

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	12 July 2016
Unique reference number	SC035387
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Stockton on Tees Borough
Registered person address	Stockton on Tees Borough Council 6 Alma Street STOCKTON-ON-TEES Cleveland TS18 2AP

Responsible individual	Shaun McLurg
Registered manager	Alan Powles
Inspector	Susan Atkinson-Millmoor

Inspection date	12 July 2016
Previous inspection judgement	Improved effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Inadequate
There are serious and/or widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected, or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Inadequate
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Inadequate

SC035387

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is inadequate because:

- There are significant weaknesses in the management of protection of young people. Young people leave the home and remain out for long periods of time, with no recorded effort to find them or contact them until the agreed return time, when missing procedures are followed.
- The statement of purpose does not accurately reflect the services provided.
- The manager's decision making when receiving referrals is not recorded. This means that it is difficult to assess whether appropriate admissions are made in line with the statement of purpose.
- Impact risk assessments are not undertaken prior to or at the point of admission. These would enable staff to look at behaviours and risks that may impact on the group of young people as individuals.
- The risk assessment of the locality in which the home is situated does not include relevant information to safeguard young people.
- The registered manager's monitoring of practice within the home lacks rigour and robust analysis. There is a failure to identify patterns evident in records to enable safe practice.
- There are no induction plans for staff. The impact is that there is little evidence of learning, and this prevents new staff from having a reference point for their ongoing development.
- There are no behaviour management plans in place to guide staff.
- Five of the six young people placed within the home have been reported missing with increasing regularity since their admission.
- There is a lack of clear understanding about the information contained in referral and placement documents from the placing authority, and the impact of these on the care that is to be provided.
- Records of restraint showed that no physical interventions had taken place. Incident reports contradicted this, indicating that these measures have been used but not recorded.

The children's home strengths

- Staff are aware of how to make relationships with young people quickly.
- Education is valued highly within the home.
- Contact with family is promoted and supported when necessary.
- The home is well maintained.

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 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'. The registered person(s) must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
*(12) In order to meet the requirements of the protection of children standard, with particular reference to taking appropriate steps so that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe, the registered person must ensure— (a) that staff— (i) assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; (ii) help each child to understand how to keep safe; (iii) have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; (iv) manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other; (v) understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; (vi) take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and (vii) are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies; (b) that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm; (c) that the premises used for the purposes of the home are located so that children are effectively safeguarded. (Regulation 12(2)(a), (b) & (c))	26 August 2016
(13) In order to meet the requirements of the leadership and management standard, with particular reference to ensuring the home helps children aspire to their full potential and promotes their welfare, the registered person is required to— (2)(a) 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;	26 August 2016

(d) ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child; (f) 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(2) (a), (d) & (f))	
(14) In order to meet the requirements of the care planning standard, the registered person must ensure— (2)(a) that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home's statement of purpose; (b) that arrangements are in place to— (i) ensure the effective induction of each child into the home; (ii) manage and review the placement of each child in the home. (Regulation 14(2)(a)(i)(b))	26 August 2016
The registered person must ensure that the home is at all times conducted in a manner which is consistent with its statement of purpose. (Requirement 16(5))	26 August 2016
The registered person must ensure that each employee completes an appropriate induction. (Regulation 33(1)(a))	26 August 2016
The registered person must ensure that— (3)(a) within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes— (i) the name of the child; (ii) details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of the measure; (iii) the date, time and location of the use of the measure; (iv) a description of the measure and its duration; (v) details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure; (vi) the name of the person who used the measure ('the user'), and of any other person present when the measure was used; (vii) the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and (viii) a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure. (Regulation 35(3)(a))	26 August 2016
The registered person must— (2)(a) maintain in the home the records in Schedule 4; (b) ensure that the records are kept up to date. (Regulation	26 August 2016

37(2)(a) & (b))	
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* These requirements are subject to statutory requirement notice.

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further, the service should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- 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)
- The registered person should have a workforce plan which can fulfil the workforce related requirements of regulation 16, schedule 1 (paragraphs 19 and 20) The plan should:
 - detail the necessary management and staffing structure (including any staff commissioned to provide health and education), the experience and qualifications of staff currently working within the staffing structure and any further training required for those staff, to enable the delivery of the homes statement of purpose;
 - detail the processes and agreed timescales for staff to achieve induction, probation and any core training (such as safeguarding, health and safety and mandatory qualifications);
 - detail the process for managing and improving poor performance;
 - detail the process and timescales for supervision of practice (see regulation 33(4)(b)) and keep appropriate records for staff in the home.

The plan should be updated to include any new training and qualifications completed by staff while working at the home, and used to record the ongoing training and continuing professional development needs of staff – including the home's manager. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.8)

- Evaluation of 'missing' incidents should be undertaken to identify any gaps in training, skills or knowledge for staff or to record and retain evidence of what worked well. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.31)

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home is provided by the local authority and provides accommodation for up to six young people who have emotional or behavioural difficulties. The home's particular remit is to provide short- to medium-term care. Young people can be admitted in an emergency.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
4 March 2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
23 September 2015	Full	Good
25 February 2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
30 October 2014	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Inadequate
The experiences of young people are inadequate because staff fail to protect them and ensure that their welfare is continually promoted. There are significant weaknesses in the management of safeguarding practice. This leaves young people at risk. The current group of six young people have all been admitted in an emergency situation, five of them within a short period of time. Assessments of the impact of each individual on the other young people are not in place. In addition, the decision-making processes are not recorded. The result is that there is no evidence to match the decisions about an admission to the stated aims of the placement. The purpose of the home is described as providing an assessment of the needs of young people when identifying future placements. However, such assessments neither have a formal model nor result in a report that outlines evaluative information to inform future decision making. This increases the likelihood of future placement breakdown. Young people use plain language when referring to living at the home, stating, 'It's all right' or 'Ok'. The home has a very busy atmosphere, with young people coming and going often with little explanation given to staff about where they are going or when they will return. Records demonstrate the movements of young people in and out of the home. However, the actions that staff take to prevent this when appropriate, for example late at night or to ensure their safety when out of the home, are not recorded. The impact is that there is a lack of engagement in ensuring that young people are safe, and staff take limited action until their designated return time. A member of staff said, 'We can't stop them.' Staff encourage children and young people to attend routine health appointments and, overall, the general health of young people is good. One young person who stays out of the home for long periods each day is often hungry when she returns. While staff respond to this need appropriately in the short term, there is a lack of understanding of the wider impact on health. Key-working sessions take place to allow children, young people and staff the opportunity to discuss specific topics. An independent reviewing officer said, 'Staff make good relationships with hard-to-reach young people.' This ensures that young people have their day-to-day needs met. Education outcomes for children and young people are mixed. Some young people attend regularly and make progress in reaching educational goals. Some young	

people make good progress, in terms of attendance, from their starting points. The home benefits from having an education worker to promote positive working relationships with schools. The home is well equipped to assist young people with their education, with a large room of resources including computers and books.

Staff members facilitate and, when appropriate, supervise contact arrangements between young people and their families and those important to them. Young people maintain friendships with peers in their local and home community. The home attracts young people from the local community to gather at the front of the property, on occasion leading to incidents of anti-social behaviour. A police officer said, 'Staff try their best to manage situations but, ultimately, police are called', and 'The dynamics of the group impacts on the number of calls to the police.'

Some young people take part in a range of activities such as swimming and boxing club, cinema trips, and in-house arts and crafts. One young person has very limited involvement in activities, restricting opportunities to engage the young person and effect change. The impact of this is that the experiences that the home is able to offer the young person to improve their social and emotional well-being are limited.

The home is well-maintained and has a range of facilities for group and communal activities. The external facilities are showing signs of destruction, with damaged tables and chairs. Not addressing the repairs promptly leads young people to feel undervalued.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Inadequate
There is a culture of a committed staff team feeling disempowered to protect young people because of a lack of leadership and guidance, resulting in serious failings to safeguard young people. Staff do not demonstrate a good understanding of how to keep young people safe, and how to prevent and disrupt child sexual exploitation. For example, since the previous inspection, a number of young people have been in situations of risk with adults. This demonstrates a failure by staff at all levels to identify, understand and effectively manage risks to young people. Records of referral and risk management plans outline clearly the needs of young people. However, their needs are not always delivered by the placement. For example, a young person is identified as having a low mood that is to be monitored by the placement, but this does not happen. Another young person is described as requiring a high level of staffing of three to one and with poor mental health. The placement is not staffed to meet this need. This young person began leaving the home with other young people two days after admission, despite very little information being available to staff. Such lack of information increases the risks around the person and others.	

One young person's behaviour has become increasingly unsafe and is beginning to impact negatively on other young people placed. They disclose to staff information which indicates that they may be involved in sexual exploitation, and the misuse of drugs and alcohol. The young person's sexual exploitation risk matrix identified three risk factors. However, from the records, the inspector identified three additional indicators, significantly raising the risk factors. One young person's risk assessment does not identify 'missing' as a risk, despite regularly undertaking this behaviour. The registered manager has not identified effective strategies with the team to address the safeguarding concerns, placing young people at significantly increased risks.

The home does not maintain a safeguarding record. Such incidents are documented in a range of records, including incident reports, missing from care risk assessments and reports. The inspector identified multiple child protection concerns such as drug use, possible child sexual exploitation, self-harm, suicidal thoughts and fire setting, which are not included in any oversight documentation. The lack of a central record of safeguarding concerns and disclosures makes it difficult for the registered manager to identify patterns and trends and take appropriate action.

Monthly summaries are written for each young person, based on other records held in the home. These indicate numbers of serious incidents and episodes of absence and going missing. One young person's summary identified five incidents. The inspector counted 16 incident records that showed serious incidents not notified to the regulator. This compromises the regulator's ability to review safeguarding arrangements effectively within the home.

The safeguarding policy is significantly out of date. The policy that staff follow is dated 2011. It does not give guidance in relation to child sexual exploitation, despite the deputy manager stating that this was the reason for the increase in notifications in the last two years. There is no separate child sexual exploitation policy. Some staff have received training against exploitation, but not all. The training matrix does not identify what is covered by this training, making it difficult to assess the suitability of courses offered.

There are no protocols in place that deal with the use of mobile phones, despite this being a key indicator in the management of those young people at risk of sexual exploitation.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Inadequate
The leadership and management of this home are ineffective. The manager fails to role model good safeguarding practice to the staff team. This compromises the	

safety and well-being of all children and young people placed in the home.

The manager has been registered since 2014. He is suitably qualified and has extensive experience in working with young people who are looked after. This person is supported in his role by a deputy manager. This allows for a division of the management tasks.

At the last inspection, a requirement was identified in relation to an incident that had not been notified to Ofsted. The manager submitted this on the day of inspection, therefore the requirement is met.

The manager does not have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the home. Records such as monthly summaries identify a need for management comments and sign off. These and other monitoring tasks have not been completed. The impact of this lack of oversight means that practice issues and gaps are not addressed.

Required documents, such as the locality risk assessments, have not been reviewed and updated. In addition, the staff register showed incomplete information for four members of staff. This indicates a further lack of management oversight. Management oversight is required to enhance an understanding of how well the home is meeting the needs of young people.

Since the last inspection, additional staff have been used on occasions to raise the number of staff on a shift to three. This has been required when young people have been displaying challenging behaviours. However, the presence of this extra staff member has not been consistent. The rota is constantly added to and changed, which impacts on the morale of staff. A member of staff said, 'Until a few weeks ago we only had two staff on shift at a weekend. It has been a stressful time in the home.'

Recruitment and vetting procedures within the home are sound. However, other than a week of mandatory training, staff are not given a planned, recorded induction into the home, its ethos and practices. The impact is that there is no evaluation of the learning and development of new staff and no recorded guidance that they can refer to, if needed.

Supervision is carried out consistently by the deputy. The manager and deputy manager then have two supervisions, one to evaluate the practice of the deputy and one to discuss issues in relation to the other staff. Staff training and development are not completed in line with the home's workforce development plan, which states that an evaluation of the learning should be carried out three months after any training session. Records of these are available in some, but not all, supervision files. As a result, there is an inconsistent approach to evaluating with staff the impact of training on their care practice.

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of looked after children is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place, however, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

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 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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