

SC035387

Registered provider: Stockton On Tees Borough Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is provided by the local authority and is registered to care for up to five children and young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home reopened under its new remit in August 2019. The manager is currently in the process of being registered with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 4 to 5 February 2020

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: n/a

Overall judgement at last inspection: n/a

Enforcement action since last inspection: n/a

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

Recommendations

- Staff should continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. Where there are safeguarding concerns for a child, their placement plan, agreed between the home and their placing authority, must include details of the steps the home will take to manage any assessed risks on a day to day basis. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5)
- Staff should be familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective, and clear recording. Staff should record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third-party information. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4) In particular, ensure that plans held on files are up to date and contain the correct information to guide staff practice.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The children and young people are settling well into their new home. Staff continue to build strong and secure relationships with children and young people. This ensures that children and young people feel happier and safer and trust the staff who look after them.

For some children and young people, the transition to the new house was not in line with their individual wishes and feelings. However, staff have encouraged children and young people to personalise their own bedrooms and to have a say in how shared areas of the home are decorated. This has increased children and young people's sense of belonging and permanence.

Staff work hard to build good relationships with professionals and those adults who are important to the children and young people. A commitment from staff to ensure that additional support is provided when necessary has helped children and young people to progress in school. This additional support has also led to creating exciting training and career opportunities for children and young people.

Children and young people are in good health. Routine health appointments are well attended. Staff work closely with generic and specialist health services to ensure that children and young people's emotional and physical needs are met. Children and young people receive support to understand their needs through targeted and reflective discussions with staff. This helps children and young people to be more able to manage their own personal care and well-being.

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

Risk assessments are thorough and identify historical and current concerns. The actions that staff must take to keep children and young people safe are clearly explained. However, staff are not always recording the actions they have taken as required. Good levels of support and advice from staff mean that children and young people are rarely missing from the home. On the rare occasion that children and young people are missing, staff do all they can to find them and return them to the home. This ensures that children and young people feel valued.

Restraint has not been used since the home reopened, and the response by staff to the few instances of bullying has been swift and effective. Staff regularly talk to children and young people to enable children and young people to understand how their behaviour can affect each other. Expectations and boundaries are consistently revisited through well-structured young people's meetings. Positive behaviour and achievements are rewarded with treats and verbal praise. This helps children and young people to manage their behaviour and regulate their responses.

Staff spend good-quality time with children and young people in a home that is warm and well maintained. Children and young people are encouraged to take part in a wide variety of exciting and enjoyable activities both inside and outside the home.

Involvement in after-school activities, youth clubs and community sports teams give children and young people the opportunity to meet friends, learn and develop important social skills.

Staff know what to do if they think children and young people may be at risk of harm. Safeguarding is discussed at length in team meetings and supervisions. This leads to a culture of safeguarding being developed, which helps to keep children and young people increasingly protected.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is managed effectively and efficiently by a suitably experienced and qualified manager who is going through the registration process. She is supported by a very experienced deputy manager who shares her ambitious vision for the service. Staff share the manager's high expectations for what the children and young people can achieve. They know the children and young people well and are committed to providing high-quality care for them.

Development plans for the home and the workforce are of good quality. This helps the manager to identify areas where the home can improve the care it offers to children and young people. The manager monitors the performance of staff regularly and has systems in place to ensure that she is clear about the strengths and weaknesses of the home.

The manager knows the children and young people well. Children and young people are encouraged to share their views, wishes and feelings. They enjoy spending individual time with the manager, when they can chat about how they are doing and share any concerns they have. This ensures that the manager has a clear understanding of how they are feeling and the progress they are making. As a result, children and young people feel confident that they are being listened to and any concerns they have are addressed.

The manager monitors care practices well, and record-keeping is comprehensive. However, historical information held on files does not always reflect children and young people's current circumstances. Having factual and up-to-date information on files would ensure that staff are able to make decisions that are in the best interests of children and young people.

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: SC035387

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Stockton on Tees Borough Council

Registered provider address: Municipal Buildings, Church Road, Stockton on Tees, Cleveland TS18 1LD

Responsible individual: Rhona Bollands

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Mark Proffitt, social care inspector

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