

SC035181

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.

Inspection dates: 9 to 10 May 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: 20 February 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: improved effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/02/2018	Interim	Improved effectiveness
03/10/2017	Full	Good
08/08/2017	Full	Inadequate
31/01/2017	Interim	Sustained 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 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 staff— - assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; - help each child to understand how to keep safe; - have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; - manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other; - understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; - take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and - are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi) and (vii)) In particular, that each young person's placement plan and risk assessment clearly set out strategies to mitigate risk.	11/06/2018
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— - lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the	11/06/2018

home's statement of purpose;
 ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate;
 ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the
 needs of each child;
 ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child;
 ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(a)(b)(c)(d) and (e))
 In particular, that every member of staff completes mandatory safeguarding training.

Recommendations

- Children must be consulted regularly on their views about the home's care, to inform and support continued improvement in the quality of care provided. Due consideration should be given to the child's cognitive ability in the development and implementation of any consultation processes. Children should be able to see the results of their views being listened to and acted upon. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 21, paragraph 14.11)
 In particular, ensure that young people's views are explicitly recorded in Regulation 45 reports and in case records following consultations.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The young people living in the home receive a good standard of care to meet their individual needs. The longest placement has been since November 2017. Despite placements being relatively new, each young person is making good progress in most areas of their life. From the point of admission, young people are responded to in a sensitive and caring way. Staff quickly develop positive relationships with young people, which helps to settle them.

The home is warm and welcoming. The young people enjoy spending time in the home as well as having independent time away from the home. Staff recognise the importance of young people spending time with friends and family members where appropriate.

School attendance is good for the majority of young people. Staff recognise what level young people are working at. One young person is waiting for an educational placement. The staff team ensures that this young person has access to home tutoring, as well as other educational activities. This will assist the young person in their transition to an educational placement.

Staff demonstrate a very good understanding of each young person's likes and dislikes.

Through consultation with the young people, the staff team designs structured, well-planned activities.

To strengthen practice in the home, young people's views could be explicitly recorded in their files and within the Regulation 45 report. This would inform and support continued improvement in the quality of care provided.

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

The young people say they feel safe. One young person who was disruptive in the home has moved on. The young people report that the home now feels more settled. They also report that staff are able to focus their energy on them. Low-level disruptive behaviour in the home is managed effectively. Consistent boundaries in the home safeguard young people well.

There are no reported missing from home episodes. Previously, when young people have gone missing, relevant protocols have been followed by staff. Records reflect the steps taken to safely return young people to their care.

Risks in the home are well understood. Supervision levels are appropriate to manage risk. A professional commented, 'Before [name] went to the home she was high risk to child sexual exploitation. She no longer goes missing and the risks have significantly reduced. I think this is because of the risk management strategies in the home. The staff engage young people and build good relationships with them. [Name] says this is the safest she ever felt.'

Most risk assessment and placement plans are detailed and identify strategies to mitigate risk. To strengthen practice in the home, every young person should have a clear risk management plan detailing strategies to mitigate risk.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager is well qualified and experienced to meet the aims and objectives as set out in the home's statement of purpose. He is supported in his role by a dedicated staff team. The manager and staff team have worked hard to improve practice over the past nine months. The young people are benefiting from the strong management of the home.

The manager is ambitious, and is able to identify the home's strengths as well as areas for development. He has a clear development plan in place. There have been staffing issues and the manager recognises that this has prevented progress being made to the standard he would wish to achieve. Staffing levels are appropriate and each young person is allocated a key worker. Steps are being taken to address staffing issues. There has been no adverse impact on the young people.

The manager works well with a care team of other professionals such as health workers and social workers. One professional commented, 'The manager and the staff are brilliant. They work so hard and keep me updated on everything. They are excellent at advocating on behalf of the young people.'

The majority of the staff have completed mandatory training. There are some members

of staff yet to complete updated safeguarding training. This should be prioritised.

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: SC035181

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: County Hall, Durham DH1 5UL

Responsible individual: Karen Robb

Registered manager: George Lisgo

Inspector

Jacqueline Tate, social care inspector

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