

SC034686

Durham County Council

Monitoring visit

Information about this children's home

The home is owned and managed by a local authority. It provides care for up to five children who may have social and emotional difficulties and/or learning disabilities.

There was one child living in the home at the time of this visit.

There is currently no registered manager at this home.

Due to the serious and widespread failings identified at the full inspection on 30 and 31 August 2022, a judgement of inadequate was given. Shortfalls were identified in how well children were helped and protected, the leadership and management arrangements of the home, and the care planning arrangements for children. In response to these failings, Ofsted issued compliance notices under regulations 11, 12, 13, 14, 20 and 21.

This monitoring visit was carried out to monitor the provider's response to meeting the steps in the compliance notices.

Inspection date: 24 October 2022

This monitoring visit

The leadership team submitted an action plan to Ofsted following the last inspection. However, this has not yet been fully implemented.

The quality assurance manager has spent a considerable amount of time in the home since the last inspection to work with the staff. It is clear that progress has been made and some compliance notices have been met. However, further work is required to meet all of the steps identified in the compliance notices that were issued under regulations 12 and 13.

Staff have not received the necessary training so that they can fulfil the ethos that is outlined in the home's statement of purpose. In addition, the provider failed to ensure that the staff received the specific training that they required to meet the

individual needs of one child, who has since left the home. The staff were unable to engage this child in positive relationships that create change. This hampered this child's progress.

There has been an improvement in the staffing levels. This ensures that the needs of the child who remains in the home are met in accordance with their care plan. Additionally, when further staff are required, staff who are known to the child are used. This has improved the continuity of care that the child receives and enables them to form relationships with the staff.

A detailed review of the child's relevant files, including their care plan and behaviour support plan, has been carried out. The child's plans are individualised and easier for the staff to read and follow. The child's targets are simple, and they are monitored by the staff. This progress helps the child to experience improved care.

The staff ensure that planned and unplanned key-work sessions with the child are purposeful. The child is helped to understand appropriate and supportive relationships as the expectations and boundaries are made clear. The staff receive additional time and guidance in team meetings to reflect on their use of positive language in their recordings. This has led to an improvement in the quality of the child's records.

Children's individual safety plans are well written and reviewed regularly. The staff identify, analyse and evaluate the child's individual risks, behaviours and potential triggers. Staff put in place and follow effective strategies. This has led to a reduction in incidents that require the use of physical intervention and in the child going missing from the home. This helps the child to experience consistent care and helps to keep them safe from potential harm.

The statement of purpose has been updated to reflect the provider's preferred choice of de-escalation and physical intervention practice. Consequently, parents and commissioners are now informed about the practice that is used by the staff.

The child has privacy and can now access all areas of their home. The practice of locking external and internal doors is now only used when there is a specific safeguarding reason. When this is required, this practice is recorded and reviewed as soon as possible by the management and the staff.

The gaps that were identified in the staff's first-aid training records have now been appropriately addressed. All staff are now trained, and there is always a member of staff on duty with the relevant skills to support the immediate health needs of the child.

The child is not provided with a warm, nurturing and safe home environment. The staff have failed to identify potential hazards in the bathrooms and the children's bedrooms, and the home looks tired and unkempt. The responsible individual has a plan in place to redecorate the home and upgrade the kitchen. The provider has

indicated that they do not intend to admit any other children into the home until this work has been completed.

Although no new children have moved in to the home, the provider has failed to review their processes on how they assess and match the competing needs of children before they move in. This oversight prevents the provider from being assured that the manager and staff can meet all of the children's needs safely.

At this monitoring visit, the inspectors have amended and reissued the compliance notices under regulations 13 and 14. The requirement under regulation 36 that was issued at the last inspection has not been fully reviewed at this visit. Therefore, this has also been reissued. Two new requirements under regulations 6 and 12 have also been raised.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
30/08/2022	Full	Inadequate
24/05/2022	Full	Inadequate
16/11/2021	Full	Good
05/06/2019	Full	Good

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 children receive care from staff who— understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; 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 the premises used for the purpose of the home are designed and furnished so as to— meet the needs of each child; and enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c))	27 November 2022
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(d)) This specifically relates to ensuring that any potential ligature points are identified and then made safe.	27 November 2022
*The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, and inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that—	27 November 2022

helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home’s statement of purpose; ensure that staff have the experiences, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; 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)(a)(c)(f)) This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	
*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 the 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)) The registered provider must ensure that they have a system in place that enables only children whose needs match those of children already living in the home are admitted. This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	27 November 2022

The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which— include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child; are kept up to date; are signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)(c)) This relates to the need for staff to accurately record in children's safety plans details pertaining to the individual child. Also, records in relation to any physical intervention are cross-referenced with both the restrictions record and the incident logbook, as per the provider's process. This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	27/11/2022
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*These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

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 5UJ

Responsible individual: Laura Counce

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Michael Dack, Social Care Inspector

Claire Webster, Social Care Inspector

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