

SC035648

Registered provider: Durham County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This secure children's home is operated by a local authority and is approved by the Department for Education to restrict children and young people's liberty. The children's home can accommodate up to 38 children and young people who are aged between 10 and 17 years. It provides for up to 18 children and young people placed by the Youth Custody Service and for 20 children and young people accommodated under section 25 of the Children Act 1989 who are placed by local authorities.

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.

The registered manager is registered with Ofsted and has managed the home since October 2015. He holds suitable higher-level qualifications for this role.

Inspection dates: 18 to 20 September 2018

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **outstanding**

Outcomes in education and related learning activities **good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 16 January 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection:

Ofsted visited this service in January 2018. This followed information noted by the independent visitor relating to the possible use of physical restraint for compliance. Following this inspection, Ofsted issued two compliance notices. These concerned the provider's failure to take effective action to monitor the use of physical restraint and to ensure that all staff were aware of the legal criteria for the use of physical restraint. These notices were subject to a monitoring visit by Ofsted in April 2018 and deemed to be met.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
16/01/2018	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
06/06/2017	Full	Good
15/02/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
27/09/2016	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 leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(b)(2)(h)) In particular, consolidate the qualitative and quantitative information collected using monitoring systems to establish patterns and trends for consideration within service development plans.	31/12/2018

Recommendations

- In some instances, a child may express wishes that are not always in their best interests or which may conflict with the views of other children in the home. In such circumstances, the responsible adults will have to balance the wishes of the child against what they judge to be in the best interests of the child and reach a reasonable view about the best way forward in the interests of all. The reasons for reaching any decision will need to be carefully explained to and understood by the child or children concerned. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.9). In particular, provide young people with a balanced healthy diet along with treats during the week in moderation, role-modelling how this is to be achieved within a family.
- The ethos of the home should support each child to learn. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 29, paragraph 5.18). In particular, ensure that leaders' plans to make further improvements to the education provision are implemented to ensure that the quality of education and outcomes that children achieve are consistently good or better in all subjects.
- The ethos of the home should support each child to learn. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 29, paragraph 5.18). In particular, ensure that the plans managers have established to improve children's access to appropriate digital reading, learning and research materials are

implemented without delay.

- The ethos of the home should support each child to learn. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 29, paragraph 5.18). In particular, leaders should support education staff to improve their links with other professionals. They should also have access to appropriate training, so that they are better able to help children to address the reasons for their disruptive behaviours. They should adopt strategies to manage this in lessons they deliver so that disruption to the other children's learning is minimised.
- The registered person should ensure that all incidents of control, discipline and restraint are subject to systems of regular scrutiny. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.36). This is with specific reference to ensuring that records of restraint are afforded the same level of scrutiny given to reviewing closed-circuit television (CCTV). This is to ensure that staff's written account is an accurate reflection of the actual incident, and that the record includes a view about whether any injuries that may have been sustained by the child fit with the information about the incident.
- Children should be encouraged to add their views and comments to the record of restraint. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 49, paragraph 9.60). This is with specific reference to ensuring that, when a debrief with a child or young person takes place, there is a clear record made of this within the completed restraint report.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children flourish in the centre. Care staff, education staff and health staff deliver nurturing care and support. This care reflects children's individual needs, risks and vulnerabilities. Children feel safe and build positive relationships with staff. These good relationships help children to grow in confidence and self-esteem and achieve the aims of their care plans.

Staff encourage children to express their opinions regarding the care that they receive. They use daily discussions, key-work sessions and children's 'house' meetings to consult with children. Children's views are central to internal and external care planning review processes. Consequently, children's wishes influence their care and they are involved in decisions about their future.

Children participate in a wide and varied range of enjoyable activities. These include gym sessions, football, arts and crafts, baking and listening to and making music. Staff make sure that leisure and social activities operate as part of the daily routines in the centre, and that clear and consistent boundaries and expectations support these activities. This helps children to develop new interests, hobbies and social skills.

Staff work hard to encourage children to eat a balanced diet. However, children have recently voiced their dissatisfaction at changes to the menu. On occasions, children are critical of the quality of food and the very limited access to biscuits and crisps. Further adjustments are needed to introduce an acceptable balance in providing children with a

realistic healthy diet alongside treats, to reflect family life.

Children benefit from easy on-site access to physical, psychological and emotional health support. This includes access to substance misuse services when appropriate. Health staff use a comprehensive health assessment tool (CHAT) to quickly identify children's health and well-being needs. This assessment informs an individual care plan for each child. Health staff regularly review and update these plans, which ensures that the plans remain reflective of children's health needs.

A team of physical health nurses with a broad skills mix provides excellent support to children during the week. Visiting general practitioners and a dentist hold regular sessions. Other visiting health professionals, including an optician, visit the centre when required. Appropriate arrangements are in place to enable children to access out-of-hours health support.

Substance misuse practitioners provide children with a good range of individual and group work. Sessions include targeted interventions for those with specific substance misuse needs. These practitioners support care staff to understand the needs of children with substance problems and use feedback from children to inform service delivery.

An external health provision provides children with bespoke emotional support. The multidisciplinary team includes psychologists, psychiatrists, registered mental health nurses and a speech and language therapist. This dedicated team provides a wide range of appropriate therapeutic interventions through individual work. These interventions are effective in improving children's psychological and emotional well-being. The Secure Stairs programme, to introduce an integrated framework to address the needs of children in secure settings, continues to develop. For example, an implementation team is working to increase awareness of this framework across the centre. These ongoing improvements mean that children benefit from formulation-based care planning to meet their individual health needs.

All care staff who administer medicines are suitably trained, and medicines are appropriately stored. Nursing staff conduct weekly audits to ensure that medication administration processes are safe. Administration errors are appropriately investigated, with a view to improving performance. Staff have developed good links with a local pharmacist to help review medicine management.

Partnership working and collaboration between health staff, education staff and care staff continue to improve. This impacts positively on the quality of the healthcare provision. Health staff are involved in a wide range of multidisciplinary meetings. Children are positive about the care and support they receive from health staff.

Staff begin to prepare children to move on from the centre at the earliest and most suitable opportunity. For some children, leaving the centre means preparing to return to their families. For others, it means a planned move to another secure setting. Staff are sensitive to children's individual needs and circumstances, and work in partnership with others to help children to develop their emotional resilience. They work with placing authorities and youth justice teams. Staff from all health services work closely with children to support them before they leave the home. They ensure that health information is shared with community services and other settings, and that children know how to access support. This ensures that children's transitions are mostly positive.

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

Children say that they feel safe in the home. Staff have the appropriate skills and knowledge to continually assess and reassess children's risks and safety.

Children are subject to regular multi-agency team around the child (TAC) meetings. Staff use these to review and update risk assessments and safety plans. Children's individual plans and risk assessments accurately reflect any concerns about a child's safety and presenting behaviours, such as self-harm, violence and aggression. These also provide staff with appropriate guidance to keep children safe. This collaborative working further promotes children's welfare, safety and security.

Care staff, education staff and health staff are competent in their assessment and monitoring of children's risks of self-harm. They work in partnership to collate relevant information and observations, and effectively communicate this knowledge to all relevant staff across the centre. To further support this approach, senior managers ensure that staff have easy access to clear policies and procedures. This integrated practice helps staff to focus on children's vulnerabilities and protect them from harm.

Children's safety plans and risk assessments emphasise monitoring checks for staff to complete. Staff record all observations, as prescribed in children's safety plans, including observations during the night. Records demonstrate the frequency that staff complete these checks, and detail both their verbal and their physical interactions with children at these times. Managers regularly audit these records, reviewing both written entries and CCTV recordings when appropriate. This additional layer of scrutiny helps managers to quickly identify any practice shortfalls that may compromise children's well-being.

Staff are sensitive and responsive to children's moods and changes in behaviours. They take account of children's histories, known triggers to behaviours, changes in relationships with peers or staff, and changes to external factors such as contact with their families. Staff share this information during daily handovers. The introduction of 'concerns forms' enables all staff to note a concern about a child, however minor. Case managers continually add this information to children's records. Consequently, case managers can track patterns in children's behaviours and act when necessary to keep them safe.

The use of physical restraint is proportionate and appropriate. Staff generally complete restraint records to a good standard. Nevertheless, there are some occasions when, due to the availability of CCTV to confirm the description of the event, staff do not complete written records in sufficient detail. This recording shortfall does not reflect unsafe practice and does not impact on children's safety. Staff always seek children's comments following the use of restraint. However, there are occasions when staff do not record these comments within the restraint record or refer to where these are captured.

Health staff complete follow-up checks on children following every incident of restraint and record these checks within the restraint record. However, it is not always clear from these records if any injuries noted are because of the restraint and if they are proportionate to the use of this measure of control. Further clarity within these records would enhance senior managers' scrutiny of the use of physical restraint.

All physical restraints are subject to review by a senior manager, the duty manager and a lead nurse. This process includes the assessment of written records and CCTV. Senior

managers use this review activity to make sure that staff practice is lawful and in line with legislative frameworks and internal procedures. Managers identify any lessons learned, including aspects of positive and effective practice, and regularly provide staff with constructive feedback. As a further measure to protect children, a representative of the local safeguarding children's board also reviews incidents of restraint.

On occasion, staff use enforced single separations and/or managing away procedures when necessary to protect individual children or groups of children from harm. In these circumstances, staff take account of children's individual risk assessments. They detail the rationale for using this measure of control and include authorisation from senior managers. This means that this additional deprivation of children's liberty is only used in accordance with stringent policies designed to keep children safe.

All personal searches of children are proportionate, and intelligence-led. Staff complete these with sensitivity, protecting young people's dignity. Managers and staff apply this good practice ethos when searching young people's bedrooms and communal areas. Records are audited by managers to ensure consistent, safe practice.

Senior managers appropriately refer all safeguarding concerns to the local authority. When required, they contact the designated officer for the local authority for advice and guidance. Senior managers and the local authority work in partnership to convene prompt strategy discussions and meetings, and ensure that children are kept up to date with regard to progress and outcomes of their concerns. These arrangements help to protect children from harm.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The registered manager and senior leadership team are committed to keeping children safe and helping them make good progress in all areas of their lives. The senior leadership team is aspirational for children and leads a dedicated and nurturing staff team. The registered manager continually champions a motivational 'can do' culture in the home that enhances children's current and future opportunities.

The senior leadership team is ambitious for the children and disseminates this vision to staff across the centre. Senior leaders constantly strive to implement new and innovative practices, including embracing the Secure Stairs model, to supplement the support programmes that children already access.

Partnership working relationships with other professionals, such as the youth custody service and local authorities, are strong. This collaborative approach supports children's transition to community placements or other establishments within the secure estate. When the performance of other agencies falls short of acceptable standards, or compromises children's progress, the registered manager is tenacious in his challenge. This ensures that others take responsibility for their actions and inactions.

Since the last inspection, the registered manager has taken extensive steps to review and revise internal monitoring systems. These now better reflect the day-to-day operation of the service, the good quality of care for children, the progress and safety of children, and the impact of staff actions on outcomes for children. These systems include children's opinions and feedback, and the views of other agencies and families.

The registered manager is aware of the need to consolidate the qualitative and

quantitative information collected through the audit process to identify service patterns and trends. Senior managers plan to incorporate these into service development plans. This will ensure that the service continues to adapt to meet children's changing, and often challenging, needs. However, currently this plan remains in its infancy.

Most staff hold suitable level qualifications for their role, with others working to achieve these within required timescales. Internal and external training programmes are robust and reflective of children's collective and individual needs. Staff regularly refresh their knowledge and skills through refresher courses. These sessions incorporate a wide and varied range of topics. As a result, staff have the skills, experience and knowledge they need to work with complex and challenging children.

Managers ensure that staff receive regular practice-related formal supervision. It is a considerable strength of the service that this process is further supported by group supervision, peer mentoring, counselling services, a listening service and reflective learning sessions. These avenues allow and encourage staff to recognise their learning needs and review their practice, while recognising the personal emotional impact that working in the centre may have on their own welfare and well-being. This means that staff develop the necessary resilience to continue to focus on meeting children's needs when their behaviours may be challenging and disruptive.

The registered manager, supported by the senior leadership team and wider staff team, promotes equality and diversity. Staff participate in awareness sessions and use their knowledge and experience to deliver key-work sessions to children. This helps children to understand prejudice and bigotry and appreciate differences, creating a culture of zero tolerance regarding discrimination.

Outcomes in education and related learning activities: good

The headteacher and other senior managers continue to make well-considered improvements to the education provision and the education curriculum. The headteacher has clear plans in place to resolve the few remaining weaknesses and further improve the consistency and quality of education.

The headteacher is supported in her role by the local authority school improvement service. She continues to successfully address any instances of staff underperformance. The headteacher and other senior managers implement a broad range of quality assurance and performance management arrangements effectively. This means that they have a good understanding of the strength of the provision, and of the few aspects where the quality of teaching and outcomes for children require improvement.

Teachers establish children's starting points and support needs quickly and effectively when they arrive at the centre. They use this information well to plan a suitable curriculum for each child that meets their needs. Children experience a broad core curriculum with a good range of optional vocational subjects. They make good and sometimes excellent progress in most subjects, including English and mathematics. However, the progress they make in a few subjects, such as science, requires further improvement.

Teaching staff now better promote the use of the library. They do this through a range of initiatives, such as reading groups and during English and humanities lessons. However, plans to improve children's access to online and digital reading and research

materials are making slow progress.

Children and education staff develop excellent relationships. Staff set high expectations. These help most children to make significant improvements to their attitude and willingness to participate in education. Staff use a good range of after-school activities to consolidate these good relationships and to resolve concerns and issues that may have developed during lessons. This supports children to prioritise their learning.

Staff respond swiftly and flexibly to any disruptive incidents that occur during lessons. However, due to the complex issues that children experience, a few who are not able to participate in planned learning activities can adversely influence the learning and behaviours of other children.

All teaching staff carefully consider children's views in the design of the curriculum and the composition of groups in lessons. For example, senior staff and education leaders work collaboratively with local colleges to deliver specialist subjects that children request, such as animal care. Children say that they understand and welcome the links between good behaviour and engagement in education and the rewards scheme operated across the centre. This supports their attendance.

Teachers plan a good range of activities that enable children to explore issues about life in modern Britain and the wider world. These help children to learn about the importance and benefits of tolerating and respecting the views of others, and the consequences for individuals and society when this does not happen. Through the education curriculum, teachers ensure that children develop a good understanding about how to keep themselves safe. Children learn about the risks of radicalisation and extremism effectively.

Staff ensure that children adopt safe working practices in practical lessons. However, they do not always model appropriate behaviours by wearing appropriate personal protective equipment themselves.

Information about this inspection

For inspections of secure children's homes, Ofsted is assisted by an inspector from the Care Quality Commission (CQC) in Ofsted's evaluation of health services provided for children (authorised by HMCI under section 31 of the Care Standards Act 2000).

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.

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: Margaret Whellans

Registered manager: Selwyn Morgans

Inspector(s)

Jo Stephenson, lead social care inspector

Debbie Foster, social care inspector

Cathey Moriarty, social care inspector

Paul Scott, social care inspector

Malcolm Fraser, further education and skills inspector

Tim Byrom, health and justice inspector, Care Quality Commission (CQC)

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