

SC035235

Registered provider: Durham County Council

Monitoring visit

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned and operated by a local authority. It provides care for up to three children who experience social and emotional difficulties and who may have learning disabilities.

The manager registered with Ofsted in November 2023.

Two children were living in the home at the time of inspection.

The children have temporarily moved to another setting while repairs are carried out at the registered children's home. This monitoring visit took place at the temporary setting.

Inspection date: 2 September 2024

This monitoring visit

This children's home was judged inadequate at the full inspection on 22 and 23 May 2024. Ofsted issued one compliance notice under regulation 12. In addition, four requirements were issued.

Ofsted conducted a monitoring visit on 8 July 2024. The inspector found that the compliance notice under regulation 12 had not been met. Further shortfalls were identified during the visit. Therefore, the compliance notice under regulation 12 was reissued.

Ofsted conducted a monitoring visit on 2 September 2024 to monitor the provider's progress in meeting the steps within the compliance notice. The inspector found that the compliance notice under regulation 12 had not been met. A case review held on 4 September 2024 agreed to reissue the compliance notice under regulation 12. In addition, a compliance notice under regulation 13 was issued.

The inspector found that leaders and managers have not made the necessary changes in a reasonable timescale. They do not have effective action plans in place to address the shortfalls that continue to be raised. This prevents service development to improve the quality of care afforded to children. As a result, children continue to be at risk of harm as their needs are not being adequately met.

Since the last inspection, no children have moved into or out of the home. The children have been supported to live in a temporary home while repairs are carried out at the registered home. Staff continue to struggle to prevent children from causing damage within the home. This has led to incidents such as patio doors being smashed.

Staff morale is low. As a result, many staff are ill and absent from the home. This has resulted in the ongoing use of agency staff and staff from other homes caring for the children. Staff do not recognise that the concerns are due to their care and believe that they are due to the children not being compatible with each other. This limits reflective practice. Leaders and managers have not yet been effective in addressing the staffing culture issues. This is impacting on the quality of care and ability to promote change for the children.

Children have detailed safety plans in place. They provide staff with clear guidance on how to support children. However, it remains that not all staff have read these plans. This leads to inconsistent approaches and confusion for the children, for example, around family time and phone use. This often leads to children becoming frustrated.

There continues to be a reactive rather than proactive response to children by those caring for them. Staff have discussions with children about their behaviour, but they are not planned or consistent, and are often in response to an incident. This limits children having the opportunity to develop the necessary skills to manage their emotions.

Staff do not always use effective de-escalation techniques to ensure that incidents do not reach crisis point. This results in incidents continuing to occur. Staff continue to contact the police to support them in managing children's behaviour, despite the young age of the children. This leads to children being at risk of criminalisation as staff are not effective in managing their emotional needs.

Leaders and managers have not yet been effective in addressing staffing practice shortfalls. The manager does not have access to all supervision records or team meeting discussion records. This prevents her having oversight of previous actions to inform decision-making.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
22/05/2024	Full	Inadequate
06/02/2024	Full	Requires improvement to be good
27/09/2022	Full	Good
22/11/2021	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 must take to meet The Care Standards Act 2000, The Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards'. The registered person must comply with 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— 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 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)(a)(iv)(v)(vi)(d))	13 October 2024
The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— meet each child's behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child's relevant plans; help each child to develop socially aware behaviour;	13 October 2024

encourage each child to take responsibility for the child's behaviour, in accordance with the child's age and understanding; help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone; communicate to each child expectations about the child's behaviour and ensure that the child understands those expectations in accordance with the child's age and understanding; strive to gain each child's respect and trust; understand how children's previous experiences and present emotions can be communicated through behaviour and have the competence and skills to interpret these and develop positive relationships with children; are provided with supervision and support to enable them to understand and manage their own feelings and responses to the behaviour and emotions of children, and to help children to do the same; de-escalate confrontations with or between children, or potentially violent behaviour by children; and that each child is encouraged to build and maintain positive relationships with others. (Regulation 11 (1)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(viii)(ix)(x)(xi)(b))	
*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 home's statement of purpose;	13 October 2024

ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child; and 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)(b)(e)(f))	
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— 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); and there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(c)(d)(i)(ii)(e))	13 October 2024

*These requirements are subject of 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: SC035235

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Durham County Council

Registered provider address: Durham County Council, Resources, County Hall,
DURHAM DH1 5UL

Responsible individual: Paul Rudd

Registered manager: Amy Philbin-Robinson

Inspector

Jess Elliott, Social Care Inspector

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