

Children's homes - interim inspection

Inspection date	16/02/2016
Unique reference number	SC035181
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Durham County Council
Registered person address	County Hall, DURHAM, DH1 5UL

Responsible individual	Karen Robb
Registered manager	Stephen Robinson
Inspector	Colin Imrie

Inspection date	16/02/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Good
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection This home was judged Good at the full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has sustained effectiveness. Since the last inspection the home has been particularly busy. One staff member described the time as 'hectic'. The home performs two functions, it offers short breaks to children and young people and also offers emergency placements. There have been high numbers of admissions and discharges in a short space of time since the last inspection. The majority of the admissions have been emergency placements and some of these emergency placements have lasted longer than usual. This has had an impact in a number of ways. Staff have been particularly busy and say they have not been able to do as much work with the children and young people attending for short breaks as they would like and have also been less able to do important outreach work. A number of children and young people have had their short breaks cancelled or postponed. One young person had their short break cut short and had to return home when children and young people admitted for emergency placements were disruptive at night time. Staff have to deal with a wide range of placement requirements and generally they do this well. They report an increase in the demand for remand to care placements and say that many emergency placements are now staying longer. This has meant that they have more involvement in education planning and this adds to their workload. Staff see their role as changing, and feel that a review of the role of the home may be required. However, despite these growing pressures, staff have continued to do some good work. With such a lot of short term work happening at the home, it is difficult to gauge progress with all children and young people. However, there are clearly some very good examples where children and young people have made excellent progress. Two young people who have attended for short breaks over a long period have been supported to improve relationships within their families and have resolved some of their own issues. They have both moved back successfully to living with their families. Progress is less clear with other children and young people attending for short breaks.	

Children and young people admitted in emergency situations have had mixed outcomes. Some have returned home and some have moved on to other placements where some have settled and some have not.

Children and young people are kept safe at the home. There are low levels of physical interventions used, and low levels of sanctions. The number of children and young people going missing is low and there have been no child protection incidents reported. One instance of bullying recorded was dealt with appropriately. There have been no complaints made. Young people have made several allegations against staff. These were all quickly retracted by the young people, but they were properly notified and investigated by the manager and external safeguarding workers.

The inspector observed good relationships between the children and young people and staff at the home during the inspection. The home rent a large allotment close to the house and working on this continues to be a positive activity chosen by many of the children and young people.

The manager continues to lead a strong and settled staff team. He clearly monitors the overall care of the children and young people and supports his staff well. The manager and staff have very good links with external workers and other agencies and this adds to the good service they provide.

There were two requirements made at the previous inspection. The manager and staff have made clear efforts to ensure that they have full information on children and young people prior to admission and this is now happening routinely. The standard of risk assessments has also improved and so this requirement has also been met.

One requirement has been made at this inspection. Children and young people have not been given sufficient personalised care to meet their needs. Key work sessions need to be planned and delivered better to meet identified need and children and young people requiring a short break need to have these when planned wherever possible.

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 six children with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties (EBD).

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
14/10/2015	CH - Full	Good
10/03/2015	CH - Interim	improved effectiveness
02/12/2014	CH - Full	Good
11/03/2014	CH - Interim	Good Progress

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Statutory Requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person/s meets 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 with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
6: The quality and purpose of care standard In order to meet the quality and purpose of care standard with particular reference to ensuring appropriate key work is carried out and planned respite is not disrupted by other work the registered person must ensure that staff- (2)(b)(iv) provide personalised care that meets each child's needs, as recorded in the child's relevant plans, taking account of the child's background.	31/03/2016

What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, 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 who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This inspection focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service 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*.

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