

SC033326

Registered provider: Kirklees Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The children's home is owned and operated by a local authority. The home provides care for up to four children who may have behavioural and/or emotional difficulties. The manager registered with Ofsted in August 2018.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on the 17 March 2020.

We last visited this setting on 22 September 2020 to carry out an assurance visit. This report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection dates: 13 to 14 September 2021

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: 13 November 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/11/2019	Full	Good
10/05/2018	Full	Good
31/01/2018	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
24/04/2017	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

The children have experienced are varied. This is due to high levels of instability and frequent incidents in the home and in the community. This has had an impact on the children's ability to build trusted and secured relationships with all the staff and with their peers.

When asked their views about living in the home, children's responses were mixed. One child said they felt safe and that they were building relationships with some staff. However, another child told the inspector about the intensity of bullying they had experienced since being placed at the home, but they felt things were slowly improving. Nevertheless, this has the potential to have a negative impact on the child's emotional well-being.

Matching children's compatibilities, before they are admitted to the home, is not effective. This has had a significant impact on the group dynamics and led to an increase in disruption in the home. The provider has taken some steps to address this, and new systems have been implemented to assist the future matching of children to the home.

Children do not have regular one-to-one key-work sessions, children's meetings or consultations with staff. This means that the children are not effectively consulted in the running of their home. However, children spoken to stated that they do access positive activities like laser quest, cinemas and holidays, and they are helped to celebrate their birthdays.

Children's educational progress is mixed. One child is engaging with his education plan. However, another child's education attendance and engagement has significantly declined since being admitted to the home. School staff told the inspector that the child had positive attendance before being placed at the home and that they are concerned with the recent decline. The provider has acknowledged this, and plans are in place to help improve educational outcomes.

The children's health and developmental needs are supported by staff, and all the children have up-to-date health assessments. Staff work in partnership with the looked after children's nurse and the home's in-house clinical psychologist. This helps to support children's physical and emotional health needs.

The home environment is generally clean and tidy. Children's bedrooms are personalised, but most areas of the home do not reflect the children's experiences as there are no photos, pictures, or soft furnishing in communal areas. This detracts from the overall homeliness of the environment.

Records indicate that staff should carry out daily checks of bedrooms on each shift. However, this is not consistently applied in practice. During the visit the inspector identified some health and safety concerns in a child's bedroom. Action was taken. However, this highlights that staff are not following some of the agreed health and safety checks.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

Children have behaviour management plans and risk assessments in place. These are reviewed regularly by the manager and deputy manager, in consultation with social workers and other agencies. This helps to ensure that risks are identified and quickly addressed.

There have been numerous occasions when staff have not been able to manage the children's behaviours safely. This has resulted in increased occurrences of serious incidents and the police being called to support staff. The inability to manage these situations leaves children at risk of harm.

Staff do not routinely use the resources and tools to support the children in developing an understanding of how their behaviours can affect themselves and others. As a result, children continue to present challenging behaviours which have led to police intervention.

Staff have regular consultations with the in-house clinical psychologist. They also work in partnership with other professionals. This supports staff in their roles. However, not all staff routinely attend team meetings. This means that any changes to children's care is not effectively communicated to all staff. As a result, some staff are not well informed about how best to support the children.

When children go missing from the home, the staff respond and follow the child's risk assessment. The staff search local areas where children are known to go and work in partnership with other agencies and the children's families to reduce the risk. However, despite this, missing-from-home incidents remain a concerning feature, with some children leaving the home without permission on a regular basis. This exposes children to a risk of harm.

Some serious incidents have not been notified to Ofsted, and updates of ongoing investigations are not always communicated to the regulator. This hinders the regulator's ability to monitor safeguarding practice in the home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

The manager of the home is experienced and has been in post for over eight years, providing support to the staff team. At the time of the inspection, the manager and his deputy were both on leave. Therefore, the inspection was led by the placement

team service manager, senior residential care officers and two managers from other local authority homes.

Staff access regular training, annual appraisals and clinical supervision. This helps to support the staff's developmental needs. However, the supervision records viewed by the inspector were not always analytical and reflective. Furthermore, it was unclear if the manager, casual staff and agency staff were receiving regular supervision. This means that opportunities to support all staff development are not used effectively.

There has been high-level usage of casual and agency staff due to the impact of the pandemic. When needed, additional staffing has been implemented to help support the children. However, on occasions, this does mean that children are cared for by adults they do not know well.

Senior managers ensure that additional monitoring systems are in place. This includes providing external management oversight to support the manager in his role. This has been a welcomed development during what has been a difficult period.

The manager makes use of a workforce development plan. The plan has clear aims and objectives but does not provide time scales or evidence of how these will be achieved. This hinders the manager's ability to monitor and evaluate the targets set.

The statement of purpose was recently updated, but not shared with Ofsted. A requirement has been raised to address this shortfall.

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 quality and purpose of care standard is that— In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff— provide to children living in the home the physical necessities they need in order to live there comfortably. (Regulation 6 (1) (2)(b)(vii)) In particular, ensure that the home's décor is maintained to reflect a warm welcoming environment and that bedroom checks are routinely completed to ensure a safe environment.	30 November 2021
The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— meet each child's behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child's relevant plans; de-escalate confrontations with or between children, or potentially violent behaviour by children. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i) (xi))	30 November 2021

In particular, ensure that members of staff are provided with the skills to manage behaviour effectively.	
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home's statement of purpose. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a))	30 November 2021
The registered person must compile in relation to the children's home a statement ("the statement of purpose") which covers the matters listed in Schedule 1. The registered person must— keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision. (Regulation 16 (1) (3)(a)(b))	30 November 2021
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)) In particular, ensure that updates of any ongoing investigations are shared and that information provided is clear and detailed.	30 November 2021
The children's views, wishes and feelings standard (2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— (a) ensure that staff—	30 November 2021

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) ascertain and consider each child's views, wishes and feelings, and balance these against what they judge to be in the child's best interests when making decisions about the child's care and welfare; (ii) help each child to express views, wishes and feelings; (iii) help each child to understand how the child's views, wishes and feelings have been taken into account and give the child reasons for decisions in relation to the child; (iv) regularly consult children, and seek their feedback, about the quality of the home's care; | |
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(Regulation 7(2)(a))

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 address: Kirklees Metropolitan Council, Civic Centre 3, Huddersfield, Yorkshire HD1 2EY

Responsible individual: Elaine McShane

Registered manager: Martin Steele

Inspectors

Noel Cooper, Social Care Inspector

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