

SC472392

Registered provider: Middlesbrough Borough Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned and managed by a local authority. It provides care for up to five children who may have social, emotional and mental health difficulties.

At the time of the inspection, the home was providing care for five children.

The manager registered with Ofsted in September 2019. The responsible individual post has been vacant since September 2025.

Inspection dates: 4 and 5 November 2025

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
---	--------------------

How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
---	-------------

The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
---	-------------

The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 16 May 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
16/05/2024	Full	Good
16/01/2024	Full	Good
22/02/2023	Full	Good
01/03/2022	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

When children are welcomed to the home, they experience a move that is well planned. The manager meets with professionals and previous carers to understand the needs of children and whether staff have the appropriate skills and experience to meet their needs. The manager visits the previous placement to conduct observations without a formal introduction to limit the impact of the process on the children. The decision to welcome children into the home is based on knowledge from the professionals and liaison with parents, who are consulted and contribute to the child's acceptance of the move.

Work takes place with children to prepare them for the move and a transition into the home, but when children want to move quickly, the manager adapts the plan to allow a transition to take place at the child's pace. This holistic approach involves the children and those closest to them and allows a positive experience and successful start to life in their new home.

Children have positive relationships with staff, whom they trust. Children say they can talk about things that are personal, and they feel listened to by staff who care. Children talk about staff as parental figures who bring laughter into their home. Children talk with confidence about leaving the home at 18 years old and the continued support they will receive when they do. One child who receives this support said that she feels 'missed and wanted'. Supported living services say that 'Children receive a regular emotional boost when staff visit them in their new home.'

Children meet monthly to share their views with staff and their peers. Children attend unless they have other arrangements and take an active role in sharing their ideas. Children inform staff and their peers about how they are feeling and the decisions they have made about the food they want and the activities they would like to experience. Children are asked for their input into the decoration of the home and personalisation of their bedrooms. Children discuss their issues and explore how they can solve problems using skills they have learned as part of their independence plan. Staff offer emotional and practical support to promote independent decision-making.

When children complain, their views are heard, and staff take them seriously. The complaints procedure is discussed regularly to remind children and promote the use of the formal process, not just in the home but also when making a complaint about those services they may pay for or access as an adult. Complaints are recorded and staff respond quickly in writing to acknowledge that the formal complaint has been received and is being investigated. Managers speak with children, and if necessary, they also speak with staff and other children to understand the facts. Children have the outcome explained to them in a face-to-face meeting in which children are satisfied with the

actions staff have taken and the resolution. Children say that 'they feel listened to' and 'staff get things sorted'. This shows that children have confidence in the process.

Children are making exceptional progress in education. Children receive support to maintain their education placements or find new providers that better meet their needs. The manager and staff work with the local authority, the virtual school and other providers to identify appropriate placements for children. As a result, children increase their attendance and engagement to pass their exams and go on to study A levels and/ or achieve employment. One child who was not in school for three years was supported back into education, progressed to college and sourced their own employment. Children who have moved on are responsible for their own attendance and engagement and generally maintain their training placements beyond their time at the home.

Children enjoy lots of activities and have the opportunity to try new experiences. Professionals comment on the regularity and variety of activities that children have access to and enjoy. The staff encourage children to enjoy time with their peers and staff in cultural events and social activities in the home and local community. The staff and children enjoy trips to theme parks and breaks away on holiday. Staff celebrate achievements, such as exam results, prom nights, birthdays and cultural events. Memories of those times are placed around the communal area in the home and in memory books for children to look back on. Children say they 'love living at the home and life is perfect'.

Children develop the confidence and skills needed to live independently. Children are given increased responsibility and reduced support over time, but staff remain flexible with their support to ensure children can make mistakes and learn from them safely. Staff are available to reflect on progress with children and discuss the impact that poor decisions or behaviour will have on them as independent adults. The staff work with children daily to learn the basics of running a home practically and become financially competent. Regular self-care and independence skills are developed slowly as children become more confident; these are enhanced to support both competence and confidence.

Children know they will receive support beyond their time at the home to assist their first steps into adulthood. Children have the option of returning to the home, contacting staff by phone or text for advice and guidance. Clinical professionals say that the emotional investment from staff in children is paying off, and children are more open to discussing their issues and gaining support from services as adults. Children are seen to be using the strategies they have learned to cope with emotionally distressing times. This commitment to children creates a strong sense of emotional security and practical support as and when children need it.

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

Children who are experiencing issues with the use of drugs and alcohol receive consistent support to reduce their use and engage with specialist services. The staff are vigilant when interacting with children to spot signs and symptoms of intoxicants and address their concerns with the children directly. The staff have regular discussions with children to explore the health risks, impact on the other children and legal implications. The staff make referrals to specialist services to promote engagement with independent workers with expertise. Staff are persistent in their messaging during discussions and this continues when the child moves into their own home.

The staff continue their support of children in this manner, carrying out visits when children are living independently. As a result, children are reducing their intake of drugs and alcohol and one child is now able to take driving lessons after a sustained period of abstinence from intoxicating substances.

When children are missing from home, the staff act promptly to find and return them home as quickly as possible. Children agree. Children agree to activate mobile location services and respond to video phone call check-ins, in line with their plans. This helps staff to search for their latest location until contact with children is established. The staff are persistent in their calls to children and continue searching for them until they are located.

Staff provide reassurance once children return home and remain curious to gather intelligence about their location and reasons for not returning. Return home interviews are conducted by an independent person who knows the children and their histories well. This helps to keep children safer when they are missing and vulnerable in the community.

The staff respond quickly and appropriately to children who are vulnerable to attempted suicide or self-harm. The staff work well during incidents to coordinate the response from services and professionals. The manager and senior leaders attend high-risk panels to ensure that vulnerable children are discussed regularly and have access to the right services. The management of risk and the accountability for children's vulnerability is shared across the heads of service of those specialist teams. As a result, children receive a coordinated response that enables staff to withdraw support gradually and encourage children to keep themselves safe during difficult times.

The staff work with children to understand their emotions and manage them effectively. During difficult times, children have needed to be held for their own and others' safety. The staff use physical intervention for the least time and restriction necessary. Staff speak calmly to children throughout incidents to support their well-being. Children are offered debriefs at a time when they are able to reflect on the incident and discuss how they could have responded differently. The manager and senior leaders review incident reports and debriefs to ensure they are appropriate, supportive for the child, and to reflect on learning with the staff.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

Leaders and managers are ambitious for children and have a good understanding of their experiences prior to them moving into the home. Managers use their knowledge of the children to develop plans that are individual and promote their engagement. One child acknowledged the manager being the inspiration for her success, saying: 'I have achieved more because of the manager.' The staff say that the manager instils in them that 'Children come first and are to be treated with care and respect.' This creates an environment that puts children first and supports them to achieve meaningful progress.

Managers are fully aware of the home's strengths and weaknesses and take action to prevent potential issues. Leaders and managers complete their own monthly audits to identify shortfalls in the home's reporting and recording systems. Managers use quality of care reviews and the independent visitor reports to analyse information and take action to change practice and update children's plans. As a result, leaders and managers have good oversight of all aspects of the children's lives and the home's systems and processes.

When changes to the home's ethos and model of care are proposed by senior leaders, the manager considers the effect and works to reduce the impact on children and staff. The manager speaks with senior leaders to understand the change, consults with staff and children, proposes amendments and implements a plan to minimise disruption. As a result, children moving on to independence will continue to receive support when moving into their own accommodation, and younger children who need residential care are now able to live at the home.

Managers regularly review the progress of children. Monthly reviews of children's plans are completed by managers to assess their progress against the plans agreed with the local authority. The manager produces a report to understand if changes are needed and shares the findings with staff. Children's plans are updated and staff work to promote a change in direction or impetus in developing the children and their independence.

Leaders and managers create an environment that is supportive and develops staff to provide outstanding care for children. Managers encourage staff to develop professionally and take part in training regularly to further develop their skills in line with the needs of children and wider home requirements. The manager commissions clinical staff to deliver specific training, attend team meetings and support the implementation of a new model of care.

Staff say they can share their views about the home and any changes that are being made. Managers show that staff views are listened to and that everyone's view is valued by encouraging them to speak out in monthly team meetings and in their supervision.

The staff are passionate about supporting children and say they are happy when they are at work.

Leaders and managers challenge services when children may be impacted by shortfalls in the support they should be receiving. The manager raises her concerns quickly with senior leaders and the local authority. Meetings are arranged and complaints are raised to highlight the concerns and begin the process of increasing the support to children. Leaders follow complaints procedures and use professional relationships to achieve a positive outcome for children. As a result, children have received the appropriate support and their own accommodation that meets their individual needs.

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: SC472392

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Middlesbrough Borough Council

Registered provider address: Middlesbrough House, 50 Corporation Road,
Middlesbrough TS1 2RH

Responsible individual:

Registered manager: Kalia-Marina Kourou-Paradeli

Inspectors

Lee Riley, Social Care Inspector
Amy Groom, 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 <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

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