

1155757

Registered provider: Northumberland County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The children's home is run by a local authority and is registered for the care and accommodation of up to three children and/or young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

The manager is suitably qualified and has been registered since May 2015.

Inspection dates: 10 to 11 September 2019

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **requires improvement to be good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **requires improvement to be good**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **requires improvement to be good**

The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: 30 May 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
30/05/2018	Full	Good
16/05/2017	Full	Good
06/12/2016	Full	Good
25/04/2016	Interim	Improved 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.

Requirement	Due date
<p>The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> understand the children’s home’s overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children’s needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure that staff— protect and promote each child’s welfare; and provide personalised care that meets each child’s needs, as recorded in the child’s relevant plans, taking account of the child’s background. <p>(Regulation 6 (1)(2)(b)(ii)(iv))</p>	<p>20/10/2019</p>
<p>The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults. <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> that staff— meet each child’s behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child’s relevant plans; help each child to develop socially aware behaviour; help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone; communicate to each child expectations about the child’s behaviour and ensure that the child understands those 	<p>20/10/2019</p>

<p>expectations in accordance with the child's age and understanding;</p> <p>understand how children's previous experiences and present emotions can be communicated through behaviour and have the competence and skills to interpret these and develop positive relationships with children; and</p> <p>are provided with supervision and support to enable them to understand and manage their own feelings and responses to the behaviour and emotions of children, and to help children to do the same.</p> <p>(Regulation 11 (1)(2)(a)(i)(ii)(iv)(v)(ix)(x))</p>	
<p>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>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;</p> <p>have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm;</p> <p>understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person;</p> <p>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; and</p> <p>that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health.</p> <p>(Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(i)(iii)(v)(b)(d))</p>	20/10/2019
<p>The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that—</p> <p>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and</p> <p>promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate; and</p> <p>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</p>	20/10/2019

<p>quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(2)(b) and (f))</p>	
<p>The registered person may only use devices for the monitoring or surveillance of children if—</p> <p>the monitoring or surveillance is for the purpose of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the child concerned, or other children;</p> <p>the child’s placing authority consents in writing to the monitoring or surveillance; and</p> <p>the monitoring or surveillance is no more intrusive than necessary, having regard to the child’s need for privacy. (Regulation 24 (1)(a)(b) and (d))</p>	<p>20/10/2019</p>
<p>The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children’s home at least once each month.</p> <p>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—</p> <p>children are effectively safeguarded; and</p> <p>the conduct of the home promotes children’s well-being. (Regulation 44 (1)(4)(a) and (b))</p>	<p>20/10/2019</p>
<p>The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children (“a quality of care review”) at least once every 6 months.</p> <p>In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating—</p> <p>the quality of care provided for children;</p> <p>the feedback and opinions of children about the children’s home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and</p> <p>any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children.</p> <p>After completing a quality of care review, the registered person must produce a written report about the quality of care review and the actions which the registered person intends to take as a result of the quality of care review (“the quality of care review report”).</p> <p>The registered person must—</p> <p>supply to HMCI a copy of the quality of care review report</p>	<p>20/10/2019</p>

within 28 days of the date on which the quality of care review is completed; and

make a copy of the quality of care review report available on request to a placing authority, if the placing authority is not the parent of a child accommodated in the home.

The system referred to in paragraph (2) must provide for ascertaining and considering the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff.

(Regulation 45 (1)(2)(a)(b)(c)(3)(4)(a)(b) and (5))

Recommendations

- Regulation 19(2) details sanctions that are prohibited in behaviour management. Any sanctions used to address poor behaviour should be restorative in nature, to help children recognise the impact of their behaviour on themselves, other children, the staff caring for them and the wider community. In some cases it will be important for children to make reparation in some form to anyone hurt by their behaviour and the staff in the home should be skilled to support the child to understand this and carry it out. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.38)
- Regulations 35–39 detail the records that must be kept in children's homes. All children's case records (Regulation 36) must be kept up to date and stored securely whilst they remain in the home. Case records must be kept up-to-date and signed and dated by the author of each entry. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.3)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

The home has several communal areas that offer the opportunity for private space or group activities. Some areas of the home are in need of repair. The manager has a programme of work in place to address these issues. Children and young people have helped to choose the decor and then helped to decorate one of the lounges. This involvement helps children and young people to gain a sense of belonging and shows that their views have been heard.

Inspectors found that children's bedrooms need attention. They were damaged and unkempt. There was no evidence that staff were taking responsibility for this when a child or young person had been unable to maintain their room. This means that children and young people do not feel valued and this can contribute to poor self-esteem.

Education is seen as important. When children and young people have faced difficulties in education, the manager has found alternative provisions to suit children's individual needs. One young person has completed a programme of education and is now employed. This is good progress from their starting point.

The achievements that children make are not always celebrated. Key opportunities to celebrate achievements and strengthen relationships have been missed. Important times when a group can come together in a household, such as mealtimes, do not take place. This means that opportunities are missed to develop children's social awareness and to build relationships within the home.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

Key-work sessions are individualised to the needs of each child or young person. Topics covered show that areas of risk are discussed. This demonstrates that children and young people are being helped to learn what it means to keep themselves safe.

Known vulnerabilities of children and young people are not always reflected in their risk assessments. This has not led to children or young people being harmed, but it is an area that requires improvement. All known risks, including the impact of risk-taking behaviour on one another, must be assessed and evaluated. This practice is essential to ensure that risks to children and young people are being effectively managed.

The management of behaviour is not effective. Strategies in place do not always help children and young people to take responsibility for their behaviour. Additionally, sanctions imposed are not always restorative. As a result, children and young people do not learn from these experiences or understand the impact of their actions.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

The manager has taken on additional tasks day to day due to a reduction in staffing levels. As a result, managerial responsibilities such as the oversight and monitoring of records have not consistently taken place. It is essential that the manager can maintain a system so that the quality of care that children and young people receive is reviewed and acted upon. This helps the staff team members to know where they need to develop or improve.

The home is fitted with devices for surveillance on the external area but also on two communal areas within the home. There are no consents in place for the use and storage of the information gained. The current policy states that this is in place to manage behaviour, which is inappropriate. The policy for the use of monitoring devices should be reviewed.

To further enhance safeguarding, the manager must ensure that the independent visitor always includes a statement that details an opinion in relation to the safety and well-being of children and young people.

The manager is passionate and committed to developing the practice in the home. Recently, staffing levels have increased. The manager recognises the need to delegate tasks effectively to maximise the impact of her team.

The manager and leadership team took on board the shortfalls identified and discussed actions to address the areas that require improvement.

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 differences 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: 1155757

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Northumberland County Council

Registered provider address: County Hall, Morpeth, Northumberland NE61 2EF

Responsible individual: Karen MacDonald

Registered manager: Stephanie Scott

Inspectors

Paula Kelly: social care inspector

Sue Atkinson Millmoor: regulatory inspection manager

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