

SC035409

Registered provider: Northumberland County Council

Interim inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

A local authority manages this secure children's home. It is approved by the Department for Education to restrict young people's liberty. The children's home can accommodate up to 12 children and young people who are aged between 10 and 17 years. It provides for young people accommodated under section 25 of the Children Act 1989 who are placed by local authorities. Admission of any child under section 25 of the Children Act 1989, who is under 13 years of age, requires the approval of the Secretary of State. Education is provided on site in dedicated facilities. The manager has been registered since 2011.

Inspection date: 11 December 2018

Judgement at last inspection: good

Date of last inspection: 3 July 2018

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

This home was judged good at the last full inspection. At the interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has improved effectiveness.

The two requirements and three recommendations raised at the last full inspection have been met. This demonstrates the home's capacity to improve the care and outcomes for children.

Children's individual risk assessments provide clear strategies for staff to manage children's risks effectively. Identified risks are well managed and children are kept safe.

All staff have made progress towards completing their mandatory and refresher training. Consequently, children receive care from staff who are sufficiently trained and knowledgeable and have the skills to meet their needs.

Ofsted is now notified of all significant events within the required timescales. Changes to staff members' responsibilities enable them to send the information without the need for prior management oversight. Therefore, Ofsted has a timely overview of each significant incident and the immediate action taken to safeguard the children.

Physical intervention is used in line with regulation. Improvements to records of incidents when children are managed away from the group and of single separation now include the manager's review of why the criteria continue to be met. This demonstrates good and effective management oversight of the behaviour management strategy and ensures that children are not separated from their peers for longer than required.

The home's location assessment now includes the potential risk of the nearby train line. However, while there is minimal impact on children due to the secure environment, the document requires continual review and updating to include all new potential risks in the locality of the home.

The children continue to make good progress relative to their time at the home. They receive support and encouragement from a highly motivated, enthusiastic staff team that has a child-centred approach. Staff are skilled at developing and building relationships with the children. These relationships enable specific targeted work and assessments to start swiftly. Children are comfortable and relaxed around the staff. The children reported that there is always someone who they can talk to if they have a problem. Children feel safe and are kept safe.

The children spoke with great passion about the food that they eat. One child said, 'The food's good in here because you get choices; it's better than anywhere I've been.' Another child said, 'Best thing is the food. It's awesome.' The children eat healthy, home-cooked food, and they try new foods and recipes that many of them have not experienced before.

The manager and the staff share a positive attitude. They enable the children to have fun through experiences such as a Christmas party and charity fundraising events. However, the staff do not forget the serious aspect of the focused work required and the meaning to the events.

Staff work effectively with the multi-disciplinary teams that are based at the home. This encourages professional discussion about the most effective strategies to meet the children's needs. The multi-disciplinary teams working at the home implement detailed and structured intervention plans. Children engage with the multi-disciplinary healthcare team, which provides a wide range of bespoke interventions. Consequently, children

receive very well planned and carefully thought through care. This helps them to develop insight, understand their feelings and implement strategies that help them to regulate behaviours such as displaying anger and engaging in self-harm. It is clear that the children are making good progress at all different levels.

The manager and staff work effectively with external agencies. They attend and participate in meetings, such as planning bespoke transitions for children, to ensure that the best placement is identified for children moving on.

The manager has identified a need for training on the use of ligature cutters. However, although training has been identified, this is not planned until early next year. The manager has not provided staff with sufficient guidance and awareness on the use of ligature cutters in this interim period. The manager provided assurance that this would be actioned immediately, as lack of guidance means that staff who have not used this tool before may not be familiar with its use.

The quality of recording is mainly good. However, improvement is required to some records to ensure that they are understood by the children who choose to read them.

Two previous recommendations relating to the education provision were not assessed at this inspection and will be reviewed at the next full inspection.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
03/07/2018	Full	Good
13/02/2018	Interim	Improved effectiveness
19/09/2017	Full	Good
06/12/2016	Interim	Sustained 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, 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
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the	21/12/2018

<p>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 have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(c))</p> <p>This is with particular regard to ensuring that all staff complete training on the use of ligature cutters.</p>	
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Recommendations

- The review of the premises should include the identification of any risks and opportunities presented by the home's location and strategies for managing these. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 64, paragraph 15.1)
- 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)

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.

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.

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: SC035409

Provision sub-type: Secure unit

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

Responsible individual: Karen MacDonald

Registered manager: Julie Tinkler

Inspectors

Natalie Burton, social care inspector
Elaine Allison, social care inspector

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