

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 run by a local authority. The home provides care for up to four children with emotional and/or social difficulties.

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

The manager registered with Ofsted in July 2013 but is currently absent from work. The home has an interim manager in post who is suitably qualified and experienced.

Inspection dates: 30 and 31 August 2022

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: 6 January 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: declined in effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
06/01/2022	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
13/09/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good
13/11/2019	Full	Good
10/05/2018	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The atmosphere of the home is welcoming. Since the last inspection, damage to the home has been repaired and many areas have been redecorated. Children have been consulted about new items of furniture and their bedrooms are personalised. This gives the children a sense of belonging and personal responsibility.

Children have made noticeable progress relative to their needs, vulnerabilities and starting points. They experience a consistent and caring staff team that helps the children to form positive relationships and develop trust in the adults that look after them.

All the children will be attending school in the new academic year. The manager and the deputy have been instrumental in liaising with schools and specialist learning environments to get the children back into education tailored to their individual learning needs. Children are now beginning to have ambitions for their future.

Children have participated in a range of activities and are supported in all aspects of their lives. Most of the children have enjoyed being out and about with staff, going biking, go-karting, daytrips to theme parks and, for some, a first time experience of going on holiday. Keeping the children busy with positive experiences and developing their interests has kept them out of trouble and promoted more settled behaviour.

Family time is encouraged and supported. Staff have built trusted relationships with parents, grandparents and other family members. For many of the children, family time is extremely important and much effort is made to involve parents and previous carers in the day-to-day lives of their children. A relative said, 'Staff regularly keep in touch with me, and I am able to visit any time and I am made to feel welcome.'

The quality of the relationship with other professionals is a key strength and facilitates multi-agency planning and decision-making. This has helped in making the home a safe place for children to live.

Staff clearly understand the children very well and they have a voice in the day-to-day decisions about their lives. Plans for the children are child-centred and key-work sessions are responsive to their individual vulnerabilities. The atmosphere in the home is more relaxed and children are better matched.

Warm and trusting relationships develop over time with the children and they are more able to share any worries or concerns they may have. Much emphasis is placed on children developing skills to manage their feelings and behaviour more appropriately.

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

Children spoken to say that they feel safe and protected. They can identify a trusted adult that they can talk to about any worries or concerns. It is clear from spending time at the home that children have good relationships with the adults who care for them. The children are more settled and are relatively well matched.

Risks associated with children going missing and exploitation are understood by the adults working at the home. Risk management plans and missing from home protocols are clear, succinct and include clear strategies to follow. Missing episodes have significantly decreased in frequency as children are making more positive choices.

The manager has worked hard at developing a shared understanding and approach to protecting children. Monthly risk management meetings with all professionals embed a culture of responsibility and collective action. This means that children are better protected and safeguarded.

Staff have adopted a restorative approach to addressing poor behaviour with the use of natural consequences. Damage to the home is less frequent and there has been no need to use physical intervention or police callouts to manage behaviour. This suggests that staff have a better understanding of children's vulnerabilities and are able to redirect behaviour in a more positive way.

Careful recruitment and regular monitoring of staff prevent unsuitable people from being recruited. Records checked evidence that safe recruitment practice procedures are robust and include a multi-layer of checks.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

There is currently an interim manager leading the home in the absence of the registered manager. The interim manager is supported by a committed and experienced deputy. The home has been through a turbulent and unsettled period. However, with the manager's ambition and enthusiasm, the home is now moving in the right direction.

The interim manager and deputy have a good understanding of the home, the staff and the children. He leads a dedicated staff team where the children are now being afforded with stability and consistency of care. The interim manager and deputy are providing the right level of support, encouragement, training and supervision.

There is much improvement in referral processes that match the children and assess compatibility. The interim manager has more autonomy in decision-making while recognising the challenges facing the local authority in finding the right home for the children. Children, when possible, are sensitively and carefully transitioned into and out of the home.

Continuous professional development is encouraged. The majority of staff have completed their National Vocational Qualification level 3 diploma and are up to date with their training. Much work has been achieved in changing the culture of the home and embedding safer practice. Consultation with the children and ascertaining their views and opinions is promoted and facilitated through a variety of processes. Children are receiving better-quality care as a result.

Recording is child-centred with the voice of the child promoted. Daily records, the daily care plans and risk assessments are clear and easy for staff to follow and understand. The manager and deputy have implemented systems to monitor and quality assure continuing good practice.

Recording systems and reflection on practice have taken place with all staff led by the manager and deputy. Staff receive clinical supervision in addition to their monthly supervision. However, records of these conversations and discussions vary in quality. This makes it difficult for staff to refer back to agreed actions, if necessary.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the content and/or outcomes of supervision sessions are kept on file and ensure that both the person giving the supervision and staff member have a copy of the record. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.4)
- The registered person should ensure that staff supervision and team meetings enable staff to reflect and act on how their own feelings and behaviour may be affected by the behaviour of the children they care for. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 39, paragraph 8.15)

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 Council

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

Responsible individual: Elaine McShane

Registered manager: Martin Steele

Inspector

Cath Sikakana, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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