

SC035387

Registered provider: Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council

Interim inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is operated and managed by a local authority. It provides care for up to five children who may have social, emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

The manager registered with Ofsted in January 2022.

Inspection date: 26 January 2022

Date of last inspection: 26 October 2021

Judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

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 to be good at the last full inspection.

At this interim inspection, Ofsted judged that it has sustained effectiveness.

The home now has a registered manager. Since the last inspection in October 2021, leaders and managers have taken some action to address the six requirements and one recommendation raised at that time. However, three requirements are reissued in part. Three recommendations are also raised as a result of this inspection.

Staff do not consistently follow children's risk assessments. This has resulted in a safeguarding incident occurring due to a child not being properly supervised. There is insufficient detail in some children's risk assessments. Risk ratings do not always reflect children's vulnerabilities or behaviours, and missing-from-home protocols are not individualised to each child. This means that inconsistent approaches may be taken by staff prior to the police being contacted. This may place children at risk of harm.

Children's transitions in and out of the home are varied. When children are preparing to leave the home, good care and planning ensure that these moves are successful. However, when children are moving in, risks to their safety and/or the safety of other children are not always fully considered. This means that children could be harmed.

The manager has taken steps to ensure that sanctions and room searches are now recorded; however, there are some gaps in these records. For example, it is not always clear if children have the opportunity to reflect on their actions before a sanction is given, or what this sanction is. When it is necessary for staff to search children's bedrooms, they do not record if the child was present or indicate where any items removed are now stored. These shortfalls do not provide children or managers with an accurate record of the action taken to manage children's behaviours.

The manager has introduced new monitoring systems to give better oversight of all aspects of the home. However, these systems do not extend to monitoring the home over weekends. On one occasion, this led to a delay in identifying and responding to a safeguarding concern. This potentially placed a child at risk of harm. Furthermore, not all notifications are sent to Ofsted in a timely manner. This hinders the regulator's oversight of the actions taken by the service to safeguard children.

Staff now ensure that children's records are detailed and helpful. However, it is not always clear which member of staff has logged which entry. This means there is a lack of accountability for entries made in children's case files.

Doors to communal areas in the home are no longer locked. Children and staff are pleased about this change. Staff have also now been trained in fire safety. This means in the event of a fire, the children are better protected and able to leave the home quickly and safely.

Children said that they feel safe, and they continue to have good relationships with staff. They seem happy and relaxed in the home, and enjoy spending time in the company of staff. Staff frequently remind the children how much they are cared for and this helps them to talk about their worries and concerns.

Children's progress is mixed. For some children, risks to their safety have continued to reduce. However, for other children, these have increased. The manager is able to identify when the home is not meeting children's needs, and works in partnership with other professionals to ensure that children's plans are reviewed.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
26/10/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good
04/02/2020	Full	Good
26/11/2018	Full	Good
30/05/2017	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(s) must take to meet 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
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— 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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)) In particular, ensure that children's risk assessments are accurate; that children have individualised missing-from-home protocols for staff to follow; and that impact risk assessments identify all potential risks for all children.	10 March 2022
The registered person must ensure that— 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— a description of the measure and its duration; details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure; and the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(iv)(v)(vii))	10 March 2022
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;	10 March 2022

are kept up to date; and

are signed and dated by the author of each entry.
(Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)(c))

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that a child's bedroom should only be searched if the child has been informed or asked for their permission. In particular, ensure that search records include if the child was present and details of the safe storage of any items removed. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 16, paragraph 3.20)
- The registered person should have a system in place so that all serious events are notified, within 24 hours, to the appropriate people. The system should cover the action that should be followed if the event arises at the weekend or on a public holiday. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 63, paragraph 14.13)
- The registered person's review of the premises should include the identification of any risks and opportunities presented by the home's location and strategies for managing these. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 64, paragraph 15.1)

Information about this inspection

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.

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: Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council

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

Responsible individual: Rhona Bollands

Registered manager: Brian Thwaites

Inspector

Emma Ridley, Social Care Inspector

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