

SC035648

Registered provider: Durham County Council

Interim inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

A local authority manages this secure children's home. It is approved by the Department for Education to restrict children's liberty. The children's home can accommodate up to 38 children aged between 10 and 17 years. It provides care and accommodation for up to 18 children placed by the Youth Custody Service and has 20 places for children accommodated under section 25 of the Children Act 1989 who are placed by local authorities. The admission of any child under section 25 of the Children Act 1989 who is under 13 years of age requires the approval of the Secretary of State. The commissioning of health services in this home is the statutory responsibility of NHS England under the Health and Social Care Act 2012. Education is provided on site in dedicated facilities.

Inspection date: 16 January 2018

Judgement at last inspection: Good

Date of last inspection: 6 June 2017

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 good at the last full inspection.
At the interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has sustained effectiveness.

At the last inspection of the home in June 2017, four statutory requirements and five recommendations were made. Four of the recommendations related to the education provision and will be assessed at the next full inspection of the home.

Of the four statutory requirements, three have been met. All search records relating to

children's bedrooms are now consistently completed and searches are undertaken in line with the home's policy and children's risk assessments, to help children stay safe and to ensure the security of the home. The much-improved medication procedures ensure that children receive their medicines appropriately and that the risk of error is reduced. When undertaking monitoring of the home's systems, processes and procedures, the registered manager now considers the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff.

One statutory requirement has not been met. Records relating to safeguarding and child protection remain lacking. Relevant details are not recorded in all cases to show important decisions, actions and outcomes.

The one remaining recommendation made at the last inspection has been met. Records of debriefs with children following restraint incidents are now kept with the main records.

Staff members are aware of how daunting being admitted to a secure children's home can be for a child. Wherever possible, staff obtain comprehensive information about each child prior to admission. This assists staff to provide the children with a sense of security and belonging from the start of their stay, allowing them to begin to forge important attachments. Bedrooms are prepared in anticipation of arrival, and include any religious items if the child's beliefs are known about in advance. The bonds children develop with staff during these early stages help sustain them throughout their time in the home, allowing self-esteem and self-worth to increase. A child stated, 'Staff have been there throughout it all, the good and the bad, and my key worker completely changed me for the better.'

Positive relationships were observed between staff and children. Some children chose to spend individual time with an inspector and, for the most part, spoke positively about the home, their care and staff. They did raise some concerns, mainly minor in nature, and, in agreement with the children, these concerns were passed on to the registered manager to look into. Children grow in confidence as they engage with the consistent care provided by the experienced and nurturing staff team. This enables them to develop the trusting relationships that they need to make sense of past experiences and how these have impacted on their development. Children learn to like themselves and recognise that they have skills and abilities that they can take into their adult lives. A staff member stated, 'Over time, she became more accepting of herself and the things she needed to be able to succeed. It was lovely to sit in her final review meeting and hear her talk about her plans for the future and the options she had.'

Children's care plans contain some very good information, providing evidence that the children's needs are being met. Children and staff spoken with, alongside reviewed records, indicate that most children's experiences are positive and that they are making good progress. A recent incident at the home that was notified to Ofsted raised concerns. This incident is the subject of an ongoing investigation by the registered manager. It appears that a child, while being supervised by a staff member, was able to overhear a confidential conversation between other staff in an office area. The child's actions after hearing this information led to negative experiences and also impacted on the care of at least one other child in the home.

Although staff have engaged in training on reporting and recording, there are still areas for improvement in the way that information is kept in children's records. Managers are not ensuring that the 'All About Me' sheets are comprehensively completed and that all entries and records are signed and dated. These omissions have the potential to impact on staff's knowledge of the children's needs and inhibit the manager's overview of care provision.

Children receive good generic and targeted care from a dedicated nursing and mental health team commissioned to work in the home. Partnership working between staff and outside agencies, including substance misuse workers and sexual health services, is very positive. Children's health and well-being improves as their physical, psychological and emotional needs are understood and met.

Managers have referred 14 safeguarding matters to local authority children's services since the last inspection. Records evidence that referrals are timely and provide relevant information for the local authority to consider; however, they lack key information, as stated earlier in this report. There is also no recorded rationale in any of the cases reviewed, to show how and why decisions are made about a staff member's deployment when an allegation is made.

Incidents that involve the use of physical restraint do occur and are carried out in line with regulations. Records are kept of all incidents and are mainly of a good quality; however, they do not always contain enough information to show that meaningful discussions are held with children to demonstrate the support provided and to plan with them how the need for restraint could be avoided in the future. Managers review all incidents, including footage from closed-circuit television (CCTV). The purpose of this is to ensure that practice is safe and appropriate, to note and share good practice, and to identify and act when improvement is needed. In most cases, this appears to work well. However, in one case reviewed by inspectors, there were elements of staff practice that were poor. These issues had not been identified through the monitoring process. The matter was brought to the attention of the registered manager, who confirmed to inspectors that action would be taken. The registered manager confirmed that the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) undertakes an annual review of the use of restraint incidents in the home as set out in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2017'. He confirmed that this review is produced by the LSCB using data and information provided by the home and from any enquiries undertaken by local authority children's services. The LSCB does not directly review restraint practices in order to inform its annual review.

Children are encouraged to share their views and have regular access to independent advocates. Children know how to make a complaint and how to use the system when they need to. However, records are not administered consistently and do not show in all cases that children are asked if they are satisfied with the outcome of their complaint.

Managers and staff work in close partnership with other agencies in order to ensure that the children receive everything that they need to progress and thrive. A particular area of strength is the joint work undertaken with the speech and language therapy practitioners. This provides staff with a deeper understanding of children's communication difficulties, leading to some marked improvements. For example, the support provided enabled one child to feel they had more control over their stammer

when attending job interviews after leaving the home.

Preparing children for transition to adulthood or to other provisions is often dependent on how proactive their placing authorities are. The manager and staff team work hard to ensure that the children are provided with the best possible opportunities, including challenging local authorities to uphold their responsibilities where necessary. Staff will accompany children to visit their new placements and to attend interviews. This continued support empowers the children to make positive steps towards adulthood. A staff member stated about one child, 'She went with us to visit, and also went to an interview for an apprenticeship and got it. That was a massive leap for her. She secured her education placement, chose her accommodation and is doing really well.'

Managers conduct a range of monitoring and identify improvements that they act on to try to ensure that the care that children receive remains of a good standard. However, this monitoring is not consistent. As stated earlier in this report, a requirement raised at the last inspection has not been addressed and, at this inspection, there are shortfalls in records and practices that have not been identified by any of the managers. There are some improvements. For example, there is now an established system for ensuring the quality and timeliness of checks on children who spend time in their room during the day and at night. Managers have introduced an addition to this system called 'live checks'. This means that managers routinely review CCTV at the time a child is in their room to ensure that checks by staff are timely and to the expected standard. Any matters that are below expected standards are appropriately addressed.

The registered managers' monitoring report, which is sent to Ofsted every six months, provides a good insight into the hard work and efforts that go into improving provision for children, and the notable positive outcomes and achievements. However, this report is lacking in some sections. It does not sufficiently analyse or evaluate key practice areas, or show how this analysis has generated any trends, themes, patterns or shortfalls that require attention and action. For example, the most recent report sets out a comparator of the numbers of incidents of restraint during the period from this year to last year. The report states that there is a reduction in incidents, but does not state why this might be. There is no commentary about the quality of restraint practices or recording, what this means for children, and the difference this is making for them. It does not indicate clearly areas that require improvement. The report talks generally about consultation processes, but there is no indication as to what action has been taken as a result of any consultation and how this has improved children's quality of care.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
06/06/2017	Full	Good
15/02/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
27/09/2016	Full	Good
15/03/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness

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 leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— (a) helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and (b) promotes their welfare. (2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— (h) use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13(1)(a)(b) (2)(h))	28/02/18
The procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse or neglect must, in particular— (d) provide for records to be kept of an allegation of abuse or neglect, and the action taken in response; (e) describe the measures which may be necessary to protect children following an allegation of abuse or neglect; (Regulation 34(2)(d)(e))	28/02/18
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 and are signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 36(1)(a)(c))	28/02/18
The registered person must ensure that a record is made of any complaint, the action taken in response, and the outcome of any investigation. (Regulation 39(3))	28/02/18
In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating, the quality of care provided for children; any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children. After completing a quality of care review, the registered person must produce a written report about the quality of care review and the actions which the registered	31/03/18

person intends to take as a result of the quality of care review ("the quality of care review report"). (Regulation 45(2)(3))	
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Recommendations

- Any child who has been restrained should be given the opportunity to express their feelings about their experience of the restraint as soon as is practicable, ideally within 24 hours of the restraint incident, taking the age of the child and the circumstances of the restraint into account. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 49, paragraph 9.60)
In particular, ensure that restraint records contain enough information to show that meaningful discussions are held or have been attempted with children, to provide support, and plan with them how the need for restraint could be avoided in the future.
- The registered person should actively seek independent scrutiny of the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph 10.24. 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2017', Chapter 3, page 70, paragraph 18 and Chapter 4, page 73, paragraph 9)
In particular, the registered person should ask the chair of the LSCB to review whether the Board deems it is meeting its statutory responsibilities as set out in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2017'.

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.

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.

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: SC035648

Provision sub-type: Secure Unit

Registered provider address: County Hall, DURHAM, DH1 5UL

Responsible individual: Carole Payne

Registered manager: Selwyn Morgans

Inspector(s)

Shaun Common, social care inspector

Ann-Marie Born, social care inspector

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