

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 15 children and young people who are aged between 10 and 17 years. It provides for children and 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: 4 July 2019

Judgement at this inspection: improved effectiveness

Date of last inspection: 11 December 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 manager has met the requirement and two recommendations raised at the last interim inspection. This demonstrates the capacity to improve.

The manager has reviewed and updated the location risk assessment to include all potential risks in the locality. The use of ligature cutters to keep the children safe has not been necessary. However, staff have now received training in this area.

Building work has been finalised to provide two additional en suite bedrooms with communal areas. These are used for children who require high-dependency support or are moving on. A new, welcoming and light library area that is accessible to all children has prompted a significant increase in children's reading.

Children live in a well-maintained home that they respect and care for. The staff carefully maintain equipment and resources. Damage is repaired without delay. The children personalise their rooms, and the communal living areas are welcoming. This results in a comfortable and relaxing home in which children can progress and thrive.

Children spoke with overwhelming enthusiasm about the nurturing care that they receive. They develop warm relationships. They know the staff well and they feel listened to. Staff are efficient in meeting, and responding to, children's needs. As a result, the children feel valued and respected.

The staff have an in-depth understanding of the children's backgrounds. They consistently deliver care and implement strategies that focus on identifying and meeting children's individual needs. Therefore, children make good progress in all areas of their development. The children spoke passionately about how the staff spend quality time with them. Staff support them to understand the reasons for the placement and the changes that they can make to keep themselves safe. This approach gives children hope and aspiration for a positive future.

Staff motivate children to engage in individual programme sessions, which are focused appropriately on their identified needs. Children embrace their hobbies and interests, using the gym, the music room and hair and beauty facilities. This supports children to make positive choices about using their time and to continue with these new interests when they leave the home.

Staff understand how important children's families are to them. The staff work with families and placing authorities to facilitate family visits. These interactions help children to maintain important relationships and ensure that they are not isolated from their families.

The staff are alert to any changes in children's behaviours. Individual behaviour management plans, risk assessments and multi-disciplinary meetings enable children to manage their behaviour. Over time, the number of incidents reduces. Children spoke about how the staff have helped them to see that what they were doing before was placing themselves at risk. One child spoke about how angry he was before and how he now has strategies to help regulate his behaviour.

Children receive support from a highly motivated, enthusiastic staff team that has a child-centred approach. This is because staff feel well supported and valued in their roles. Monthly reflection meetings with the on-site healthcare team provide the staff with an opportunity to discuss any concerns and to manage their own emotions that have arisen from incidents.

Physical interventions are appropriate to keep children and staff safe. However, the manager does not consistently identify learning and required improvements to records. The records of physical interventions lack detail of the incident. Therefore, staff continue to make errors in recording, which makes it difficult to monitor physical interventions effectively.

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
11/12/2018	Interim	Improved effectiveness
03/07/2018	Full	Good
13/02/2018	Interim	Improved effectiveness
19/09/2017	Full	Good

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
<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>use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(2)(h))</p>	02/09/2019

Recommendations

- Ensure staff are familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful and clear recording. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

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: Northumberland County Council

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

Responsible individual: Karen MacDonald

Registered manager: Julie Tinkler

Inspectors

Natalie Burton, social care inspector

Shaun Common, senior officer, secure estates

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