

SC036773

Registered provider: Gateshead Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned and managed by a local authority. It provides care for up to five children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

At the time of the inspection, four children were living in the home.

There has been no registered manager since 31 August 2024. The acting manager has applied to register with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 May 2025

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	good
---	------

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

Date of last inspection: 2 July 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
02/07/2024	Full	Requires improvement to be good
16/11/2023	Full	Good
04/10/2022	Full	Good
08/06/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children experience stability and a sense of belonging, as they live in the home for a long time. A stable staff team provides the children with consistency. This enables children to develop positive and trusting relationships with the adults who care for them. Children speak positively about staff and the enjoyable experiences they have together.

Staff provide children with personalised nurturing care. They understand the impact of the children's early childhood trauma on their current presenting needs and behaviours. The manager uses support from partner agencies to further enhance staff's knowledge of the children's emotional health needs and develop strategies to meet those needs.

Children make progress from their starting points of living in the home. For example, children develop maturity and their independence skills and have new experiences, such as going on holiday. Furthermore, staff support children to make educational progress and aspire for the future. One educational professional said, '[Name of child] is talking about their GCSEs and their future; this is the first in a long time.'

Staff develop positive relationships with the children's families. Staff take part in significant family events, such as supporting children to visit family out of the local area. Staff help parents to understand the children's needs, which provides consistency for children. This supports children to spend quality time with their loved ones.

Staff document the children's experiences in a way that is helpful to the child. They give a detailed overview of each day, including any challenges, balanced alongside positives. Staff use compassionate and child-centred language when describing difficult situations. They create opportunities for children to access a range of enjoyable activities. Staff capture these memories in photo books for the children to cherish.

Some areas of the home are more homely due to displayed photos of the children. Children are involved in personalising the home, such as building a dining table together. This supports the children to take pride in their environment. However, some areas in the home need refurbishment and are not being used because of this, limiting the potential of the environment for the children. Furthermore, some areas of the home are locked, such as the utility area. This prevents children from freely accessing the area where they can develop their independence skills.

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

Staff ensure that each child has an up-to-date individualised risk assessment. Staff regularly review the risks to ensure that they reflect the children's needs and give clear guidance about what actions staff should take to safeguard children. Staff encourage children to contribute to their plans. For example, one child developed their communication plan. This helped the child to feel listened to and experience care in line with their wishes.

There is a proactive response when children go missing from care. Staff actively search the local area, and throughout the night if required. Staff coordinate with children's families and partner agencies to work on returning children safely home. The manager escalates concerns when safeguarding risks increase. This has led to a reduction in missing-from-care episodes recently.

Incidents of bullying within the home are reducing, although do still occur. Staff speak to all children involved and reflect with them on the impact their behaviour can have on one another. Triggers to the incidents are known and appropriate action is being taken to address these concerns. The manager has effective oversight of incidents and is driving forward change.

Staff de-escalate behavioural incidents effectively. They take action in line with the children's agreed plans. Staff's practice is proportionate and necessary to keep children safe from harm. Incident records are well written and support the manager's oversight of the event, helping to assess if further action is needed. Regular reflective conversations are helping children become more accepting of discussions about their behaviour. As a result, children are developing better coping skills when experiencing difficult emotions or when faced with unsafe situations.

Staff help children to discuss aspects of their care and sensitive topics such as their emotional health needs or substance misuse. Children feel comfortable talking about these matters and share how they are feeling because of their positive relationships with staff. One child said, 'I feel that I understand myself more.' Staff provide advice and praise, while also challenging when needed. This allows children to learn from concerns and supports a reduction in incidents occurring.

There has been delay in completing discussions with one child about safe phone use and internet safety. This limits the child developing knowledge and skills on keeping safe for when they do have access to a phone.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager has a good understanding of the shortfalls raised at the previous inspection. She has been supported by the deputy managers to make improvements to the service. This has resulted in the children's quality of care improving. The manager continues to strive for service improvement and has an action plan that prioritises areas of development.

Staff speak about the manager in high regard. They value the support from the management team. One member of staff said, 'I've been supported by an approachable management team who consistently go above and beyond to ensure that both staff and young people feel valued, safe and empowered. Their leadership creates a warm, structured and nurturing environment that allows everyone to thrive.'

The manager has effective monitoring systems that support her to have clear oversight of the home. The manager uses these tools to identify gaps in staff knowledge and areas of good practice. This enables the manager to implement guidance and training opportunities for staff to develop their practice. As a result, children are being cared for by skilled and knowledgeable adults.

Staff benefit from regular practice-related supervision sessions and team meetings. The manager ensures that reflective discussions focus on the children. The manager invites partner agencies to attend team meetings to share knowledge, for example the local authority designated officer. Furthermore, the managers ensure that staff learn from one another, such as delivering presentations about the guidance that governs their practice.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the children's home is a nurturing and supportive environment that meets the needs of their children. It should be a homely, domestic environment. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that the design and function of the home enable children to develop independence skills, including through encouraging independent use of kitchen and laundry areas. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 17, paragraph 3.25)
- The registered person should ensure that staff take reasonable precautions and make informed professional judgements based on children's individual needs and developmental stage about when to allow them to take a particular risk or follow a particular course of action. If a child makes a choice that would place them or another person at significant risk of harm, staff should assist them to understand the risks and manage their risk-taking behaviour to keep themselves safe, including safe use of social media and the internet. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.7)

Information about this 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: SC036773

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Gateshead Council

Registered provider address: Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Council, Civic Centre, Regent Street, Gateshead NE8 1HH

Responsible individual: Lesley Thompson

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Jess Elliott, Social Care Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2025