

SC059203

Registered provider: Northumberland County 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 short breaks for up to six children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The manager registered with Ofsted 28 October 2025.

Inspection dates: 14 to 17 November 2025

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 7 March 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
07/03/2025	Full	Good
21/03/2024	Full	Good
20/01/2023	Full	Good
10/12/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Staff provide a good quality of care to children. Staff and children know each other well as staff have been in their roles for many years. The children have trusting relationships with staff. Staff show the children that they enjoy spending time with them and that they are important. This provides the children with the stability and predictability to improve their sense of belonging for the duration of their stay.

Children are well prepared to spend time at the short-break service. Staff communicate and work effectively with the family and other professionals to make these experiences positive for children. Staff provide children with an appropriate and planned ending, which gives all children a sense of closure.

Staff ensure that children's voices are heard using their chosen style of communication. They provide children with the resources to choose new activities and express how they feel and their likes or dislikes. Children are confident in sharing their views and telling staff what they need.

The experiences that children enjoy contribute to the progress they are making. Staff support children to develop new life skills, and this leads to children learning to sleep in their own beds and eat solid food. Staff send families updates of what children have done during their stay. These are brief, and the manager does not keep a record of the information that has been shared with family members.

Staff are aware of the health needs of the children. However, one child has a specific meal plan, but the staff do not keep a record of what they eat. This does not provide assurances that staff are following the child's plan.

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

Staff understand the children's risks well. Staff support children to keep themselves safe, teaching them about topics such as road safety. Staff understand the need to provide ongoing prompts to help them to process the learning. Children are safer as a result.

Staff are proactive in helping children to understand behaviours that are not acceptable or that can lead to children feeling bullied. Staff do this using enjoyable resources and activities such as arts and crafts. Children successfully identify behaviours that are either friendly or unfriendly. Children demonstrate a high level of respect and patience towards each other.

There is an effective process in place for administering medication. Two staff members authorise medication, and regular audits are carried out. This means there are no medication errors recorded.

Most staff are trained in fire safety. Staff understand the impact of fire drills on children who are affected by sensory influences, and they adapt practice to accommodate this. Fire equipment is regularly checked and fit for purpose.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The staff team are all experienced, and most hold the required qualification. The manager is confident in the staff's ability to meet children's needs.

The manager and staff team are enthusiastic and take pride in their work. Staff feel valued in their role and recognise the positive impact they have on children's lives. The staff speak highly of the support provided by leaders and managers. This means children are cared for by staff who enjoy their work and want to be there.

The manager ensures that staff practice is child focused. Staff discussions about the children demonstrate a natural and empathetic approach. Staff role model positive behaviour, including tolerance and patience. Staff are skilled at demonstrating this in a calm and natural way.

The manager and staff team work effectively with partner agencies. Communication is identified as a particular strength. This ensures that everyone is well informed and working towards a shared goal for children.

Staff are provided with regular supervision sessions. They reflect on their practice and discuss the children at length. However, staff do not have an annual appraisal of their practice. This prevents the manager from setting new learning and development goals for staff.

On one occasion, the manager did not record a complaint about staff practice. Consequently, this was not fully investigated, and learning was not identified for the member of staff concerned. Furthermore, this hinders the manager in having effective oversight of staff practice in the home.

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, The 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— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and 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)(a)(b) (2)(h))	30 January 2026
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))	30 January 2026
The registered person must ensure that all employees— have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33 (4)(c))	30 January 2026

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that staff are 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 way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third-party information. ('Guide to the Children's Home's Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

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: SC059203

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Northumberland County Council

Registered provider address: County Hall, Morpeth, Northumberland NE61 2EF

Responsible individual: Adam Hall

Registered manager: Daniel Thompson

Inspector

Lisa Gordon, Social Care inspector

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