

SC035387

Registered provider: Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home provides care for up to three children with social and emotional difficulties.

A manager has been in post since September 2023 and is not yet registered with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 February 2024

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 26 January 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
26/01/2022	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
26/10/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good
04/02/2020	Full	Good
26/11/2018	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The home reopened in September 2023 after a period of refurbishment. The home is a warm and welcoming environment for children to live. Children have personalised bedrooms and access to toys and activities throughout the home.

Children are welcomed into the home sensitively after planned introductions to meet staff and other children. Children are supported to develop trusting relationships with the staff. This support helps children to make progress from their starting points.

Staff regularly seek children's views. Staff talk to children about their daily activities and how they want rewards systems to work. This helps children feel listened to and involved in how they are cared for.

Staff promote children's education and health needs. Staff ensure that children attend school and their health appointments regularly. If a child is reluctant to attend school, staff work closely with education professionals to give children the best opportunity to be supported back into learning.

Staff support children to spend time with family members and are proactive in making these arrangements. Staff make suitable arrangements for children to spend time with their family in line with their care plans. This helps children stay connected to their important family members.

Feedback from family and professionals is positive. One parent said that they could not ask for anything more from staff for their child. Professionals spoke positively about children's care arrangements, communication with staff and how well staff advocate for children.

The home uses bedroom alarms at night to monitor children when staff are in another part of their building. Staff do not follow the home's monitoring and surveillance policy. This means all children who live in the home will have these alarms activated irrespective of their individual needs.

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

Children's risk assessments are detailed and provide information about children's risks, behaviours and vulnerabilities. Staff understand how to support children and review children's assessment when incidents take place. This ensures that staff respond to children when in need in a manner that is consistent.

When safeguarding incidents take place, staff take prompt action. Staff follow safeguarding procedures, and the recording of these incidents is thorough. The staff

and children are offered opportunities to discuss their experiences and the manager evaluates all incidents. This helps practice to develop to keep children safer.

When children are feeling angry or sad, staff use their skills to try to support the child. Children are sometimes held by staff, but only as a last resort. Staff ensure that the children have opportunities to speak to an advocate and are given time to discuss what has happened. This provides children with a choice as to who they wish to speak to and gives them time to process their feelings.

When children go missing from home, staff follow the children's risk assessments and missing from home procedures. Staff are committed in their endeavours to try to locate the children and will actively search for them. When children return, they are welcomed back into the home and return home interviews are offered. This helps professionals to understand children's experiences and consider what actions can be taken in future to prevent children from going missing.

The staff use a system of rewards and consequences to encourage positive behaviour from the children. When consequences are imposed, the manager reviews them to ensure they are appropriate and effective. This helps to ensure that staff are consistent in their approach and that children can learn from their mistakes.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home has been without a registered manager since November 2022. A new manager has been appointed, but has not yet submitted an application to register with Ofsted.

Regular team meetings are taking place. These provide opportunities for staff to focus on the children and discuss their risk assessments and plans. The manager includes training within these sessions to help improve practice and offer learning opportunities.

The manager ensures that staff have a structured training programme. The staff complete the provider's mandatory training and records are kept up to date. This provides staff with the necessary knowledge and skills to care for the children.

The exit doors to the home are secured by a key lock and all but one of these doors is locked at night. The manager has asked for these locks to be changed, but this has not yet been completed. The current arrangements could prevent children and staff from safely exiting the building in the case of a fire.

Children's looked after child records are not up to date and not kept on file. One child has lived in the home for several months without the necessary documentation being in place. This means staff do not have up-to-date plans for the child's care or a record of consent to make day-to-day decisions for the child.

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 within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which— include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child; are kept up to date; and are signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)(c))	22 March 2024
The registered person may only use devices for the monitoring or surveillance of children if— the monitoring or surveillance is for the purpose of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the child concerned, or other children; the child's placing authority consents in writing to the monitoring or surveillance; the monitoring or surveillance is no more intrusive than necessary, having regard to the child's need for privacy. (Regulation 24 (1)(a)(b)(d))	22 March 2024
After consultation with the fire and rescue authority, the registered person must— provide adequate means of escape from the home in the event of fire. (Regulation 25 (1)(b))	22 March 2024

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people, 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 address: Municipal Buildings, Church Road, Stockton-on-Tees, Cleveland TS18 1LD

Responsible individual: Debra Farrow

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Joanne Wallis, Social Care Inspector

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