

# 1233307

Registered provider: Newcastle City Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

A local authority operates this home. Care and accommodation is provided for up to six children and young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

**Inspection dates:** 9 to 10 May 2017

<b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people,</b> taking into account	<b>outstanding</b>
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

**Date of last inspection:** This is the home's first full inspection since opening.

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** Not applicable

**Enforcement action since last inspection:**

None

## **Key findings from this inspection**

This children's home is outstanding because:

- The highly committed and nurturing staff provide an excellent quality of care and intensive support to children and young people.
- Children and young people make significant progress with education and improvement in their emotional well-being.
- The highly committed manager and staff team strive to help children and young people to reach their full potential.
- Young people are encouraged to become representatives for steering groups, providing them with new experiences and opportunities.
- Staff develop positive relationships with family members and are excellent at facilitating contact.
- Staff work effectively with children and young people, teaching them how to keep themselves safe.
- Behaviour management techniques are highly effective, resulting in a reduction in negative behaviour.
- Missing from home episodes have reduced, resulting in young people no longer putting themselves at risk.
- The manager and staff team work well together ensuring they provide children and young people with continuity of care.
- The purpose-built home is to a high specification, with excellent facilities both inside and outside.

## **Recent inspection history**

This is the first full inspection since the home opened.

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding**

The extremely dedicated and committed staff team provides children and young people with high-quality, intensive, nurturing care and support. Excellent relationships that are stable and trusting help children and young people form strong attachments. They begin to open up to staff, engaging with therapy and life-story work. A medical professional reported, 'Staff have looked at [name of young person's] emotions, anxiety, presentation and body image, giving ongoing advice and support.' Children and young people experience emotional stability, with a reduction in negative and harmful behaviours. Consequently, many children and young people return to live with family members or move to foster carers.

Children and young people benefit from living in a home in which staff genuinely care about them and are determined to help them to succeed. Because of their positive experiences, children and young people remain in contact with staff after they leave the home. This provides them with ongoing emotional and practical support. The home's development plan is exploring how these young adults can provide insight and advice to the existing children and young people.

The majority of children and young people are engaging in full-time education. Staff are highly effective at motivating them to attend school or college. Their established links with training providers offer young people bespoke training schemes, including work experience. Children and young people who have inconsistent school attendance become self-motivated and make improvements in education. Staff members' encouragement and support have led to one young person reaching her full potential, returning to school to sit all her GCSE exams. She said, 'I never went to school. Staff gave me incentives and pushed me to go.' Another young person is living part time in a training flat that offers semi-independence in preparation for leaving the home.

Staff take every opportunity to spend time with children and young people. They eat together at mealtimes, providing a natural way for staff to nurture children and young people. They benefit from healthy, home-cooked meals that are varied and balanced. The large, well-equipped games room provides excellent leisure facilities at the home. Good physical health is promoted, and new skills and interests develop. Children and young people have access to a full range of outside activities and enjoy going out together with staff as a group. This leads to improved relationships at the home between the peer group, and increased social interaction.

Positive role modelling has enabled one young person to become a representative for the care leavers' group of an advisory committee. The group provides a voice for children and young people living in residential care. This has given the young person new experiences and opportunities and has resulted in improved self-esteem and increased confidence. All the children and young people are making progress from their starting points. Staff have nominated them all for the annual achievement award for children looked after. A staff member said, 'Small achievements are recognised, instilling

confidence in young people and raising self-esteem.'

Staff strive to meet the cultural needs of children and young people. Staff members' good knowledge of children and young people and their hometown helps them build a good rapport with them. This extends to building trust with the family and friends of children and young people through ongoing communication. Consequently, positive relationships develop with family and friends. Contact can take place at the home, so relationships that are important to children and young people are maintained. Children and young people see the relaxed atmosphere between staff and their family members, which leads to reduced feelings of potential conflict. For one young person, who has a strong loyalty to his birth family, such positive interaction has allowed him to settle at the home. A social worker said, 'The home is really good at facilitating contact. Staff are happy to do transportation and stay with young people. Staff have gone above and beyond.'

Staff know the diverse and holistic needs of children and young people really well. Their assessment of children and young people provides essential information to the placing authority. Staff members' extensive experience and knowledge within the care sector helps them to identify when the needs of children and young people are too complex for them to remain living at the home. In such cases, they support children and young people to move on to a more suitable provision. For example, one young person moved to a combined therapeutic and educational placement. A social worker said, 'Staff's support and input has meant we were able to amend the plan to meet [name of young person's] needs quickly.'

### **How well children and young people are helped and protected: outstanding**

Children and young people are safe and protected living at the home. Individualised risk assessments reflect the dangers to children and young people, and staff know which measures to take to reduce the risks. Placing social workers and parents are satisfied that children and young people are safely cared for.

One of the home's major strengths is that experienced staff teach children and young people how to keep themselves safe. Staff use learning opportunities, such as educational and research materials, informal discussions and key-working sessions, including group sessions with children and young people, to discuss known concerns. The group sessions provide opportunities to promote openness from children and young people. This allows them to share issues that they are facing and enables the staff to help children and young people to make safe choices. Staff members' inventive use of worksheets, DVDs, quizzes and computer animations promote further discussions about potential dangers relating to substance misuse and radicalisation. A staff member said, 'There is a big emphasis on training and educating young people to keep themselves safe in the community.'

Episodes of going missing from the home have reduced significantly in frequency and duration. Children and young people no longer put themselves at risk of harm through

long periods of being missing. The risk of child sexual exploitation is low. This is because staff cleverly weave information about child sexual exploitation within regular communication. They explore children's and young people's understanding of unhealthy relationships, risky behaviour and domestic abuse, allowing children and young people to express their feelings, thoughts and beliefs. This enables staff to identify those who may potentially be at risk of harm. This progresses to one-to-one discussions, which offer children and young people self-protection skills. Consequently, children and young people are no longer putting themselves at risk of sexual exploitation.

Physical restraint is a rare occurrence. Staff use consistent boundaries and routines, combined with incentives for positive behaviour or achievements. Restorative justice is used and staff give children and young people a choice of sanctions. The combination of these behaviour management approaches is effective. Children and young people self-regulate their emotions and there is a reduction in their negative behaviours. For one young person, there has been a significant reduction in his aggressive behaviour and damage to property.

Staff effectively monitor young people's substance misuse with screening tools helping them to determine young people's level of dependence. Staff who have expertise in this area teach young people about the dangers involved. This results in young people accepting the need for support from the drug advisory service. Consequently, their substance misuse reduces.

The manager regularly attends a multi-agency risk management group. She advocates strongly for joined-up working with the police and other children's homes which help professionals to safeguard children and young people. Children and young people know the local police officer through his regular visits to the home. Good information sharing between the police and the home's staff offers a valuable link with the wider community and provides additional safeguarding for the children and young people living at the home.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding**

The manager has significant experience in residential care and has the required qualification. She is highly dedicated and enthusiastic and provides effective leadership in the home. A social worker said, 'People come and stay. The manager is a massive part of the reason why. She is so passionate about her job and outcomes for young people. Her passion is reflected through the staff team.'

There is a cohesive and well-established team who enjoy working together. As a result, there is a very low turnover of staff. This offers continuity of care for children and young people.

The manager has good delegation skills but maintains an excellent oversight of the home. Committed staff use research to inform practice. Staff members become 'champions' in different areas, such as in drugs and alcohol. The recently introduced

group supervision provides them with time for reflection. Staff benefit from regular supervision, training and support, enabling their personal and professional development. This leads to continued motivation, and staff strive to look at ways of improving the service.

There are excellent monitoring systems with a clear interlinking of paperwork. A thorough overview of the paperwork systems is undertaken monthly. Children and young people contribute to their individualised, child-friendly care plans and decide their own objectives. For example, one young person wrote, 'Going to school more often.' This not only gives insight into what children and young people are hoping to achieve, but offers them self-motivation when they see the progress that they are making.

The high standards and quality of the home enable children and young people to benefit from excellent facilities both inside and outside. For example, each bedroom has an en-suite wet room, and outside there are landscaped gardens surrounding the home, offering areas to play or for enjoying quieter times. The manager's input during the planning stages has ensured that the design is very child focused. Children and young people's needs are at the forefront. For example, having the office at the front of the building ensures that visiting professionals do not disturb children and young people.

Children and young people contribute to the running of the home, and their views are listened to and actioned. For example, after their request, staff changed the games room and dining room around, resulting in an increased use of the games room. This provides young people with a more enjoyable and accessible space for socialising together.

The manager's extensive review and evaluation of the service every month ensures that they are able to highlight any gaps and shortfalls before these impact on children and young people negatively. Staff are fully included in this process and contribute to improving the service. One staff member said, 'The ambitions you have for your own children are the same as what you have for the young people who live at the home.'

## **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:** 1233307

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider address:** Newcastle Upon Tyne City Council, PO Box 690,  
Newcastle Upon Tyne NE99 2BN

**Responsible individual:** Karen Simmons

**Registered manager:** Sharron Pattison

## Inspector

Tina Ruffles, social care inspector



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