestyle choices. However, these are ineffective for some children as one child's health continues to deteriorate, and their substance misuse remains a concern.

Some parts of the house are unwelcoming for the children due to unfinished work to repair damage. One child's bedroom was unkempt and had a plate of food which had been there for some time, and there are burn marks to the windowsills. Burn marks on the carpets in two children's bedrooms do not provide the children with a comfortable space to relax.

The children become more independent as a result of living in the home. They learn a range of life skills, including cooking, using public transport and shopping. The children have their own independence plans that help them to focus on personalised targets that prepare them for when they move on.

Staff had a considered approach towards one child who was in hospital. Staff spent nights in the hospital to reassure and support the child at a time when they needed adult support. This helped the child to understand that the adults around them care, and the relationships between the staff and the child have improved.

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

The home environment is not kept safe for the children and staff. Effective action has not been taken to ensure that the children's bedrooms are free of weapons. This oversight exposes the children and the staff to the risk of harm.

Risks continue to increase in frequency and severity in the home and out in the local community. Staff use a multi-agency approach to manage children who are at risk of child criminal exploitation. While the staff understand the associated risks, incidents involving weapons and violence continue to increase for two children. The multi-agency approach and the direct work that the staff carry out with the children has little impact on affecting positive change.

Some children smoke tobacco and cannabis in their bedrooms. Daily bedroom checks identify that children cover their smoke alarms. The staff do not routinely carry out one-to-one work with the children around the dangers of this. This, and the children refusing to engage in fire evacuations, places themselves and others at risk of harm. Not having an effective strategy in place to prevent these behaviours means that the children's welfare and well-being are not consistently promoted.

The mix of children who live in the home has affected the overall stability of the home and places children at risk of serious harm. Children are influenced by the behaviours of other children. This has resulted in one child hiding things for other children.

There is a multi-agency response to missing-from-home incidents. Nevertheless, missing-from-home protocols contain different information that is confusing for the staff. This has resulted in inconsistent approaches when children are missing from the home. In addition, one child is known to leave the home in the early hours of the morning. There is no protocol in place for the staff to follow and the child is left to roam the streets. The lack of direction and staff action exposes this child to the risk of harm. In addition, this does not provide the child with the message that the staff care about them and act to keep them safe.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

The registered manager has not been at work since 22 May 2023. The service manager is supporting the deputy manager who is in day-to-day charge of the home. Staff speak positively about the deputy manager and recognise her commitment to managing the home and caring for the children.

Leaders and managers do not operate the home in line with the home's statement of purpose. Ineffective monitoring of the home means that some paperwork lacks evaluation. Effective monitoring would enable the leaders and staff to identify trends and patterns in the children's behaviours.

Staff supervision has increased since May 2023. However, some staff have gone months without appropriate supervision. This prevents the staff from reflecting on their practice and learning new skills at a time when they are needed the most.

Leaders and managers do not inform Ofsted of all serious incidents or safeguarding matters. The lack of transparency means that Ofsted cannot be assured that leaders and managers take effective action to safeguard the children when significant incidents occur.

Staff have received advanced training in response to incidents of knife crime. The staff show a good understanding of the children and the risks that they present. This knowledge has successfully driven plans for one child to positively engage in a weekend of structured activities with staff.

Professionals praise the staff for the communication with them. They say that the staff advocate well on the children's behalf and that they will seek them out for advice and guidance to better support the children in their care.

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, 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 protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(iv)(v)(vi)(d))	20 August 2023
*After consultation with the fire and rescue authority, the registered person must— take adequate precautions against the of fire, including the provision of suitable fire equipment in the children's home; 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. (Regulation 25 (1)(a)(d))	20 August 2023

The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— understand the barriers to learning that each child may face and take appropriate action to help the child to overcome any such barriers; help each child to understand the importance and value of education, learning, training and employment; help each child to attend education or training in accordance with the expectations in the child’s relevant plans. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(iii)(iv)(x))	20 August 2023
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children’s home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home’s statement of purpose; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(h))	20 August 2023
The registered provider must appoint a person to manage the children’s home if— there is no registered manager in respect of the home. (Regulation 27 (1)(a))	20 August 2023

In particular, leaders and managers should ensure that there is a registered manager in post who is in day-to-day charge of the home.	
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(e))	20 August 2023

* These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the environment is homely and that damage to the home is repaired in a timely manner and to a high standard. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that there are systems in place so that all staff, including the manager, receive supervision of their practice as per the local authority policy and procedure. Supervision should allow staff to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care and be delivered by an appropriately qualified and experienced professional. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2)

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: SC033326

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Kirklees Metropolitan Council

Registered provider address: Civic Centre 3, Huddersfield, Yorkshire HD1 2EY

Responsible individual: Tom Brailsford

Registered manager: Hannah Smyth

Inspectors

Gemma McDonnell, Social Care Inspector
Lee Riley, Social Care Inspector

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