

SC034686

Registered provider: Durham County Council

Full inspection

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 for the position held.

Inspection dates: 25 to 26 September 2018

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 **good**

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

Date of last inspection: 31 October 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
31/10/2017	Full	Outstanding
25/01/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
07/06/2016	Full	Outstanding
17/02/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness

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 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— 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)(a)(b)(2)(e)(i)) In particular, that the registered manager undertakes a risk assessment of each young person prior to their admission. This is to ensure that risks to all young people are effectively managed.	27/10/2018
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— a child is involved in or subject to, or is suspected of being involved in or subject to, sexual exploitation; an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious; there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there; a child protection enquiry involving a child— is instigated; or concludes (in which case, the notification must include the outcome of the child protection enquiry); or	01/11/2018

there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious.

(Regulation 40 (4)(a)(b)(c)(d)(i)(ii) and (e))

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, that safeguarding be added as a stand-alone agenda item in staff supervisions and team meetings.

- Where children placed in a home are not participating in education because they have been excluded or are not on a school roll for some other reason, the registered person and staff must work closely with the placing authority so that the child is supported and enabled to resume full-time education as soon as possible. In the interim, the child should be supported to sustain or regain their confidence in education and be engaged in suitable structured activities. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 28, paragraph 5.15)
- The registered person should ensure that staff can access appropriate facilities and resources to support their training needs, and should understand the key role they play in the training and development of staff in the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.11)

In particular, that all members of the staff team receive training around substance misuse.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The registered manager and the staff team work hard to ensure that the individual needs of the young people are met to a good standard. Young people are making progress from their starting points. Some young people have started to engage with agencies that are there to support them. Other young people have made improvements in their health, social skills and relationships with family members.

Young people's attendance in education, training and employment is varied. The staff team members have good relationships with connected educational professionals and

they work hard to improve young people's educational attendance. However, children's plans do not detail the alternative arrangements for young people should they refuse to attend education.

Young people develop positive relationships with the adults who care for them. The staff team members get to know the young people and help to promote young people's self-esteem and confidence. Pictures displayed around the home show the young people enjoying activities with the adults who care for them. Photographs include the coast to coast cycling route and their fun days out. Additionally, the experiences and achievements of young people are captured in memory books and memory boxes.

The staff team welcomes the new admissions into the home. Pen pictures are developed quickly to help staff to understand the young people's past experiences. This enables the staff to implement individualised strategies that are tailored to each young person. For one young person, recently admitted to the home, there is good evidence of key-work sessions starting swiftly. This was to help support his transition and to help him settle.

Young people are confident to voice their concerns and views to the staff team. This demonstrates that young people know that the adults who care for them will listen and act upon any concerns. When young people do raise concerns, staff are effective at managing the situation and, where appropriate, escalating concerns to ensure that appropriate risk management strategies are in place. There is not yet an effective system in place to risk assess pre-admission. This would ensure that the welfare of all young people is carefully considered.

There are communal areas that are well used by all the young people and the staff team. Young people can also have privacy if they choose not to spend time with others.

Young people are supported to have contact with family and friends where it is safe to do so. This helps the young people to have a sense of belonging and enables them to have positive experiences and to maintain links to significant people in their lives.

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

The registered manager and the staff team have a good understanding of the young people's individual vulnerabilities. Risk assessments are robust and identify strategies to mitigate risk of harm. Care plans are written in a way that is likely to help young people to understand how they will be supported by the adults who care for them.

Where there have been safeguarding concerns, the registered manager takes decisive action and ensures that safeguarding procedures are followed. Not all serious incidents have been notified to the regulator.

The registered manager and staff team have good relationships with a network of professionals. This ensures that young people receive safe and consistent care, with a multi-agency input.

The staff team supports young people to learn how to keep themselves safe via regular key-work sessions. The topics covered explore emotions and staying safe in a range of settings. For two young people living in the home, substance misuse has been an issue. Appropriate support from other agencies is in place and the staff team works effectively with them to help reduce the risks to the young people. Training around substance misuse is not currently up to date.

Missing from home episodes have fluctuated. In the past month, there is evidence of a reduction. When young people have gone missing from home, the correct procedures are followed by staff, who take proactive steps to reduce risk. Young people are encouraged to engage in activities to disrupt negative behaviours. Incentives are also put in place to help engage young people and to help them to make positive choices.

Physical interventions are only used as a last resort to ensure the protection of young people. There is a clear reduction in the number of physical interventions used.

There has been one recent incident of bullying recorded. Swift action was taken to address the incident and individual risk assessments have been updated.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager is suitably qualified and experienced for the position held. He is supported in his role by a dedicated staff team. Collectively, they ensure that the home continues to meet the aims and objectives as set out in the statement of purpose. The staff team has a diverse range of skills and experience. The registered manager utilises the skills of the staff team to ensure that the young people receive consistent care.

The registered manager ensures that staff supervisions take place regularly. To further strengthen the safeguarding culture in the home, safeguarding should be added as a stand-alone agenda item within staff supervisions and team meetings. The registered manager has ensured that all mandatory training is completed, including first aid, which was a requirement from the previous inspection.

The registered manager understands the home's strengths as well as the areas for improvement. He was able to reflect on the challenges that he and the staff team have encountered in recent months and has a clear plan to ensure that effective systems are in place to improve practice.

Professionals spoken to are confident in the registered manager's and staff team's ability to meet the young people's individual needs. Comments include, 'They go above and beyond' and 'They are superb.' One professional said, 'They are the best. They are so committed to the young people. There are young people who can be extremely challenging, but they are so proactive in their responses and work well with all the agencies involved.'

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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: SC034686

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: County Hall, Durham DH1 5UL

Responsible individual: Karen Robb

Registered manager: Mark Proffitt

Inspector

Jacqueline Tate: 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](http://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 www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

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 2018