

Children's homes – Interim inspection

Inspection date	25/04/2016
Unique reference number	1155757
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered manager	Stephanie Scott
Inspector	Bill Drumm

Inspection date	25/04/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Good
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The effectiveness of the home, and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection	
<p>This home was judged good at the full inspection. At this interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has improved effectiveness.</p>	
<p>Young people who live at this home have often experienced a troubled and disordered lifestyle prior to their admission. They have complex needs. Some have challenging behaviour, and poor relationships with their parents and family members. However, in spite of this, they are making progress. Staff are committed to ensuring that young people are treated with respect, and are able to feel safe and secure. They encourage and support them to develop socially acceptable behaviour and to learn appropriate ways to deal with their frustrations. They do this by showing commitment to them, by being good role models and by having clear, firm boundaries in place. Consistent handling from a resilient staff team gives young people the platform they need to develop and make progress.</p> <p>Staff understand what the individual healthcare needs of each young person are. They fully support their attendance at all appointments and offer ongoing encouragement to follow a healthy lifestyle, for instance by eating a healthy diet, taking regular exercise and reducing the amount that they smoke. Young people's health needs are recorded in their individual care plans and their healthcare needs are met.</p> <p>In order to try to reduce offending and anti-social behaviour, young people are encouraged to have aspirations for themselves and their future. They are fully supported to attend education, and to develop hobbies and interests. Staff show real determination in helping them to do this, and there has been some success. Examples of this include one young person achieving 100% attendance at school, another attending a formal interview and securing a work placement, and another actively seeking a part-time job. A member of staff said, 'The current group of young people that we have is excellent. They are all motivated and it's a real pleasure to look after them.'</p>	

Restraint or holding young people rarely happens at the home. A previous requirement was made in relation to the use of financial penalties to help to promote and encourage positive behaviour. However, this system has been reviewed and work practice has changed. Staff no longer impose a fine on young people to be taken from their pocket money if they display negative behaviour. Discussion, persuasion and, when necessary, reparation are promoted. This helps young people to understand the consequences of their behaviour and the effect that it has on others.

Transitions to and from the home are very good. Staff advocate for the young people in their care, to ensure that they are fully supported by the local authority in returning home to live with their family or to move onto independence. In addition, young people are admitted to the home in an organised and planned manner. This helps to ensure that the needs of existing residents are fully considered when new placements are being considered.

Staff recognise the need to keep young people safe. They work hard to help them to understand the risks that they face when they go missing or misuse social media. A recommendation made at the last inspection in relation to risk assessments and the use of mobile phones has been met. In addition, the registered manager has reviewed and updated the home's workforce development plan. This records all training undertaken by staff and the date on which update training is required. This was undertaken as a result of a recommendation made at the last inspection, and helps to ensure that staff training remains up to date.

Another recommendation made at the last inspection was for the registered manager to ensure that the home provides a domestic and homely environment for young people. As a result, staff no longer ask young people to sign documents, such as pocket money records and notes of key-worker sessions. In addition, they carry their keys more discreetly. This helps to promote a homely atmosphere in the home, and to reduce the appearance and feeling of its being an institution.

The documentation used by the independent visitor to record the summary of their visit to the home is detailed. The visiting officer makes a formal decision about the ongoing safety and well-being of the young people living there. In addition, the registered manager's monitoring reports for the home are wide ranging and extensive. As a consequence, the six-monthly summaries supplied to Ofsted are substantial. The registered manager is reviewing the content of these reports to ensure that they fully reflect on both the quality of the service that the home provides and how managers and staff assist in promoting positive outcomes for young people.

Information about this children's home

The home is run by Northumberland County Council. It provides care and accommodation for up to three children and young people with emotional/behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
10/11/2015	Full	Good

What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

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 focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

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 'Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations including the quality standards'.

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