

SC476512

Registered provider: Highfield (North East) Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is operated by a private provider. It offers short- and long-term care for up to five children who may experience social and emotional difficulties and/or have learning disabilities.

The manager registered with Ofsted in February 2021.

At the time of this inspection, three children were living in the home.

Inspection dates: 29 and 30 January 2025

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 12 March 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12/03/2024	Full	Good
15/06/2022	Full	Good
28/03/2022	Interim	Improved effectiveness
23/09/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The inspector spoke to two children living in the home during the inspection.

The home is a warm and welcoming environment. It is personalised with children's photos throughout the living spaces. There is ample space for the children to spend time together or apart, and there are lots of activities for the children to use if they wish. This gives the children a sense of belonging.

The children have built trusting relationships with those caring for them. Staff regularly have key-work discussions with children about things that are important in their lives. Children say that they feel able to talk to the staff about things that are important to them. This has helped children to share their worries and experiences with staff.

Staff support children to have positive relationships with people who are important to them. The staff work well with families and friends to help children to enjoy positive relationships. One professional said, 'Staff go above and beyond.' This was echoed by a parent who said, 'They (staff) put the kids' needs first and I can just pick up the phone and speak to them if I have any worries.'

Staff support children to enjoy new activities. Children are encouraged to get involved in activities and have new experiences. They enjoy spending time with staff and getting involved in a variety of activities, such as go-karting and trips. One professional said, '[Name of child] never went anywhere before and is now getting lots of opportunities and life experiences.' These new experiences have helped children to have fun and develop their social skills and confidence.

The manager carefully considers all new referrals to the home to ensure that children's needs can be met. Children said that when new children move into the home, it is a positive experience and they are aware of the changes. When children move on from the home, staff work closely with other professionals and family members to determine what support is needed. One parent said, 'The work the home completed with [name of child] around independence helped her to have a good transition.' This integrated and thoughtful approach means that children feel safe, well cared for and listened to. This enables children to make good progress.

Children are registered with health services, including a dentist. Staff support children to attend health appointments. However, when there have been concerns about children using vapes or having anxiety about immunisations, staff have not always been proactive enough in addressing these. Consequently, not all children have received consistent messages about their health.

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

There have been no incidents involving the use of physical restraint since the last inspection. Staff work with children to help them find alternative ways to express their frustrations and manage their anxieties.

When there are concerns about children's safety, staff are proactive. They work alongside professionals to respond to children in the right way. This is then followed up with key-work sessions to educate children around risks, alongside referrals to outside agencies. This helps children to understand why adults are concerned about them and helps them to learn how to keep themselves safer.

Positive rewards are used in the home. These are linked with each child's needs and are achievable. Staff do not use consequences. Instead, when there have been issues, staff talk to children to help them learn from their behaviour. This helps children to understand and adhere to routines and boundaries.

Staff have effective relationships with children and use de-escalation techniques to good effect. They encourage open discussions so that the children can begin to better understand their feelings. As a result, the children are now better able to reflect on past behaviours, and they have not been missing from the home since the last inspection. This is because children are settled and better able to recognise the risks associated with going missing.

Risk assessments are carried out for children's individual risks. They are kept up to date and include clear actions for the staff to follow. However, staff do not have up-to-date local authority care plans for all the children. This means that staff cannot be certain they are following the most up-to-date plans for the child.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is managed effectively by an experienced manager who knows the children well. She is supported by a deputy manager. Staff say they feel well supported. This is evidenced by the stability of the staff team. Supervision sessions are held regularly and are reflective in nature. This helps the manager to be assured that staff understand each child and how best to support them.

The staff are provided with a comprehensive training package. Training goes beyond the core learning to give staff specific knowledge to help them provide effective care to children with complex needs. This helps to ensure that staff understand children and how to respond to them.

Leaders and managers have good relationships with other agencies, professionals and parents. The staff communicate regularly with parents, social workers and education professionals to make sure that the children's needs are responded to consistently. One professional said, 'Staff in the home were, at times, the only ones driving the plans forward.'

The manager has an audit process in place and has regular oversight of the home and the strengths and weaknesses for each child. This has been developed to identify patterns and trends. However, this information is not used effectively, and learning from the audits is not analysed or fed through to actions and staff meetings. This limits opportunities for further learning and reflection.

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.

Requirement	Due date
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))	12 March 2025

Recommendations

- The registered person should actively seek independent scrutiny of the home and make best use of information from independent and internal monitoring (including under regulations 44 and 45) to ensure continuous improvement. They should be skilled in anticipating difficulties and reviewing incidents, such as learning from disruptions and placement breakdowns. They are responsible for proactively implementing lessons learned and sustaining good practice. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph 10.24)
- The registered person should ensure that staff have the relevant skills and knowledge to be able to help children understand and where necessary work to change negative behaviours in key areas of health and well-being. This includes, but is not limited to, nutrition and healthy diet, exercise, mental health, sexual relationships, sexual health, contraception and use of legal highs, drugs, alcohol and tobacco. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 35, paragraph 7.18)

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: SC476512

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Highfield (North East) Limited

Registered provider address: 37 Emerald Street, Saltburn-by-the-Sea, Cleveland
TS12 1EE

Responsible individual: William Ashton

Registered manager: Angela Morrison

Inspector

Natalie Clark, Social Care Inspector

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