

SC356963

Registered provider: Kirklees Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

A local authority operates this home. It provides care for up to four children who may experience social and emotional difficulties. At the time of the inspection, four children were living in the home.

The manager registered with Ofsted in August 2018.

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 October, and 7 November 2024

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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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.

Date of last inspection: 1 August 2023

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
01/08/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
16/05/2023	Full	Inadequate
14/06/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
04/11/2021	Interim	Improved effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

All children have lived at the home for a significant period, two of whom were spoken with during the inspection. The staff have developed a meaningful bond with the children and have a good understanding of their needs. Despite this, there are shortfalls associated with certain aspects of the children's care. Consequently, these areas of practice undermine some of the good care that staff offer and provide to children.

There is insufficient proactive effort to help some children access their health appointments. Consequently, some children have not received their immunisations or attended the dentist or GP.

There is reasonable support and planning to help children to move on from the home. However, there are gaps in the children's plans associated with this aspect of their care. As a result, this work is not effectively coordinated, and the manager overlooks important issues that children may need better support with. Additionally, there is a vulnerability that staff in a new placement will not be suitably prepared to provide the right support due to a lack of planning around the handover of care.

There is good collaboration with the children's virtual school to support the children's access to education. All children have an education placement, albeit there have been challenges to promote and sustain some children's attendance. In these instances, viable, alternative short-term arrangements are put in place, such as a home tutor. Most children have established good attendance at college and are pursuing their career aspirations.

Staff use their personalities and skills to engage the children. The children have someone in the home who they feel comfortable to speak with. However, some staff wear and have their identification badges visible on their person in the home. This practice undermines the good efforts that have been made to create a homely environment.

The staff support children to enjoy an array of activities in the community. Staff and children enjoy meals out and have fun together pursuing the children's interests. The staff understand the value of arranging holidays and outings that broaden the children's experiences.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

A child was left for several hours in a vulnerable situation. Staff missed various opportunities during this timescale to effectively assess and coordinate a response to ascertain the child's welfare. Additionally, the child's records do not capture any concern that staff had for the child, or staff's evaluation of the situation. Consequently, the child's

records give a poor reflection of the actions and decision-making associated in this incident.

Staff are sometimes swayed in their decision-making due to a child's age and legal status. In one instance, this meant that a child did not receive sufficient support around a hospital admission. Staff reflected on this and acknowledged the need to learn from this event.

The manager has made good links with other safeguarding agencies. However, the manager does not always maximise the potential support that could be of value to the children and staff. For example, some children have returned to the home with tattoos. Although staff have addressed this concern with these children, there is not enough endeavour or initiative to learn who illegally tattooed the children, and share this information with the police.

Staff are knowledgeable about people who are considered by professionals to pose a risk of harm to the children. This is underpinned by efficient information-sharing across the staff team. In doing so, staff were able to better protect a child from an unsafe and potentially abusive relationship.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

Leaders and managers have failed to ensure that the home's electronic recording systems are effectively used by the manager and staff. This has resulted in significant gaps in care planning and documents not being used for the purpose that they were designed for. Additionally, the manager does not use the home's records as a tool to evaluate staff practice. Cumulatively, the shortfalls around written records reduce the opportunity to learn and develop effective care practices.

Leaders and managers overlook opportunities to take and share the children's views of their care. The manager does not incorporate the children's views in their biannual review of the quality of care in the home. Neither have the children or staff responded to Ofsted's annual survey about their care. This practice excludes the children's voices and diminishes the transparency around how each child perceives their care.

Staff have good access to training. The training equips staff to respond to difficult and emotively charged situations, such as when children self-harm. Consequently, staff are more confident and able to better respond in such situations. Additionally, staff have the opportunity to reflect on incidents involving the children, with a clinical psychologist.

Staff are supported to reflect on their practice through regular supervision sessions and team meetings. This ensures that staff are learning about new approaches to children's behaviour and increases opportunities to share good practice. All staff spoken to say that they felt supported by the manager and find supervision sessions helpful.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person 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 must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The health and well-being standard is that— children receive advice, services and support in relation to their health and well-being. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff help each child to— achieve the health and well-being outcomes that are recorded in the child's relevant plans; take part in activities, and attend any appointments, for the purpose of meeting the child's health and well-being needs. (Regulation 10 (1)(b) (2)(a)(i)(iii))	15 December 2024
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person;	15 December 2024

take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies; that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(iii)(v)(vi)(vii)(b))	
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; are kept up to date. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)) In particular, the registered person should make clear plans to support children who are moving on from the home. Additionally, the children's case records must have clear information, and documents, such as the child's Philomena Plan, should be used specifically for the purpose it was designed for.	15 December 2024

Recommendations

- The registered person should apply their awareness that children in residential care may be worried about being stigmatised or bullied by their peers for being 'different' because of where they live. Staff wearing their identification badges in the home is likely to create a barrier with staff. This practice also increases the children's sense of being different. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 16, paragraph 3.13)
- The registered person should ensure that children are consulted regularly on their views about the home's care, and to inform and support continued improvement in the quality of care provided. In particular, the children should contribute to the manager's review of quality of care report, and be supported to respond to Ofsted's annual survey. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.11)

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: SC356963

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Kirklees Council

Registered provider address: Civic 3, Market Street, Huddersfield, West Yorkshire
HD1 2EY

Responsible individual: Post vacant

Registered manager: Benjamin Lancaster

Inspectors

Gemma McDonnell, Social Care Inspector
Rachel Moore, Social Care Inspector
Steve Guirey, Social Care Inspector

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