

SC468929

Registered provider: Northumberland County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

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

The manager registered with Ofsted in October 2013.

There were four children living at the home at the time of the inspection. The inspector spoke to three of them.

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 August 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: 22 October 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
22/10/2024	Full	Good
20/11/2023	Full	Good
21/06/2022	Full	Good
11/05/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Staff care for children and know them well. Staff recognise the impact of good relationships in all aspects of the children's care. Children can identify a trusted adult they can turn to if they need something. One child told the inspector that they would not choose to live anywhere else, and they know that staff like them.

Children have a positive experience of moving into the home. Staff meet children in advance to get to know them and gradually build up the time the children spend together. This helps each child to manage and feel prepared for living together.

Staff value children's education and have good relationships with education professionals. Staff make sure that children have consistent morning and bedtime routines in preparation for the school day. This is clearly effective, as one child who did not previously attend school now attends full time. This represents significant progress for that child.

Staff gather children's views through formal meetings, house meetings, independent advocate visits, feedback from professionals and sessions with each child. Staff feed back to the children the outcome of any requests or concerns expressed. This helps children to feel listened to and valued.

Children live in a spacious and beautifully decorated home. There is ample space for children to spend time together, or to break away for time alone. All the children have personalised bedrooms, which reflect their likes and dislikes. This helps children to feel a sense of belonging in their home.

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

Staff know and understand the children's risks and vulnerabilities. Staff update children's risk assessment and plans regularly to ensure that they remain child focused and relevant. Children say they feel safe living in the home.

Staff are committed to ongoing professional development. They develop their knowledge through formal training and their own research. Staff recognise when support is needed from specialist organisations. They are comfortable reaching out to the wider care team to upskill themselves, which better enables them to meet the children's needs.

Children are held as a last resort to protect themselves or others. Staff know the children's triggers and quickly recognise when things are escalating. Staff are creative in their use of incentives, encouragement and praise, which helps them to intervene at the most effective point. Staff work with each child to help them understand strong emotions and recognise how their feelings impact on their behaviour. This helps children to feel valued and listened to and supports the manager to track patterns of behaviour.

Children rarely go missing from home. However, when it does occur, staff know what to do and take effective action in line with children's risk assessments. Staff recognise the value of making the home a warm and welcoming place to be. Strong relationships between the staff and children contribute to only three episodes of children going missing, all noticeably short in duration.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager is qualified and experienced and has strong aspirations for the children. The manager leads by example, demonstrating respect and acceptance in her own practice. This has developed a staff team that has a strengths-based approach, and staff are patient and empathetic with the children.

The manager has an open-door policy and is interested in the staff's well-being. The manager provides regular reflective supervision and annual appraisals. When staff practice falls below the required standard, the manager encourages staff to identify their own areas for development and a plan is put in place to address this. Staff feel supported by the manager and there is a positive culture of ongoing staff development.

The manager holds weekly team meetings. Information is shared with staff to appraise them of important organisation changes. There are regular guest speakers to help staff update their knowledge and maintain a consistent approach for children.

The manager robustly investigates any complaints or allegations. The records kept are detailed and recorded in a child-friendly way. The manager feeds back to children promptly. This contributes to the children feeling listened to and affirms their trust in staff.

There is a strong focus on multi-agency working. Professionals give consistently positive feedback that strong local inter-agency networks make it easier to address issues for children as they arise. The manager challenges partner agencies when their practice is not empathetic to the child. This has improved children's access in areas such as education and health.

The manager knows the home's strengths well. She has good oversight, and good systems are in place to monitor and review children's progress, safety and welfare. When areas of development are identified, the manager implements credible plans to improve practice. However, the inspector did identify that staff do not consistently record all consequences given to children. This limits the manager's ability to evaluate all methods of behaviour management for their effectiveness.

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.

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that all incidents of control, discipline and restraint are subject to systems of regular scrutiny to ensure that their use is fair, and that the above principles as set out in 9.35 are respected. In particular, the recording of all consequences, so that they are monitored and reviewed by the manager. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.36)

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: SC468929

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: Susan Harvey

Inspector

Lisa Gordon, 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 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