

Children's homes – Interim inspection

Inspection date	31/01/2017
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	Post vacant
Inspector	Colin Imrie

Inspection date	31/01/2017
Previous inspection judgement	Requires improvement
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 requires improvement at the full inspection. At this interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has sustained effectiveness. The home is undergoing a number of changes. Since the previous inspection, the registered manager has left and two interim managers have been employed. The current manager took over on 30 January 2017 and intends to apply to become the registered manager. There have also been some staff changes during this period. The current manager has completed a new statement of purpose and this is currently being agreed by senior managers from the local authority. It proposes a number of changes to the current aims and objectives of the home. In a number of ways, the staff at the home have made improvements since the previous inspection. Safeguarding is now stronger. The number of incidents of missing from home has decreased and the incidents that have occurred have been dealt with correctly. Two safeguarding issues have been appropriately dealt with and correctly referred to and notified. There have been a couple of issues of bullying and staff have also dealt with these well. Some of the children and young people have made progress. Of those children and young people that attend the home for short break respite care, most of them have made some progress. However, some of these short break arrangements have been cancelled due to the volume of emergency admissions at times. These are planned placements with clear aims and objectives. A number of children have been admitted in emergencies; these are unplanned placements and the outcomes have been mixed. Some emergency placements have moved on quickly to more appropriate living situations, but some have drifted when planning has been less clear. At the previous inspection, there were five requirements made. Staff have clearly ensured that they are in receipt of full information, including a basic care plan, prior to admission and also ensure that there is a basic risk assessment at the same time. Staff have then been able to review these and make a more complete and in-depth risk assessment later. Staff have also provided children and young people with better quality individual key work. Therefore, these three requirements have been met.	

However, the two remaining requirements have not been met. Staff have not followed their statement of purpose and have admitted too many unplanned, emergency placements. The statement of purpose says that, 'placements will usually be planned'.

Secondly, the excessive number of emergency placements has again meant that planned respite care for other children and young people has been cancelled, so that their needs are not being fully met.

Consequently, both these requirements have been raised again.

The inspector notes that the newly proposed statement of purpose would change the role of the home and would clearly address both these issues.

The previous interim manager has made some clear and positive developments to the home during their time in charge and has been well supported by a skilled and committed staff team during this difficult time. The current manager was a senior member of the staff team and, therefore, is very familiar with the home, the staff and the children and young people and so offers good continuity.

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 who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
28/06/2016	Full	Requires improvement
16/02/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
14/10/2015	Full	Good
10/03/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness

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 within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
13. In order to meet the leadership and management standard, with particular reference to ensuring that emergency placements are managed appropriately, that sufficient information is available to do this safely and that this information is acted upon, the registered person must lead a culture in relation to the children's home that: (1)(b) promotes their welfare.	31/03/2017
The registered person must ensure that the home is at all times conducted in a manner which is consistent with its statement of purpose. (Regulation 16(5)) In particular, this relates to ensuring that the description of the admission criteria is accurate and that the needs of all children are fully taken into account and acted upon.	31/03/2017

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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