

SC033645

Registered provider: Newcastle City Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is operated and managed by a local authority. It provides care for up to six children with physical and learning disabilities. One child may reside in the home and five children may stay under short-break arrangements.

There are 57 children using the service. Four children were staying in the home during the inspection. The inspector met with all the children.

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 July 2025

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	requires improvement to be good
---	---------------------------------

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

Date of last inspection: 3 July 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
03/07/2024	Full	Outstanding
15/11/2023	Full	Good
26/09/2022	Full	Good
13/06/2022	Full	Inadequate

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Staff support the children who visit and live in the home to make good progress. Many children have been accessing the service for several years, which allows staff to establish trusting relationships with children and their families. Staff are supporting one child who lives in the home to make good progress with their personal care. A professional said that they did not know that the child could speak until they came to live the home.

Staff understand children's needs well. Their understanding of how children prefer to communicate has been further developed by accessing Makaton training. This allows staff to give children a greater say about the care that they receive. Staff also receive specialist training to help them to better understand the individual needs of each child and provide personalised care.

Staff support children to participate in activities such as bowling and attending the theatre. Staff and the manager also take children who have the most complex needs on holiday to a holiday park. This provides children with experiences that they would not otherwise be able to access. Memories of these events are captured in photos which are displayed on the walls of the home and in memory books for the children.

Staff and the manager support children with their education. They observe children in education settings and contribute to assessments of their needs. Staff liaise with children's parents, carers and education professionals to help to ensure that children receive a consistent approach to meeting their needs and managing their behaviour.

Staff provide good support to children as they approach adulthood. Staff and the manager liaise effectively with professionals to help children with a smooth transition to adult services, including children who are moving into an alternative care provision. Staff continue to support those children until they are settled into their new home. This helps children to feel valued by the staff who are caring for them.

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

The staff and the manager make effective use of the home's positive behaviour support lead, which has helped to reduce incidents where children need to be held. Conversations with staff after an incident involving a hold do not always provide the opportunity for reflection. It is unclear whether staff support all children to understand that they are held to help to keep them safe. This limits the opportunities the manager has to identify the strengths or areas where practice can be strengthened.

The children have complex health needs related to their disability. Staff who are new to the service learn how to administer specialist care to children under the supervision of the child's nurse. Staff are alert to changes in children's behaviours and seek urgent medical care appropriately. There have been two medication errors since the previous

inspection. The manager has strengthened the process to reduce the likelihood of errors being made. This helps to ensure that children are safeguarded effectively while they are staying in the home.

Staff and the manager support children well when they make allegations against adults. Children are listened to, believed and supported well throughout any investigation. This helps children to feel valued and safe.

Staff have a good understanding of the children's vulnerabilities and the associated risks. Staff respond well to new and emerging risks. However, not all risk assessments reflect all known risks for children, and some contain outdated or irrelevant information. This does not impact on the quality of care provided to the children.

Staff do not ensure that all visitors sign in and out of the home. Consequently, there is no accurate record of who is in the home in the event of an emergency or if a child were to be harmed. This also prevents the manager from maintaining oversight of who has visited the home and the purpose of their visit.

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

Staff absences are impacting on the care that children receive. Managers made the decision to move two children into the home despite operating with a limited permanent staff team. This places additional demands on staff, and the manager relies on those staff to volunteer to work extra shifts. The manager uses sessional and agency staff to fill gaps in the rota. However, not all those staff have the necessary skills and knowledge to meet children's complex needs. The lack of experienced staff has prevented some children from accessing the short-break service, causing some disruption to the lives of children and their families.

The monitoring systems used by the manager to oversee the home are not always effective. For example, not all audits are carried out, and management oversight of events and documents is not always complete. Furthermore, the manager does not ensure that supervision sessions for staff have taken place within the expected time frame. This prevents the manager from identifying and addressing shortfalls in staff practice.

The home is registered to accommodate one child on a full-time basis. However, another child has exceeded the maximum number of days in a 12-month period. Furthermore, this child is being cared for by the local authority without a legal order in place. This is currently being explored by the local authority's legal advisers.

The manager does not always complete checks to determine whether staff have achieved their required qualification. Consequently, two staff members have not achieved their qualification within the required time frames.

The manager is committed to providing good-quality care to the children. He is ambitious for them and expects high standards of care from the staff. He is supported by two deputies who are equally enthusiastic. The manager knows and understands the children's needs well.

The manager has successfully advocated to senior leaders for additional staff and a change to the staffing structure. This includes dedicated waking night staff to reduce the likelihood of staff fatigue and mitigate the potential impact that this may have on children's 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, The 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 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 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) (2)(a))	1 October 2025
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— ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(b) (2)(c)(h))	1 October 2025
The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children;	1 October 2025

use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff— provide personalised care that meets each child's needs, as recorded in the child's relevant plans, taking account of the child's background. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(iv)) In particular, that decisions made in relation to children coming to live in the home do not impact negatively on other children using the service.	
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 (4)(a)(b) (5)(a))	1 October 2025
Schedule 4 sets out the other information that the registered person must keep in relation to a children's home. The registered person must— maintain in the home the records in Schedule 4; and ensure that the records are kept up to date. (Regulation 37 (1) (2)(a)(b))	11 September 2025

In particular, the registered person must maintain a record of all visitors to the home, and to children, including the names of visitors and the reasons for the visit.	
---	--

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that accurate records are kept in children's homes. All children's case records must be kept up to date. In particular, that risk assessments are kept up to date. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.3)
- The registered person should ensure that any child who has been restrained is given the opportunity express their feelings about their experience of the restraint as soon as is practicable. Children should be encouraged to add their views and comments to the record of restraint. Children should be offered the opportunity to access advocacy support to help them with this. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 50, paragraph 9.60)

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: SC033645

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Newcastle City Council

Registered provider address: Newcastle Civic Centre, Barras Bridge, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Tyne and Wear NE1 8QH

Responsible individual: Liz Spaven

Registered manager: David Mason

Inspector

Julia Hagan, Social Care Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2025