

# SC034686

**Durham County Council**

Monitoring visit

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## **Information about this children's home**

The home is run by a local authority and is registered for the care and accommodation of up to five children or young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The registered manager has extensive experience of the position held.

**Inspection date:** 1 March 2019

## **This monitoring visit**

This monitoring visit was undertaken due to increasing concerns being raised about safeguarding practices and poor management decision-making around the appropriateness of placements.

This children's home was judged good at the full inspection on 25 September 2018. Following this monitoring visit, the inspectors found that the home has declined in effectiveness.

There was evidence of increased risks around the home that had not been recognised by staff. Subsequently, there were poor risk management strategies in place to manage risk-taking behaviours effectively.

The staff team is not making the necessary links to the presenting behaviours of children and young people. This heightens the vulnerability of children and young people. Furthermore, poor records of information make it difficult to see how children and young people are safeguarded effectively.

Poor use of language in records means that it is difficult to distinguish between fact, opinion and third-party information. Information about children and young people is not always recorded in a way that will be helpful to them. There was a lack of evidence to demonstrate that the manager had made efforts to address effectively some of the underlying practice issues within the team. The recording of challenge to practice in staff supervisions was poor, and safeguarding was not given significance.

Children and young people who are unsuitably placed do not have positive experiences. Subsequently, placements end abruptly, and children and young people do not receive the support they require to transition to their new placements.

The condition of the home has declined. Repairs and deep cleaning are required throughout the home. The manager accepts that the deterioration of the environment is a result of responding to the disruptive behaviours within the home. Furthermore, the home displays signs, which makes it feel institutionalised, reflecting that some of the practice is dated.

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement    |
|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| 25/09/2018      | Full            | Good                    |
| 31/10/2017      | Full            | Outstanding             |
| 25/01/2017      | Interim         | Sustained effectiveness |
| 07/06/2016      | Full            | Outstanding             |

## 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   |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| <p>The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who–</p> <p>understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children;</p> <p>use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to–</p> <p>understand and apply the home's statement of purpose;</p> <p>ensure that staff–</p> <p>understand and apply the home's statement of purpose;</p> <p>protect and promote each child's welfare;</p> <p>treat each child with dignity and respect;</p> <p>provide personalised care that meets each child's needs, as recorded in the child's relevant plans, taking account of the child's background;</p> <p>help each child to understand and manage the impact of any experience of abuse or neglect;</p> <p>help each child to develop resilience and skills that prepare the child to return home, to live in a new placement or to live independently as an adult;</p> <p>provide to children living in the home the physical necessities they need in order to live there comfortably;</p> <p>provide to children personal items that are appropriate for</p> | 01/04/2019 |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |            |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| <p>their age and understanding; and make decisions about the day-to-day arrangements for each child, in accordance with the child's relevant plans, which give the child an appropriate degree of freedom and choice. (Regulation 6(1)(a)(b), (2)(a)(b)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(ix))</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |            |
| <p>The registered person must ensure that –</p> <p>the privacy of children is appropriately protected. (Regulation 21(a))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that private and confidential information about the children and young people is not recorded in generic documentation, such as the home's daily log book.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | 01/04/2019 |
| <p>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure–</p> <p>that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm. (Regulation 12(1), (2)(b))</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 01/04/2019 |
| <p>The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that–</p> <p>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and</p> <p>promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to–</p> <p>understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13(1)(a)(b), (2)(f))</p> | 01/04/2019 |
| <p>The care planning standard is that children–</p> <p>receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and</p> <p>have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | 01/04/2019 |

In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure–

that the child’s placing authority is contacted, and a review of that child’s relevant plans is requested if–

the registered person considers that the child is at risk of harm or has concerns that the care provided for the child is inadequate to meet the child’s needs.

(Regulation 14 (1)(2)(e)(i))

In particular, the registered manager should undertake a risk assessment of each young person prior to their admission. This is to ensure that risks to all young people are effectively managed.

## Recommendations

- Supervision of staff practice should ensure that individual adults in the home are engaged in the safeguarding culture of the home so they understand what they would need to do if they found other staff misusing or abusing their position to the detriment of the safety of a child. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 43, paragraph 9.14)

In particular, ensure that safeguarding is added as a stand-alone agenda item in staff supervisions and team meetings. Safeguarding should be explicitly referred to.

- For children’s homes to be nurturing and supportive environments that meet the needs of their children, they will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. Children’s homes must comply with relevant health and safety legislations (alarms, food hygiene etc.); however in doing so, homes should seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than ‘institutional’ impression. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- Staff should record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third-party information. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 62, paragraph 14.4)

## **Information about this inspection**

The purpose of this visit was to monitor the action taken and the progress made by the children's home since its last Ofsted inspection.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

## **Children's home details**

**Unique reference number:** SC034686

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** Durham County Council

**Registered provider address:** County Hall, Durham DH1 5UL

**Responsible individual:** Karen Robb

**Registered manager:** Mark Proffitt

## **Inspector**

Jacqueline Tate, social care inspector

Sue Atkinson-Millmoor, regulatory inspection manager

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