

Children's homes – Interim inspection

Inspection date	02/03/2017
Unique reference number	SC034210
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	North Yorkshire County Council
Registered provider address	North Yorkshire County Council, Director of Social Services, Racecourse Lane, Northallerton, North Yorkshire DL7 8AD
Responsible Individual	Karl Podmore
Registered manager	Katherine Clarke
Inspector	Michele Hargan

Inspection date	02/03/2017
Previous inspection judgement	Good
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 good at the full inspection. At this interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has improved effectiveness.</p> <p>The provider has met the requirement and three recommendations made at the previous inspection. One requirement and a recommendation are made as a result of this inspection.</p> <p>Staff records relating to the occasional restraints are now more detailed. This improved practice means that staff are accountable for their actions. Records accurately reflect what happened and are not open to misinterpretation in the event of any retrospective scrutiny.</p> <p>Updated risk assessments about children and young people's needs when travelling mean that staff know in advance what to do in the event of any concerns. This measure promotes the safety of children, young people and staff.</p> <p>Staff have up-to-date medication policies and procedures that reflect current legislation and guidance. This information also makes clear the requirement to achieve competency to administer medication. In addition, following the completion of further medication training, each member of staff receives a comprehensive information pack about the safe administration of medication. This means that staff have a handy guide that is readily available for additional reference.</p> <p>Staff receive training that increases their understanding about children and young people's rights. This means that they are more aware of how the law applies to anyone assessed as significantly vulnerable in ways that could possibly affect their liberty. This had led to the involvement of an occupational therapist to ensure that any measures aimed at protecting children and young people do not unintentionally impinge on their rights. These improvements meet the three recommendations made at the last inspection.</p> <p>Children and young people make good progress as they receive care and support that reflects their needs. Staff work closely with parents, carers and school and adopt a consistent approach. This means that children and young people derive the greatest benefit from their short breaks, helping maximise their potential.</p>	

An increased range of activities is available as a result of improved consultation with children and young people and their parents and carers. This renewed focus means that firm plans are in place for community-based events reflecting the aspirations and suggestions made. A member of staff said, 'We have booked a rail trip to London; we are taking the minibus to transport all of the equipment that we need. We decided to do this because of the feedback we got asking for more holiday-type activities.'

Professionals are confident that the home provides very good care to children and young people. Staff also make an effective contribution at meetings, focusing on developing the range of services the home has to offer. This collaborative approach improves outcomes for children and young people. A social worker said, 'I know we sound like we are their fan club but I think the service is the best it has ever been.' Parents value the actions of the staff and see the benefits for their children. They have confidence in the staff and are relaxed about clarifying any matters that may arise. Parents and carers also know that staff provide children and young people with good overall care. This also reassures any new parents and carers that their children's stays are a worthwhile experience. A parent said, 'The first thing she asks when she gets in the car is "When am I going back?"'

Children and young people are safe. Staff take effective action to ensure the well-being of children and young people. This includes the offer of accommodation in emergency situations. This happens because of good joint working with parents and social workers. Staff also pass on concerns to social workers when they identify care practice by others that may compromise children and young people's safety. This results in appropriate action to safeguard them.

A diverse range of skills within the staff team benefits children and young people. For example, staff who are skilled in sign language help children and young people who also sign to feel better understood. This helps reduce their anxiety about expressing their feelings because they feel listened to. On the topic of further aiding good communication, a member of staff said, 'The key worker put together a visual aid for [Name] to help her with walking to school – it has really helped.'

Staff feel well supported by the management team. This means that they are clear about their responsibilities to stay updated about children and young people's needs and to stay focused on target areas as outlined within their care plans. A member of staff said, 'The team are very good at supporting each other, including managers and staff; the shift debrief also really helps.' The management team also consults parents, professionals and staff. This results in clear plans that demonstrate a proactive approach to delivering further improvement.

Management review of any concerning incidents identifies areas for improvement and these are followed up in supervision so that staff are supported to reflect further on their care practice. This promotes an effectively consistent approach in support of children and young people. A member of staff said, 'We are going to use a reward scheme because we want to help [Name] understand that he can benefit

more from positive behaviour.'

Staff provide care and support to children and young people who have experienced trauma. This affects their attachments and behaviour. Some staff lack a full understanding of the impact of these experiences, meaning that it is difficult to recognise and respond to children's and young people's more complex underlying needs. This can lead to an escalation in difficult behaviours and an increase in children's and young people's distress.

The statement of purpose is not up to date, as it does not reflect the current arrangements for all the children and young people who use the home. This means that stakeholders are not aware of the range of services that the home offers.

Information about this children's home

The home provides accommodation for up to nine children who have sensory impairment, learning disabilities, and/or physical disabilities. It is owned and operated by a local authority.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/09/2016	Full	Good
29/03/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
19/08/2015	Full	Requires improvement
03/03/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness

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 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 must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The registered person must keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision. (Regulation 16(3)(a)(b))	28/4/2017

Recommendations

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

- Children will have varied pre-care experiences. A large proportion of children come into care for reasons relating to trauma, neglect and abuse. The registered person should ensure that staff are prepared and able to listen to children who want to talk about their past experiences. In particular, ensure that staff receive training about trauma and the impact of this on attachment behaviour. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 16, paragraph 3.11)

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 that 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 whom 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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