

Children's homes inspection - full

Inspection date	31/08/16
Unique reference number	SC035387
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Stockton on Tees Borough
Registered provider address	Stockton on Tees Borough Council 6 Alma Street STOCKTON-ON-TEES Cleveland TS18 2AP

Responsible individual	Shaun Mclurg
Registered manager	Alan Powles
Inspector	Sue Atkinson-Millmoor

Inspection date	31/08/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Inadequate
Enforcement action since last inspection	1 compliance notice issued on 25 July 2016 in relation to Regulation 12, The protection of children standard
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

SC035387

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- The responsible individual and registered manager have demonstrated a commitment to improving the care and safeguarding arrangements in the home. They worked transparently with Ofsted and made considerable progress in addressing these shortfalls. This includes a large majority of the requirements and recommendations that were raised at the last inspection.
- Staff receive better support from the point they start work in the home. New staff identified at the last inspection are being well inducted and existing staff have been supported to acquire the majority of outstanding mandatory training. Consequently, staff are better equipped to meet the needs of the current young person and any young people admitted to the home in the future.
- The home has been decorated throughout and signs of previous damage repaired. This re-addresses the issue of the culture presented to young people when they arrive at the home.
- The staff team have reflected on the previous inspection and acknowledged where the shortfalls occurred. They remain a professional team committed to young people.
- There is a comprehensive decision making tool in place in relation to admissions to the home. This helps evaluate the admission against the statement of purpose and the impact on the other young people, particularly in an emergency.
- Numbers of young people have reduced by natural progression to new placements. This has allowed focussed work to take place with the remaining young people.

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

Requirement	Due date
13. In order to meet the leadership and management standard, with particular reference to evaluating the missing from home information to inform training and guidance for staff, the registered person must 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.	30/09/16

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendations:

- As part of reviewing and revising, where appropriate, the Statement of Purpose (regulation 16(3)(a)), the registered person should review and update the children's guide as necessary, and make sure children are given an explanation of any changes. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 24, paragraph 4.23)
- Sufficient staff means a home having enough suitably trained staff (including someone in a management role) on duty to meet the assessed needs of all children in the home, and that those staff are able to respond to emergency placements, where accepted. The registered person must demonstrate every effort to achieve continuity of staffing so that children's attachments are not overly disrupted, including ensuring that the employment of any temporary staff will not prevent children from receiving the continuity of care that they need (regulation 31(1)).('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 51, paragraph 10.1)
- 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)

- Children should be actively encouraged to read their records and to add further information to them. They should be regularly reminded of their rights to see information kept about them and be given information about how they might be supported to access their records in later life.('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.6)

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
12/07/16	Full	Inadequate
4/03/16	Interim	Improved effectiveness
23/09/15	Full	Good
25/02/15	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The provider and the manager have made every effort to ensure the serious failings noted at the last inspection have been suitably addressed. The manager and the staff team have reflected on the findings of the inspection and have made changes to their practice to ensure the needs of young people are met. Five of the young people present in July have successfully moved on to other placements as planned. Due to the fragility of the home the manager has not admitted any young people since the previous inspection. He has demonstrated a commitment to ensuring that the next young person to be considered for admission will have their needs as rigorously assessed as possible before admission. An assessment tool is in place to assist this process including the matching and impact of any future admissions. The statement of purpose has been re-written to accurately describe what the home can provide and to offer staff a framework for practice. A professional working with the home said, 'They get to know young people quickly and well. They come up with guidance about the care package to suit the individual young people.' This needs to extend to the young people's guide to reflect the changes made. This will improve the ability of the home to recommend future placement plans for young people. The atmosphere of the home is calmer. Episodes of missing have reduced in length and staff are now aware of where young people are when they go missing. The result is that young people are able to recognise the care being offered during their stay. A young person said, 'I am much better now, I have a better relationship with the staff.' Briefings have taken place with staff to re-enforce the messages within the 'Guide to children's homes regulations including the quality standards' about the actions staff can take to protect a young person leaving the home and placing themselves at risk. There has been a review of all risk assessments and recording tools which have been shared with the staff team as a group to ensure consistency. The result is that staff feel confident and able to take action to protect young people and manage their behaviour. A member of staff said, 'I can feel the difference in the manager's input.' A range of activities is now planned in advance. One young person has very limited but improving involvement in activities, choosing to spend time with family members. The staff's response has been to include family members in some of the	

activities with the young person. The impact is that the experiences that the home is able to offer the young person to impact their social and emotional well-being are improving.

The home has been redecorated throughout including the exterior parts of the building. The impact is that new young people admitted to the home will have a positive view of their surroundings, feel valued and be less likely to indiscriminately damage the property.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
The safeguarding concerns present at the last inspection have decreased. The risk assessment and management plans have been reviewed and routinely monitored by the manager to ensure that they accurately reflect young people's known and emerging risks. Information has been shared amongst the staff team who are now much clearer about their safeguarding responsibilities. For example, clear protocols have been discussed and agreed to ensure young people's whereabouts are consistently known. This includes a series of welfare checks which are fully recorded and monitored by the manager. In addition, this means that young people admitted to the home in the future will be afforded sufficient supervision and support to ensure their risks and vulnerabilities are effectively managed. There have been a number of incidents of young people going missing from care since the last inspection. These have reduced in the length of the absence and now reflect late returns rather than full absences. Detailed records have been maintained and reflect a robust and rigorous response to managing absences. Staff are diligent in their efforts to ascertain the whereabouts of young people by searching and contacting family, friends and know acquaintances. Staff will contact the police and work collaboratively with them and any other relevant persons to promote a safe return. The impact is that safeguarding is now more effectively managed in relation to incidents of missing from care. The recording of safeguarding incidents has improved. The documentation has been streamlined and this offers staff clearer guidance for practice. The safeguarding policy has been re-written and now reflects actions to be taken in relation to child sexual exploitation. All staff have received training in safeguarding since the last inspection and half of the team have had refreshers in behaviour management training with a second session planned later in the year. Incidents relating to challenging behaviour within the home have reduced significantly. This is in part because the majority of young people left the home	

soon after the inspection. However, remaining young people's behaviour has also improved. This is as a response to the fact that young people are being cared for by a dedicated team of staff with time to focus on them due to reduced numbers. As a result, young people are beginning to forge mutually respectful relationships with staff. It is important that the staff team continue to promote this philosophy when new young people are admitted to the home.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
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. All requirements of the compliance notice issued on 25 July 2016 have been met. A great deal of progress has been made with all requirements of the previous inspection and most recommendations being met. The recommendation that is outstanding is escalated at this inspection to a requirement. Consequently, there are some good foundations in place for providing young people with the right circumstances to succeed. There remains a fragility to this home due to the fact that a number of improvements have yet to be embedded into practice and tested, as currently there are reduced numbers of young people living in the home. The manager has improved his understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the home. Records requiring management sign off have been completed along with other monitoring tasks. Gaps identified by this monitoring have been addressed. However, it must be acknowledged that this has been easier to achieve because of the low numbers of young people and subsequent records to monitor. Required documents, such as the locality risk assessments and staff register, have been reviewed and updated. Management oversight has improved and has been recognised as required to enhance an understanding of how well the home is meeting the needs of young people. Since the last inspection, staffing numbers per shift have improved. This has offered a consistent level of care to young people and allowed for safe practices such as searching for young people who go missing to take place. In addition, the ability to respond to activities in a planned way has improved. The impact is that relationships with young people have improved and change is beginning to be effective. Recording has improved within case records, risk assessments and individual plans.	

However, this is an area not yet fully embedded as some new records have only recently been introduced. In addition, the inclusion of young people's views within these records needs to be explored and put into practice. This will allow young people the opportunity to feel valued and part of the planning process. The impact will be an improvement in young people's engagement in their care.

Recruitment and vetting procedures within the home are sound. Induction booklets are now in place and have been started with the newest members of staff who joined just prior to the inspection in July 2016. The result is that staff are guided and their practice analysed more succinctly to enable decisions about suitability once the probationary period has ended.

Supervision with all staff has been carried out consistently since the last inspection. All staff have had the opportunity to reflect on the findings of the last inspection and be guided on how their individual input can make a difference. In addition, a number of staff meetings have been held to ensure consistent messages about practice and changes to records can be given.

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 children looked after 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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