

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	23/08/2016
Unique reference number	SC356963
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Kirkless Council
Registered provider address	Kirklees Council, 30 Market Street, Huddersfield HD1 2HG

Registered manager	Victor Szczesnowicz
Inspector	Pauline Yates
Responsible individual	Bev Paris

Inspection date	23/08/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Declined in effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Requires improvement
The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Requires improvement
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement

SC356963

Summary of findings

The children's home's provision requires improvement because:

- Young people are admitted to the home under emergency situations without any supporting paperwork. At the point of admission, any possible risks or needs are not fully understood by the care team.
- There is a lack of effective communication between the care staff and the local authority following emergency admissions. The absence of updated planning documents has led some young people to experience confusion and uncertainty with regard to their future living arrangements.
- The registered manager does not currently exercise any effective decision-making with regard to the admission of young people. This decision-making is made on a resource-led basis. No meaningful regard is given to matching the needs of young people or the impact upon young people currently at the home.
- Challenge made by the registered manager, regarding unsuitability of the home in being able to meet some young people's needs, has been ineffective. As a result, three young people admitted under these circumstances have experienced unplanned emergency discharges due to safeguarding concerns.
- Young people who have been at the home for longer periods of time describe the effects of unplanned admissions as 'chaos' and led some to seek an early move on from the home.
- Three requirements made at the previous inspection have not been met.

The children's home's strengths

- An experienced staff team cares for young people and they are fully committed to their development and welfare. Over time, young people establish trusting relationships with staff, grow in self-esteem and develop aspirations for their futures.
- Staff work hard at nurturing young people as individuals and enabling them to reach their potential. Young people are fully supported to negotiate and resolve any difficulties they may face through the individualised care they receive.
- All young people have an educational provision, and they learn to value the role that learning plays in their lives. In addition, staff provide enriching activities that build upon young people's interests and strengths.
- Young people's religious and cultural heritage is fully respected and nurtured. Staff establish and maintain respectful and warm regard between themselves and young people.
- Over time, young people commit to the home and engage fully in routines, such as cooking, eating together, group activities and holidays away. Young people develop a range of skills that will support their transitions into adulthood.

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(s) must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
13. In order to meet the leadership and management standard, with particular reference to staff accessing training to enable use of the electronic files system, the registered person must: (2)(c) ensure that staff have the experience, qualification and skills to meet the needs of each child.	31/12/2016
The registered person must notify HMCI and each relevant person without delay if there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(e)).	22/09/2016
The registered person must ensure that within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ('the authorised person') has spoken to the user about the measure and has signed the record to confirm it is accurate and within five days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(b)(i)(ii)(c)).	30/09/2016
45. (2) In order to complete a quality of care review, the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating: (a) the quality of care provided for children (b) the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it (c) any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children. (5) The system referred to in paragraph (2) must provide for ascertaining and considering the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff.	31/12/2016
14. In order to meet the care planning standard, with particular	30/09/2016

reference to emergency admissions and impact and matching considerations, the registered person must ensure that children: (1)(a) receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home (b) have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. (2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure: (b) that arrangements are in place to ensure the effective induction of each child in the home (e) that the child's placing authority is contacted, and a review of that child's relevant plan is requested if: (i) the registered person considers that the child is at risk of harm or has concerns that the care provided for the child is inadequate to meet the child's needs.	
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. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)).	30/09/2016
12. In order to meet the protection of children standard, with particular reference to the timely referral of allegations by a young person of bruising following a restraint, the registered person must ensure that staff: (vii) are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies	30/09/2016

Recommendations

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

- When a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from the home without permission, the responsible local authority must provide an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. Homes should take account of information provided by such interviews when assessing risks and putting arrangements in place to protect each child. (Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards, page 45, paragraph 9.30)
- Children should be able to see the results of their views being listened to and acted upon. (Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards, page 22, paragraph 4.11) With particular reference to children's

complaints being responded to in a timely manner.

- Children should be encouraged by staff to see the home's records as 'living documents' supporting them to view and contribute to the record in a way that reflects their voice on a regular basis. (Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards, page 58, paragraph 11.19)
- Decisions about overnight stays with friends should be delegated to the children's home's staff by the placing authority for children looked after. The level of delegated authority should be recorded in the placement plan. (Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards, page 38, paragraph 8.9)
- The statement of purpose is particular importance to this standard (regulation 6 (2)(a) and (b)(i)). Homes are required to develop and keep under review a 'statement of purpose' (regulation 16 and schedule 1). (Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards, page 14, paragraph 3.5). With particular reference to the statement of purpose providing clarity to the placing authority the documents required, in order to provide immediate and safe care to young people placed in emergency situations.

Full report

Information about this children's home

The children's home is owned and operated by a local authority. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for six young people who experience behavioural and emotional difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
31/03/2016	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
15/09/2015	Full	Good
24/02/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
12/08/2014	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home	Requires improvement
Young people arriving at the home on an unplanned basis are admitted without any essential supporting documentation. The risks to other young people, to staff, or to the young person themselves are therefore not fully appreciated. Some weeks after the most recent admission of a young person, the staff are still without suitable care planning documents. This prevents staff from developing appropriate plans, goals and outcomes for the young person and hinders the focus of any individual work that could take place. Due to the lack of clarity surrounding unplanned admissions, young people have not been offered the necessary guidance and reassurance from staff. One young person's understanding of their placement at the home is at odds with that held by the staff. The absence of clear direction with regard to planning has led to confusion and a degree of anger. One young person commented to an independent reviewing officer (IRO): 'I am not a jigsaw piece to be slotted in here, there and everywhere.' In addition, any possible restrictions which may be considered regarding contact with certain people or visiting certain areas, are not in place for some young people. Expectations from social workers regarding the young person's whereabouts are not clear. One IRO expressed concerns about the lack of clarity and direction with regard to this. Since the last inspection there have been six emergency admissions, three of which have ended as emergency discharges within a short space of time. One of these occurred within a 24-hour period. The frequency of young people being admitted and discharged has led some young people to comment that their routines were regularly disrupted through lack of sleep at night due to 'people kicking-off'. They felt that their education was being affected due to being tired. Some young people have experienced disruption in their home life due to the frequency and number of unplanned admissions and discharges. They commented that during this period they sought to be moved on from the home far sooner than they would have wanted. A young person commented, 'It unsettles the group. It depends who it is. They could be really good for us or they just don't fit in.' Matching considerations for young people joining the home, either prior to admission or post admission, are not currently effective. Although young people understand how to make a complaint, these are not always	

responded to in a timely manner. A recent complaint made by a young person regarding night-time disturbance was not responded to for two months, by which time the young person causing the disturbance had left the home.

Young people who leave the home in a planned way are fully supported to embrace the next stage in their lives. Staff ensure that they learn the necessary basic skills, such as cooking, shopping, laundry tasks and good use of their leisure time. This is achieved in a natural and incremental way over a long period of time. Staff are good at including young people in daily tasks and encouraging their interests in cooking. Active inclusion of young people in everyday decision-making offers them a sense of ownership and increases their commitment to the home.

Young people's health improves through living at the home. This is achieved through being offered, and being encouraged to eat, healthy meal options, attendance at gymnastics and dance classes and regular use of local walks and parks. Their emotional health is also supported through regular individualised time with staff and attendance at specialist appointments, such as child and adolescent mental health services.

Notwithstanding the difficulties regarding unplanned admissions, young people spoken to who were admitted under these circumstances feel that they were welcomed warmly by staff. One young person commented, 'They treated me good,' and, 'They are people from the heart.'

Young people enjoy positive and warm relationships with staff. They are responded to as individuals and their cultural, religious and dietary needs are fully met. One social worker commented, 'They know him very, very well. They are able to offer an in-depth picture of him, his likes and dislikes and what he wants to do in the future. He is going from strength to strength.'

The identity of young people is also supported through staff maintaining appropriate levels of contact between the young people and their families. Young people make progress in developing these relationships through the support that staff offer, and some young people have benefited from increased family contact. Young people learn to understand and negotiate positively the individual differences between themselves and others.

Learning and educational success for young people are important to the staff. They advocate well on young people's behalf, ensuring that suitable educational placements are identified and maintained. Young people's achievements are celebrated and they value the role that education plays in their lives. One young person commented, 'I just try hard and I am determined to do well. If you don't, you don't get anywhere in life.'

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Requires improvement
When young people are absent from the home without permission, staff are active in looking for them, trying to stay in contact and liaising with other agencies. For those young people who have been at the home for a longer period of time, incidents of missing from home are infrequent. Staff spend time with young people in order to ensure that they are given advice and guidance around keeping themselves safe while out in the community. One social worker commented about the staff, 'It was positive the way they managed his missing from home. They put a safeguarding plan in place and there was close liaison with the police and speaking to him about where he was going. They did a lot of educational work with him on this. He lacked a lot of understanding.' Although young people are offered independent missing from home return interviews, these interviews are poorly documented. When interviews are accepted by young people, there is no feedback sought by the staff or manager. As a result, risk assessments do not take into account any information that may have been shared. In addition, the recording of these interviews is not kept in one easily accessible place. There is currently no process for evaluating any emerging concerns or patterns of behaviour that might be gained from gathering this information. Physical restraint is used only when other means of de-escalating a situation have not been successful. At the last inspection a requirement was made in respect of the recording of physical interventions. This requirement has not been met. Records are unclear with regard to staff being spoken to appropriately by the manager about the measure, nor is it recorded whether the young person was spoken to following the incident. As a result, one young person was not spoken to with regard to bruises they said that they obtained from such intervention. This limits management oversight into staff practice and understanding from the young person's perspective of their experience of the intervention. A previous requirement, regarding serious incidents being notified to Ofsted, has not been met. Although appropriately investigated, an incident involving possible child sexual exploitation was not shared with the regulatory body. This restricts Ofsted's oversight into the monitoring of these incidents and liaison with the home over planning to address the concerns. Due to omissions in the care planning processes following an emergency admission, some young people do not have clear plans with regard to any restrictions on their whereabouts. Clarity is further compromised by conflicting advice in the care plans and the actual placement of young people. For example, one young person is placed in the area that the care plan states would pose a risk	

to their safety. Although no immediate concerns have been noted, a young person's daily whereabouts are not restricted and are unknown.

Young people are supported effectively to resolve conflicts that arise positively, and staff present as good role models. Young people say that they feel safe in the home and that staff appropriately intervene to help them to resolve any disputes that may arise.

Over time, young people develop close and trusting relationships with staff and young people feel cared about. Sanctions are infrequently used and staff work hard at engaging young people in increasing their self-awareness and how behaviours may effect others. Expectations regarding behaviour towards others are clear and staff continuously reinforce the benefits from positive behaviour. Activities are used effectively to develop relationships between staff and young people and, establish good use of leisure time.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement
The registered manager is suitably qualified and experienced. He has been manager of the unit for over nine years. He leads a committed and equally experienced team of dedicated staff, all of whom are suitably qualified to work with children and young people. Although there are some systems in place to review the quality of care offered to young people, there is no effective system for eliciting, integrating and acting upon the feedback received from parents, young people or professionals. The home's development plan does not currently accommodate these processes or outcomes. The learning that could be gained from young people's experiences is therefore limited. At the last inspection, six requirements were made. Only half of those have been met. In addition to those relating to the making of appropriate notifications and recording of physical restraint, not all staff have been trained in the access to and use of the electronic recording system. There remains heavy reliance upon paper copies of documents being sent through to the home. As a result, more immediate insight into young people's previous life experiences is significantly curtailed through the inability of staff to access these records. Although the manager has challenged the placement of some young people at the home, this has not been effective. Information required by the staff to offer well-	

informed care to young people admitted at short notice has not been forthcoming from social workers. Processes of escalation are not utilised and there has been a reliance upon other professionals, such as IROs, to ensure that care plans are eventually provided.

Processes to provide for effective matching and the meeting of young people's needs are severely limited through resource-driven decision-making, before and after emergency placements are made. The manager does not consider he is able to exercise professional judgement with regard to the appropriateness of young people being placed at the home or their longer-term plans.

Processes such as planning meetings are not fully utilised by the home. The staff and manager do not ensure that explicit agreements concerning authority that is delegated from social workers to the staff are obtained. For example, some young people must await conversations being held with the social worker before decisions can be reached about contact with new friends. This causes frustration for some young people.

The statement of purpose has recently been updated. However, despite this update, it is not clear which essential paperwork is required from social workers to ensure that immediate and safe care is given to young people.

Since the last inspection, three requirements have been met. As a result, supervision of staff occurs regularly and is appropriately recorded. Work is currently under way to develop this further and ensure that there is a more robust approach to the setting and reviewing of actions for staff.

Staff feel supported by their management team and consider there to be a cohesive and supportive culture among the whole team. All staff are appropriately qualified and stability is provided to young people through very low levels of staff changes. Young people feel able to approach the manager, and staff describe an 'open-door' policy that operates in seeking his advice and support.

At the last inspection a requirement was made to improve the recording of young people's key-working sessions. This has been met and young people's views and thoughts are now clearly recorded. However, young people adding to these records or signing them is not consistently achieved across all entries.

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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