

SC033467

Registered provider: St Cuthbert's Care

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned and managed by a charity. The home can care for up to six children who have emotional and/or social difficulties.

Inspection dates: 28 and 29 June 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: 25 January 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
25/01/2022	Full	Good
29/01/2020	Full	Good
07/08/2018	Full	Good
05/09/2017	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children make good progress with their social skills and behaviour. This is because staff know the children well and how to support them. This helps the children to feel settled in their home. Children say they are happy living here and one child, who is of school age, said they would like to live at the home until they are 18 years old. One professional described the progress made by one child as 'phenomenal', while another professional said they were 'extremely impressed' with the standard of care that staff provide to the children.

Children who move into the home are well supported by the manager and staff team. Staff support children who move out of the home to learn the life-skills they need to help to keep them safe and well. This is enhanced by a self-contained flat located in the home. Children who have moved on stay in contact with staff which provides the children with an additional support network. When a local authority does not prepare an independence support plan for a child, the manager escalates this until satisfactory action is taken. This helps children to have the best support available to them when moving on.

Staff understand the importance of children being able to maintain relationships with those who are important to them. Staff develop good relationships with the children's family members, and with adults who are responsible for caring for the children's friends. This means staff can make safe decisions about who the children spend time with and can support them with this. This support extends to helping children access legal advice about seeing those who are important to them.

Children make good progress with their education. Staff prepare the children well for their day ahead, which has a positive impact on the children's ability to learn. Staff encourage the children to be aspirational about their futures and support them to access higher education. Children's attendance at their education provision is good. When attendance declines, the manager works with education professionals to implement effective strategies to improve this. On days when a child does not attend school, staff support the child to access learning materials that are individual to the child's stage of learning, and which staff source. This helps the children to continue to make progress with their education.

Staff and the manager recognise the importance of a therapeutic approach when helping children to manage their feelings and behaviour. Staff are pivotal in identifying specialist provisions which meet the needs of the children and challenge decision-making if they feel outcomes are not in the best interest of the child.

Children's meetings are held regularly which are well attended by the staff and children. These meetings allow children to request activities they would like to try and enquire about improvements they would like to their home. Children can sometimes see the outcome of their requests, such as when items they have

requested are purchased. However, the meeting minutes do not always reflect the outcomes of these requests. This means children may be confused or unclear about the outcome and may not feel listened to.

The home is decorated and furnished to a good standard, and children can personalise their rooms. Damage to the home is repaired quickly, and furniture which is damaged is quickly replaced. However, some areas of the home were seen to have dirty food cartons and dirty dishes left out. Some bathroom areas were also seen to be unhygienic. This may pose a health hazard and does not give children positive aspirations for their home environment.

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

Children say they feel safe in their home. Risk assessments are kept up-to-date and are reviewed regularly. The staff's good understanding of the risks associated with each child and how to help each child to stay safe, has resulted in a reduction in the number of incidents involving children. Restrictions on a child's ability to move freely about the home are also reviewed and updated regularly within a child's safety plan. However, they are not formally recorded as a restriction of movement.

Children rarely go missing from home and when they do, processes are followed to find and support the child. Once a child returns home safely, the manager ensures the child has an independent interview about their time spent missing. When the local authority does not share information obtained during these interviews, the manager requests it. This is because the manager recognises this information informs potential changes to a child's safety plan, which may improve the child's level of safety. The local police force commended the home's staff for their safe management of children who go missing.

All children have safety plans that consider whether children need to be held to keep them safe or to protect others. However, staff manage the children's behaviour through a therapeutic and relationship-based approach, which means holding children has not been necessary.

Room searches are infrequent and when they do happen, they are with the intention of keeping children in the home safe. Children are always consulted when their rooms are searched. This helps the children to understand how the staff are helping to keep them safe.

When children cause damage to property or furniture because they are struggling to manage their feelings, staff support the children with a restorative approach. This includes staff helping children to assemble new furniture which has been purchased to replace damaged furniture. This helps children to understand the effect that their behaviour has on themselves and others living in the home. When the manager recognises a sanction is ineffective, she will review this with the staff team and implement an alternative approach and monitor this to determine its effectiveness.

Risk assessments are kept up-to-date and are reviewed regularly. When the manager is asked to consider caring for a child, she assesses if the staff are able to meet the needs of a child, whether the home's environment is safe for the child and whether there are factors which pose a risk to children already living in the home. This means the children living in the home experience stability, with children only moving on as part of their long-term plan. This contributes towards the children feeling settled.

Staff support the children to attend routine medical appointments and access medical care in emergencies. Staff identify agencies which support children to reduce their drug use and cigarette smoking. Staff provide children with information to help them make safe choices about their physical health, their mental health and their sexual health. Staff provide children with information which allows them to consider options available to them about their health, such as whether to have the COVID-19 vaccine.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is run by a dedicated and experienced manager, who has high aspirations for the children in her care. She challenges professionals and agencies when the support that they offer the children falls short of the standard which she considers they deserve. Staff say that the manager is passionate about the children, that she is a strong leader and that they feel well supported by her.

The manager has a visible presence in the home and has an 'open door' policy, allowing children into the office whenever they wish. This not only helps the children to understand that staff always want to listen to what they have to say but also contributes to the trusting relationships the manager has formed with all of the children.

The manager leads by example and her passion is seen in her staffing team, who are committed and enthusiastic. There is a very low turnover in staff, which is a testimony to the support she provides to the staff team. This contributes to the stable home environment which the children live in and helps the children to benefit from staff who know how to support them well. This allows children to form long-standing and trusting relationships with staff.

Staff have regular supervision which is conducted by someone with the appropriate level of experience to do so. It is reflective, and considers the needs of the children, areas for staff development, identified training needs and the personal welfare of the staff member. When practice falls short of the standards expected by the manager, this is addressed in supervision with a clear plan put in place to review performance.

Training is offered regularly, and the organisation ensures staff complete training which the organisation considers mandatory. When children's needs change or new

risks emerge, training is identified and offered to support the staff in providing the best level of care possible to the children.

Documents seen during the inspection reflect the needs of the children well. However, some documents were not fully completed and some documents were inconsistently signed and/or dated by the person making the entry. There were also some documents which were unsigned by the children, and therefore it is unclear whether the children are fully aware of or understand these documents. These shortfalls have not been captured by the manager's review and audit process which may result in missed opportunities to improve the progress that children make.

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 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— use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) and (2)(h))	15 August 2022

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the home is maintained to a good standard, in particular that the toilets and showers are hygienic, and children's bedrooms are clean and free from hazardous waste or items. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that restrictions of liberty of movement are recorded as restraint. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 47, paragraph 9.2)
- The registered person should ensure that information about children must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child, in particular, the children's meetings minutes. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

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: SC033467

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: St Cuthbert's Care

Registered provider address: St. Cuthbert's House, West Road, Newcastle Upon Tyne NE15 7PY

Responsible individual: Amanda Head

Registered manager: Kerry Wilson-Pearce

Inspector

Julia Hagan, Social Care Inspector

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