

SC482872

Registered provider: Fairfield House Bishop Auckland Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is operated by a private company. It provides care and accommodation for up to five children, who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties or a learning disability.

Inspection dates: 21 to 22 November 2017

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	inadequate
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	inadequate
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	inadequate
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There are serious and widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded and the care and experiences of children and young people are poor.

Date of last inspection: 1 February 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection:

A number of requirements were made at the last inspection. Not all of the requirements have been met.

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is inadequate because:

- The leadership and management of this home are weak and have led to widespread failures in meeting the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015, and concerns about the welfare of the children living in the home.
- The registered manager does not demonstrate the required skills and knowledge to manage this home safely and effectively.
- The registered manager's assessment of incidents involving staff and children and her scrutiny of the subsequent records maintained by staff are poor. The registered manager has failed to question what has happened during incidents and, consequently, she has not challenged poor staff practice or protected the children.
- Staff do not always deal with the children's behaviour in a way that demonstrates care and a good understanding of the impact of the children's needs and previous experiences. As a result, incidents have happened that have resulted in the children being distressed.
- Neither the staff team nor leaders and managers are aware of a child's diagnosed needs, even though these are written in the care plan provided by the placing authority and held on the child's file kept at the home. The care that staff are giving to the child contradicts the approaches typically used with a child who has these needs.
- Care plans are not individualised. Two were exactly the same, despite being for different children. Behaviour support plans do not include sufficient information for staff to care for the children using the same approaches.
- At times, staff have physically moved children in a restraint hold from one area of the home to another without determining the potential risks of these actions.
- Restraint and de-escalation training is not provided to staff before they work with children. As a result, children have been cared for by staff who do not have the required skills to meet their needs.
- One member of staff worked alone with children before a disclosure and barring check was returned. This poor safer recruitment practice places the children at risk.
- Quality assurance systems are not used effectively, as leaders, managers and the independent visitor have failed to identify the weaknesses found at this inspection.

The children's home strengths:

- Children are provided with good support from alternative therapies. These therapies are individualised to meet children's personal skills and interests. For example, a child who is a keen horse rider attends equine therapy regularly.

One child told the inspectors that the therapy provision has given her a range of 'tools' that she can use now and in later life.

- Children are making expected progress. They are all attending school and have engaged well with a range of activities that they have chosen and that they enjoy.
- During the inspection, caring and nurturing relationships were observed between the staff and children. Children told the inspectors that they like the staff, and one child was particularly positive about the support that the staff provide to help the child to develop family relationships.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
01/02/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
03/08/2016	Full	Requires improvement
08/01/2016	Full	Good
14/10/2015	Full	Inadequate

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, 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: The quality and purpose of care standard (1) The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— (a) understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; (b) use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. (2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— (a) understand and apply the home's statement of purpose; (b) ensure that staff— (i) understand and apply the home's statement of purpose; (ii) protect and promote each child's welfare; (iii) treat each child with dignity and respect; (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; (v) help each child to understand and manage the impact of any experience of abuse or neglect; (vi) help each child to develop resilience and skills that prepare the child to return home, to live in a new placement or to live independently as an adult; (ix) make decisions about the day-to-day arrangements for each child, in accordance with the child's relevant plans, which give the child an appropriate degree of freedom and choice; (d) ensure that any care that is arranged or provided for a child that— (i) relates to the child's development (within the meaning of section 17(11) of the Children Act 1989) or health; and (ii) is not arranged or provided as part of the health service continued under section 1(1) of the National Health Service Act 2006(a), satisfies the conditions in paragraph (3). (3) The conditions are— (a) that the care is approved, and kept under review throughout its duration, by the placing authority; (b) that the care meets the child's needs;	01/02/2018

(c) that the care is delivered by a person who— (i) has the experience, knowledge and skills to deliver that care; and (ii) is under the supervision of a person who is appropriately skilled and qualified to supervise that care; and (d) that the registered person keeps the child's general medical practitioner informed, as necessary, about the progress of the care throughout its duration.	
12: The protection of children standard (1) The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. (2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— (a) that staff— (i) 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; (ii) help each child to understand how to keep safe; (iii) have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; (iv) manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other; (v) understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; (vi) take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and (vii) are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies; (b) 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; (e) that the effectiveness of the home's child protection policies is monitored regularly.	01/02/2018
13: The leadership and management standard (1) The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— (a) helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and (b) promotes their welfare. (2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— (a) lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose; (b) ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate; (c) ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;	01/02/2018

- (d) ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child;
- (e) ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child;
- (f) understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home;
- (g) demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on—
 - (i) research and developments in relation to the ways in which the needs of children are best met; and
 - (ii) feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received; and
- (h) use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.

In particular, the registered manager must demonstrate that they have the knowledge and skills required to effectively be in day-to-day control of the home and deliver safe and consistent care for children.

In addition, the registered person must ensure that oversight by leaders and managers is effective and ensures that any incidents or occurrences are reviewed by someone who was not directly involved.

19: Behaviour management and discipline

01/02/2018

- (1) The registered person must prepare and implement a policy ("the behaviour management policy") which sets out—
 - (a) how appropriate behaviour is to be promoted in the children's home; and
 - (b) the measures of control, discipline and restraint which may be used in relation to children in the home.
- (2) The registered person must keep the behaviour management policy under review and, where appropriate, revise it.
- (3) The registered person must ensure that
 - (a) within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes
 - (i) the name of the child;
 - (ii) details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of the measure;
 - (iii) the date, time and location of the use of the measure;
 - (iv) a description of the measure and its duration;
 - (v) details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure;
 - (vi) the name of the person who used the measure ("the user"), and of any other person present when the measure was used;
 - (vii) the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure;

and (viii) a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure; (b) within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person") (i) has spoken to the user about the measure; and (ii) has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and (c) within five days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. This regulation refers to all behaviour interventions including restraint and sanctions.	
20: Restraint and deprivation of liberty (1) Restraint in relation to a child is only permitted for the purpose of preventing— (a) injury to any person (including the child); (b) serious damage to the property of any person (including the child). (2) Restraint in relation to a child must be necessary and proportionate.	01/02/2018
32: Fitness of workers 1) The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. (2) The registered person may only— (a) employ an individual to work at the children's home; or (b) if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home, if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). (3) The requirements are that— (a) the individual is of integrity and good character; (b) the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform; (d) the registered person ensures that the individual is appropriately supervised while carrying out the individual's duties, pending receipt of any outstanding information on the matters in paragraphs 3 to 6 of Schedule 2, which is then considered satisfactory by the registered person.	01/02/2018
33: Employment of staff (1) The registered person must— (a) ensure that each employee completes an appropriate induction; in particular this must provide them with the skills that they require to safely care for children.	01/02/2018

35: Behaviour management policies and records 1) The registered person must prepare and implement a policy ("the behaviour management policy") which sets out— (a) how appropriate behaviour is to be promoted in the children's home; and (b) the measures of control, discipline and restraint which may be used in relation to children in the home. (2) The registered person must keep the behaviour management policy under review and, where appropriate, revise it. (3) The registered person must ensure that (a) within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes (i) the name of the child; (ii) details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of the measure; (iii) the date, time and location of the use of the measure; (iv) a description of the measure and its duration; (v) details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure; (vi) the name of the person who used the measure ("the user"), and of any other person present when the measure was used; (vii) the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and (viii) a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure; (b) within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person") (i) has spoken to the user about the measure; and (ii) has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and (c) within five days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. This regulation refers to all behaviour interventions including restraint and sanctions.	01/02/2018
37: Other records (1) Schedule 4 sets out the other information that the registered person must keep in relation to a children's home. (2) The registered person must— (a) maintain in the home the records in Schedule 4; (b) ensure that the records are kept up to date.	01/02/2018
40: Notification of a serious event (4) The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— (a) a child is involved in or subject to, or is suspected of being involved	01/02/2018

in or subject to, sexual exploitation; (b) an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious; (c) there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there; (d) a child protection enquiry involving a child — (i) is instigated; or (ii) concludes (in which case, the notification must include the outcome of the child protection enquiry); or (e) there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (5) A notification made under this regulation— (a) must include details of— (i) the matter; (ii) the other persons, bodies or organisations (if any) who or which have been notified; and (iii) any actions taken by the registered person as a result of the matter; (b) must be made or confirmed in writing. (6) In this regulation, references to the PPO include a person appointed by, or working on behalf of, the PPO for the purposes of an investigation under paragraph (2).	
44: Independent person: visits and reports (1) The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month. (2) When the independent person is carrying out a visit, the registered person must help the independent person— (a) 1970 c.42. Section 1A of the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970 was inserted by section 102 of the Local Government Act 2000 (c.22). (a) if they consent, to interview in private such of the children, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home as the independent person requires; and (b) to inspect the premises of the home and such of the home's records (except for a child's case records, unless the child and the child's placing authority consent) as the independent person requires. (3) A visit by the independent person to the home may be unannounced. (4) The independent person must produce a report about a visit ("the independent person's report") which sets out, in particular, the independent person's opinion as to whether— (a) children are effectively safeguarded; and (b) the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being. (5) The independent person's report may recommend actions that the registered person may take in relation to the home and timescales within which the registered person must consider whether or not to take those actions. (6) If the independent person becomes aware of a potential conflict of	01/02/2018

interest (whether under regulation 43(3) or otherwise) after a visit to the home, the independent person must include in the independent person's report— (a) details of the conflict of interest; and (b) the reasons why the independent person did not notify the registered provider of the conflict of interest before the visit. (7) The independent person must provide a copy of the independent person's report to— (a) HMCI; (b) upon request, the local authority for the area in which the home is located; (c) the placing authorities of children; (d) the registered provider and, if applicable, the registered manager; and (e) the responsible individual (if one is nominated).	
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Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

Care planning for the children who live at this home does not reflect their individual needs. For example, one child has a specific diagnosis. Neither the registered manager nor the staff team was aware of this diagnosis, despite it being stated in the local authority care plan. As a result, the current approaches that the staff use to care for this child do not meet his needs. Care plans are not individualised. Two documents were found to be exactly the same, despite being for different children.

Behaviour management plans are not specific. They do not provide the staff with clear expectations about how to support the children or to help the team to manage children's behaviour. This is compounded further by the poor level of management oversight. As a result, children do not always receive a consistent approach to their care that takes into account their experiences and needs.

Arrangements are in place to ensure that children are spoken with and consulted following any incident or concern at the home. At times, children have been very precise about what they think that the staff can do to support them in the future. Despite this, the wishes and feelings of the children are not always acted on.

Staff do not always support children in a positive and caring way. Some staff lack a good understanding of the impact that children's needs and previous experiences have on their current feelings and behaviours. On one occasion, a member of staff purposely turned a light off and left a young child crying in the dark, despite knowing that this was a particular fear of the child and contravened her care plan. Another child wanted to play in the paddling pool and became unhappy when staff said no. Staff failed to de-escalate this situation effectively and instead sanctioned the child from going in the paddling pool the next day.

Children are supported to take part in alternative therapies such as adventure, horse

riding and art therapy. These activities result in improving the children's emotional well-being. In addition to the therapeutic activities, children also enjoy a range of clubs and hobbies outside the home. Some children have particularly enjoyed pot-holing and rock climbing, while others go to Brownies and horse riding. The children really enjoy these opportunities and find them beneficial.

Children are making expected progress with their education. They all attend school regularly and are motivated to learn and to achieve. Staff read with children and help them with their homework.

Despite the identified shortfalls in how well some staff manage children's behaviours, inspectors did observe interactions between staff and the children that were nurturing. Children were given caring responses from staff, which help them to feel that they are valued by the team.

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

Leaders, managers and staff do not always recognise allegations made about staff. One allegation, stemming from an incident that happened at the home, has not been addressed. The registered manager failed to follow the child protection policy and did not refer the safeguarding concern to the designated officer as required. As a result, the safety of the child was not prioritised and the allegation has not been investigated.

On occasions, children have been moved from one area of the home to another while being restrained by staff. The records about these restraints do not describe a significant danger that would deem such restraint a necessary course of action. Due to discrepancies in the restraint and incident records, it is difficult to understand what actually happened or the effect that this practice has had on the children.

Some of the staff have not been provided with the training that they require to care effectively for children and to keep them safe. Staff who have not been trained in de-escalation techniques or how to use restraint with children have been on duty when significant incidents have occurred, placing the children and the staff at risk.

The arrangements in place to ensure the safer recruitment of the staff who work at the home are not thorough. Inspectors identified that one member of staff was working overnight at the home prior to a disclosure and barring check being carried out. Although another member of staff was on duty, they were in a separate building and not able to directly supervise the unchecked member of staff.

The safeguarding children policy is not currently in line with the local authority policy and procedure. The registered manager was unable to make reference to this policy when asked about the referral processes required as part of a safeguarding incident.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

Leadership of this home is poor. This weakness is the cause of the majority of poor

practice concerns identified at this inspection. Weaknesses in the leadership and management of the home were also identified at the last inspection. These weaknesses have not been dealt with, despite senior leaders providing additional support and training for the registered manager.

The registered manager fails to undertake managerial tasks which would ensure that children are safe and that they are cared for in accordance with their needs. For example, the registered manager has failed to effectively review and to cross-reference incident reports with restraint records. As a result, discrepancies in these records and instances of poor staff practice are not identified or acted upon. At times, leaders and managers have reviewed incidents that they were directly involved in, preventing an independent assessment of what happened.

The registered manager does not demonstrate the skills or knowledge to effectively identify or manage safeguarding concerns that are brought to her attention. The child protection policy is not always followed, and this results in concerns that the staff team fails to deal with.

The registered manager fails to supervise and manage the staff team effectively. Although supervision sessions take place regularly, staff do not use these sessions to reflect on incidents that they have been involved in or to evaluate what went well and what could have been done differently. The registered manager fails to challenge staff and deal with poor performance and, as a result, poor practice continues.

Quality assurance of the home is not effective. This includes the monitoring conducted by leaders, managers and the independent visitor. The oversight of the staff team's practices and the scrutiny of records lack rigour and challenge. Consequently, leaders and managers are not aware of the extent of the weaknesses in the quality of care and are unable to make improvements.

Leaders and managers fail to work together with other relevant agencies for the benefit of the children who live at the home. Serious incidents and concerns about children have not been notified to the designated officer and Ofsted. This is a breach of the regulations and lacks transparency, as it prevents external agencies from independently scrutinising the care that children are receiving.

The registered manager has failed to ensure that visitors coming into the home have correctly signed in and out of the building and recorded the reason why they are visiting. As a result, the registered manager was unable to explain to inspectors when certain visitors had been to the home, for what reason or how often.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and 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 whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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: SC482872

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Fairfield House Bishop Auckland Limited

Registered provider address: Fairfield Lodge, Evenwood Lane, Evenwood, Bishop Auckland, County Durham DL14 9NH

Responsible individual: Richard Parker

Registered manager: Nicola Streat

Inspector(s)

Tracey Ledder, social care inspector

Paula Lahey, social care inspector

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