

Children's homes – interim inspection

Inspection date	29/03/2016
Unique reference number	SC034210
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	North Yorkshire County Council
Registered person address	Racecourse Lane, NORTHALLERTON, North Yorkshire DL7 8AD

Responsible individual	Karl Podmore
Registered manager	Katherine Clarke
Inspector	Michele Hargan

Inspection date	29/03/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Requires improvement
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
<p>The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.</p> <p>This home was judged requires improvement at the full inspection. At this interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has improved effectiveness.</p> <p>A good start has been made with addressing the previous requirement to improve the administration and management of the medication of children and young people. A dedicated room is now used to store and administer medication, reducing the likelihood of staff being distracted while carrying out the necessary tasks. While an addendum about medical devices has been added to the registered provider's medication policy and procedures. This document is not yet approved by senior managers, so that definitive guidance is not available for reference purposes. However, in-house guidance and risk assessments now make clear how many staff and that only suitably trained staff can manage medication devices that some children and young people rely on. This means that staff carrying out these tasks are sufficient in number and appropriately competent. This improves the safety and well-being of children and young people.</p> <p>Medication errors are reduced. A methodical approach is being implemented by the interim manager and senior staff to embed strict adherence to medication procedures. For example, shift leaders identify who is responsible for administering medication and a daily medication audit takes place. This practice makes sure that staff are clear about their responsibilities and promotes consistent care practice. Staff requiring additional training and guidance with medication practice and procedures are receiving the necessary support. As a result, they are not currently responsible for medication tasks until they are assessed as being safely able to carry them out. These additional measures make staff accountable for their actions and help to establish safe and effective medication systems.</p> <p>The statement of purpose now distinguishes which staff are qualified and how many are working towards achieving the necessary qualifications. This means that the progress and support for staff can be measured, making the interim manager accountable for the quality of care that children and young people receive. As a result of the above, the three previous recommendations are now met.</p> <p>Children and young people make a significant contribution to the running of the home and to their wider community. For example, one young person played a valued part in the staff recruitment process and also represented the home at a meeting in London with government officials, including the Children's Commissioner. It is clear that these were valuable experiences for the young</p>	

person concerned. About interviewing staff he said, 'It was tough.' Regarding the young person's meeting with policy makers, a member of staff said, 'We wanted to make sure he had [a] voice to help him know that there are people out there who have disabled young people's best interests at heart, that he had some influence over.' Affording young people this kind of experience helps to raise their aspirations and aids their understanding about their rights and culture.

All children and young people, their parents and carers are consulted about issues that are relevant to them. This includes whether they want more involvement from their care team. For instance, young people recently took part in an informal activity day aimed at increasing their understanding about what support they can expect in their own right. This approach recognises young people's individual needs. A social worker said, 'It was really good, there was great turnout of young people and staff's consultation with young people felt meaningful.'

Professionals speak highly of staff, the range of activities in the home and the quality of care that children and young people receive helping them to make good progress. One young person admitted to the home as a result of an emergency has thrived. This is the result of good joint working with family members and professionals establishing a shared understanding about the young person's needs. An independent reviewing officer said, 'We get a really good flavour of activities that young people take part in. (Name) is now going on the bus, his progress has been amazing since he's had the short stays.'

Children and young people, their parents and carers receive good support from staff with helping them to move on. As part of this process, information is shared about the overall needs of children and young people and staff accompany them on visits to their new homes. This type of planned approach reduces children's and young people's anxieties and promotes successful outcomes. A social worker said, 'The staff will take him and stay with (Name) for the first few days when he moves in to help him settle.'

Parents rate key workers' understanding of children and young people as good and they value the additional support that the home offers. A parent said, 'Staff came over to the school so they could get feedback as a result of my son's speech and language therapy assessment.' This means that important information is shared among those directly involved with children and young people, promoting consistency and more effective communication. Children and young people are happy at the home because they trust staff and they are confident about the support that they receive. By establishing worthwhile relationships, staff promote the social and emotional development of children and young people.

Sanctions are not used as a means of managing the behaviour of children and young people. Since the last inspection, one restraint has been carried out. Also demonstrating that overall children's and young people's behaviour and relationships with staff and each other are good. However, recording of the events that led to a young person being held are not sufficiently detailed, nor is the effectiveness and consequence of the measure clear. Because of this, records would not stand up to any retrospective scrutiny.

Informal concerns and a complaint have been thoroughly investigated and responded to. The process undertaken demonstrates that concerns are taken seriously and acted on, leading to improved care practice. Appropriate communication with the local authority designated officer also takes place. This means that information is shared with other settings so that any concerns can be addressed. This promotes the safety and well-being of children and young people.

The registered manager in post at the last inspection has now retired and an interim manager has been appointed. This individual is suitably experienced and has made an application to become the registered manager. A systematic review of care practices is being undertaken. The interim manager and senior leaders are working with staff to ensure that everyone is sufficiently knowledgeable about the needs of children and young people. This approach helps to establish a shared understanding by all staff, making clear to them their responsibilities in improving outcomes for children and young people.

A thorough review of the home by the acting manager identifies how ongoing improvements are being achieved and subsequent development plans are being progressed. As part of this internal monitoring, a robust monthly audit takes place of children's and young people's files to ensure that they are up to date. Any issues are brought to the attention of staff to be addressed. Ensuring all necessary information is held on children's and young people's files means that staff have an accurate understanding of the needs of children and young people. Staff are issued with a reflective journal as an aid to focus supervision and appraisal outcomes. This approach to improvement helps to promote reflective practice and identifies any additional staff training needs. This also helps staff to attain increased empathy and understanding about the complex needs of children and young people with disabilities.

Information about this children's home

The home may only provide care and accommodation to nine children and young people with sensory impairment, learning disabilities, autism and physical disabilities. The home must ensure that a placement of any child and young person accommodated is made under the short breaks arrangements and/or may also constitute an extended, bespoke, shared care plan with the child's or young person's family/carers that enables them to remain within their family/carer's home and attend their local school. The home is owned and operated by a local authority.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
19/08/2015	Full	Requires improvement
03/03/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
22/09/2014	Full	Adequate
17/03/2014	Interim	Good progress

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Statutory Requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person(s) meets 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 with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
<p>The registered person must make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the children's home (Regulation 23 (1)).</p> <p>In particular, to ensure that medication policies and procedures are reviewed, reflect the current needs of children including the use of any medical devices and are ratified by an appropriately qualified person.</p>	30/6/2016

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further, the service should take account of the following recommendations:

- The registered person should ensure that all incidents of control, discipline and restraint are subject to systems of regular scrutiny to ensure that their use is fair. In particular, that events leading to the use of any measure of restraint are detailed and that the effectiveness and any consequence as a result of any measure of restraint are recorded ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations', page 46, paragraph 9.36).

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

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