

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	5 July 2016
Unique reference number	SC391993
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	St Cuthbert's Care
Registered provider address	St Cuthbert's House, West Road, Newcastle upon Tyne NE15 7PY

Responsible individual	Sheila Errington
Registered manager	Post vacant
Inspector	Colin Imrie

Inspection date	5 July 2016
Previous inspection judgement	Sustained effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

SC391993

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- The organisation has made a number of positive decisions about the management of the home. The previous registered manager left the organisation after this was agreed with the responsible individual. The organisation has made a strong appointment of an interim manager who will shortly apply to become registered. The responsible individual has played a very positive part in making the appropriate changes to the management and in supporting the staff and the young people through this difficult time.
- The new interim manager has certainly revitalised the staff team and has produced a development plan that covers all aspects of the running of the home. She has made good relationships with the young people and the staff in a short space of time and has set about making many significant changes to care practices and procedures within the home.
- The young people have responded well to the recent changes and are being empowered to take greater control over their lives and their futures. They are consulted well. They clearly have a greater say in the running of the home and they will develop and mature better because of this.
- Education and independence preparation are being given a higher priority, and the staff team is working well to better promote these aspects and to support the children and young people to make further progress here. Most of the young people have made good progress with their education.
- The children and young people are treated like individuals. Placement plans and incentives are in place and are discussed and planned with the young people. Young people have individual plans for their spare time and are able to follow activities and interests that suit them. They are also able to organise individual holidays according to their wishes.
- The children and young people are supported to maintain and develop good relationships and contact with their families and friends. This is particularly positive as all the young people currently in the home are nearing independence.

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
6. In order to meet the quality and purpose of care standard, with particular reference to providing key-work and preparation for independence work, the registered person must ensure that staff— (2)(b)(iv) provide personalised care that meets each child's needs, as recorded in the child's relevant plans, taking account of the child's background.	7 August 2016
The registered person must— (3)(b) notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision (Regulation 16 (3)(b)). In particular, this relates to the change in manager.	7 August 2016

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home is run by a charitable organisation and is registered for the care and accommodation of up to six children with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties and children with learning disabilities.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
8 March 2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
12 May 2015	Full	Good
18 February 2015	Full	Adequate
23 December 2014	Full	Inadequate

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The home has had a number of changes since the last full inspection in May 2015. A manager was appointed in June 2015. He applied to be registered manager and was registered in February 2016. That manager resigned in April 2016. Five other staff members have left and three new staff members have started work. A new interim manager was appointed in April 2016 and this position was made permanent from 1 May 2016. The new interim manager has made a very positive start. This has been a difficult year for everyone at the home, but most of the young people have continued to make good progress. During the period since the last inspection, two young people have left and none have been admitted. Both the young people who left, left in difficult circumstances, but moved on to placements that were positive. One young person left when they became pregnant, but they moved into a successful foster placement. The other young person was being negatively affected by their very difficult, local, family circumstances. Their behaviour deteriorated and a placement was found, with their agreement, further away from their family. Reports from this placement suggest that the young person has made a positive start. Of the three other young people continuing to live at the home, two young people have made good, steady progress throughout the year and one young person has not made good progress during this time. All the young people have good relationships with the staff and this has remained positive throughout the year. They have coped well with the sudden change in manager and this has been down to the particularly good efforts of the new interim manager who has put making strong relationships with the young people at the top of her priorities. The new interim manager has a strong belief in listening to children and young people to understand their wishes and feelings and has done this well. All the young people have excellent and improved individualised placement plans and incentives in place and these have worked very well in a short space of time. These new arrangements have encouraged all the young people to make greater progress in the last few weeks, with challenging behaviour lessening and young people taking greater interest and gaining greater confidence in learning more independence skills. All the young people now have clear targets linked to appropriate incentives. Two young people have made good progress at school and college and have attended well. One of these young people has successfully passed their first year at college and they are planning to attend a second year to attain a higher qualification. One young person has not made progress with their education. They	

did not have sufficient education and refused to attend regularly. This young person has now left school and does have an appropriate training placement arranged to start shortly and they are looking forward to this.

The health outcomes of the young people are also mixed. One young person with complex health needs has had these met well and is being supported very well to self-medicate. Another young person has overdue health checks and outstanding health needs and immunisations, but refuses to attend for these or address the issues very thoroughly. Staff have tried hard to support this young person and have made efforts to encourage them to look after themselves better. Staff make referrals to external professions as required for specialist help and some of the young people do access these.

The young people are encouraged to take part in a wide range of interests and activities. One young person with a keen interest in sports has a programme of sporting activities, which they enjoy very much. They are also able to attend premier division football matches with staff to support their team. All the young people have recently been enthusiastically arranging summer holidays of their choice and these range from active holidays such as camping and walking to more traditional seaside holidays with adventure parks.

The staff support the young people to maintain and develop relationships with their families and friends. One young person has recently increased the amount of unsupervised contact that they have with their family and this is moving forward well.

All three of the young people living in the home are currently moving towards independence. They are all being supported to look realistically at the future and to get themselves into a position where they will be able to move on successfully. There is a much greater emphasis on preparation for independence and pathway plans are in place and being actively worked on. They are clearly maturing and starting to develop into young adults who have aspirations and plans.

At the last inspection, there was a requirement for staff to work in a more individual and personalised way with the young people. Although there have been some improvements here, the work is still not of a sufficiently high enough standard and so the requirement has been raised again. Young people need more planned and targeted key-work sessions that are carried out both formally and informally if they are to make continued progress.

The home is currently being redecorated and is more homely now. Young people are encouraged to take a greater part in day-to-day chores and this is having a positive effect on how they treat the home.

	Judgement grade
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
The home is a safe place for the young people living there. Staff understand risks, assess them well and take steps to minimise these where possible. There have been very low levels of episodes of going missing from the home. The very few occasions when young people have been reported missing have been when they have been a little later home than expected. The staff have made good efforts to ensure that young people are safe when they are away from the home and keep in close contact by the telephone when they can. There have been a few incidents of bullying at the home, but staff have worked with the young people and resolved these to everyone's satisfaction. These bullying incidents appear to have stopped now, but it is clear that the young people will quickly and easily let staff know should any future concerns arise. Over the past year, there have been a number of complaints made and allegations made against staff. These have been well dealt with by staff. The responsible individual is a regular visitor to the home and has a good relationship with the young people. She is respected by the young people and plays an important role whenever there is some dissatisfaction expressed by them. This is a clear strength of the home. The staff rarely use restraint or physical interventions, preferring to negotiate or use other de-escalation methods. This generally works well. Appropriate boundaries and expectations are set by the staff and these work well. The new interim manager is a trainer in behaviour management and physical interventions and clearly values increased training around de-escalation and restorative work. There have been no concerns around child sexual exploitation and no safeguarding issues have been reported. The interim manager has dealt well with concerns around one young person staying out overnight with a friend. The arrangements that were in place were not appropriate and she has spoken to the local authority concerned and insisted on appropriate changes being made so that this situation is now satisfactory. The home is well maintained and free of any health and safety issues.	

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
The previous registered manager left the post in April 2016. He resigned his position and left with immediate effect so that both the staff and young people were surprised and the organisation had to react quickly to put interim	

arrangements in place. An interim manager was appointed from another home in the organisation within a few days. This person was interviewed and appointed as permanent manager on 1 May 2016. This interim manager has not yet applied to be registered manager, but the inspector understands that this application is about to be made. The interim manager has a good deal of experience in residential childcare and was previously a deputy manager in another home within the organisation. The interim manager has a level 5 leadership and management qualification, which is appropriate for this post.

The interim manager has made an excellent start to the work. She has put in a considerable effort in a short space of time and has achieved significant change and development. She has built good relationships with both the staff and the young people living at the home. She has set about the management task in a planned and orderly way, creating a good development plan with clear priorities and has started implementing the changes that she thinks necessary. This demonstrates that she has gained a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the home in a short space of time and has acted on this assessment. She clearly has a strong belief in doing the best for the young people in her care and all her work is child-centred and aimed at meeting assessed need. She is enthusiastic and motivated to ensure the best possible outcomes for all.

The staff comment on how supportive the new interim manager is and supervision is regular and in depth. The interim manager also clearly gives training a high priority and has started to introduce much more training and discussion into the staff team. She has arranged visits to staff meetings by the local authority's designated officer and by local drug and alcohol workers and has other visits planned.

In the ten weeks that she has been in post, there is clear progress in a number of areas and the young people living at the home have responded positively to changes that she has introduced and have made progress.

The interim manager has spent time revising the statement of purpose in line with the quality standards and other recent changes, but has not yet submitted this to HMCI. A requirement has been made for this to be done.

At the previous inspection, a requirement was made for staff to offer children and young people more individualised work and key-work. Although this is improved, it is not yet at a standard that is good and so the requirement is raised again.

The interim manager is confident and well able to develop good professional relationships. This has already been evidenced by her contact with local social workers, social work managers and other external professionals. She is able to challenge others when required and has already made appropriate arrangements for the education and training of one young person where the previous registered manager had not managed this.

The staff team reports that staff morale is higher and that they are clearly more motivated to develop the service. The young people living in the home have responded positively to changes that have been negotiated with them.

The new manager has clearly made an impact on the home. This has been noticed by the independent visitor in their reports and they also report that other external workers have commented on the clear improvements. There has been a general tightening up of staff working practices and greater attention to detail by all. Staff meetings now include regular team building exercises and there is much greater emphasis on training and individual staff training plans. The staff team is close to being the full complement and the strengths of the team members are being better used with increased delegation of duties and responsibilities.

Perhaps the most important change is that the young people are being consulted more and are playing a greater part in the running of the home and in planning their own care and futures. The interim manager has more plans to develop these areas much further to ensure that the young people are as empowered as possible. This bodes well for the future.

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 looked after children 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 that 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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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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