

# 1234990

Registered provider: The Percy Hedley Foundation

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

The children's home provides care and accommodation for up to 14 children or young people who may have physical disabilities, learning disabilities and/or a sensory impairment. The accommodation consists of a residential unit and a three-bedroom cottage. The children's home is situated on the same site as their special school. A private provider operates the children's home and the school. There is currently no registered manager in post.

**Inspection dates:** 24 to 25 September 2019

**Overall experiences and progress of children and young people,** taking into account **requires improvement to be good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **requires improvement to be good**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **inadequate**

The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

**Date of last inspection:** 12 June 2019

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** inadequate

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** Three compliance notices and a notice to restrict accommodation were issued at the last inspection. These were reviewed following two monitoring visits. The compliance notices were judged as met and the notice to restrict accommodation was lifted.

## Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12/06/2019	Full	Inadequate
01/08/2018	Full	Requires improvement to be good
22/05/2018	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
14/06/2017	Full	Outstanding

## 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, the 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 quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who—</p> <p>understand the children's home's overall aims and outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; and</p> <p>use this understanding to deliver care that meets the children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>ensure that the premises used for the purpose of the home are designed and furnished so as to—</p> <p>meet the needs of each child; and</p> <p>enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b)(2)(c)(i)(ii))</p>	22/12/2019
<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>ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;</p> <p>ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child; and</p>	22/12/2019

ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(c)(d)(e))	
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## Recommendations

- The registered person must ensure the home has sufficient staffing, including someone in a management role, to meet the children's assessed needs. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 51, paragraph 10.1)
- Where it is identified that a restraint or a restriction of liberty may be needed to meet a child's complex needs, the registered person must ensure that a rigorous assessment has been carried out to justify that the measures used are necessary and proportionate. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 47, paragraph 9.45)

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good**

The overall experiences and progress of children and young people, and how well children and young people are helped and protected, are judged requires improvement to be good because the judgement for the effectiveness of leadership and management is inadequate.

The judgement for the effectiveness of leadership and management is a graded judgement. This means that other inspection judgements can be judged no higher than requires improvement to be good.

The quality of individualised care for children has improved since the last inspection. The provider has focused on, where practicable, allocating the same staff to individual children to attend to the children's complex needs, including their personal care needs. Nevertheless, there continue to be occasions when children have many carers, including agency staff and part-time staff, which compromises consistency for the children and continuity of care.

The children's home is located within a school building, which presents challenges to make the environment homely. Some areas of the home have been greatly improved, however there continue to be rooms that offer unacceptable accommodation. For example, one two-bed unit looks stark with plain walls, basic furniture and little in the way of personal or homely fittings. This undervalues the children living there.

The staff strive to form positive relationships with the children. The provider has increased staff training and development to meet a requirement from the last inspection,

which has provided the staff with more understanding about why the children display challenging behaviours. This has improved the day-to-day childcare practice, with good results. Positive, caring interactions between the staff and the children were observed throughout the inspection. This demonstrates the staff's commitment to enrich the children's lives and experiences.

The children are making good progress with their health and education. The acting manager has written new-style healthcare plans that clearly set out the children's health needs and how these will be met. Clear, descriptive, written plans better inform the staff regarding how to follow the children's healthcare regimes. The provision of good healthcare has been strengthened by the school's nurse overseeing the children's plans and by delivering good-quality training for the staff.

All the children are achieving and progressing in school. They have access to teachers alongside a range of specialists who are employed by the provider. These include a speech and language therapist and a registered nurse. Children also have access to occupational therapy. These additional on-site services contribute to improving the children's health and well-being.

### **How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good**

There are no children at risk of exploitation, going missing from home, radicalisation or bullying. There has been one complaint from a parent, which was reviewed at this inspection. The complaint related to several concerns about the care of a child, including a medication error. There are no requirements or recommendations raised in relation to the complaint outcomes.

A previous requirement to ensure that all staff have up-to-date behaviour management and restraint training is met. Restraints are very rarely used, and only implemented as a last resort.

There have been two restraints since the last inspection. Both incidents have been recorded appropriately and reviewed by the acting manager. However, one of the restraints appears to have been a compliance restraint, which is not permissible. The restraint was used to carry out personal care, which is permissible if a comprehensive risk assessment has been carried out. On this occasion, no risk assessment was completed. This way of working potentially compromises the children's rights and their well-being.

The provider has improved how the children are safeguarded. The children's known risks are much better managed, and the quality of the children's written risk assessment plans is good.

The acting manager and the responsible individual have taken comprehensive measures to further protect the children's welfare. Senior managers have formed a strategic team to plan and oversee the children's care planning, behaviour management, and safety.

This demonstrates the provider's commitment to improve the children's outcomes.

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

Despite their best efforts, the provider has not been able to recruit a manager since the previous registered manager resigned in March 2019. This has left the home without stable management or oversight. This has affected the quality of care provided to the children and led to poor staff morale.

A recently appointed acting manager, working alongside the responsible individual, has made several positive changes that have improved outcomes for the children and the general operation of the home. However, the acting manager is due to begin a long period of absence. Ongoing, unacceptable management arrangements have contributed to instability in the home, repeated requirements, and an increase in inspection and compliance activity.

There are ongoing concerns about poor staff recruitment and retention. Although this has improved since the last inspection, evidence from this, and previous inspections, indicates that the provider is struggling to recruit and maintain a full staffing complement. This questions the provider's ability to sustain adequate staffing.

Inductions for new staff are better planned and bespoke to the needs of the children and the home's statement of purpose. Staff competencies are regularly monitored and assessed. New staff are supported by mentors, which supports them through their induction process. However, the number of staff with a level 3 diploma in the care of children and young people is low: 10 staff out of a current staffing complement of 44.

The provider has improved processes at the home by meeting three compliance notices and two requirements. The children's residential care plans are now more individualised, and additional staff training has enabled the staff to take an active role in contributing to and evaluating the children's achievements and their development.

Improvements in how child protection concerns are managed safeguard the children better. The staff are more vigilant in noting and reporting any potential safeguarding concerns, and they are familiar with the home's safeguarding policies. This promotes the children's welfare.

A requirement to improve the monitoring of the home has led to changes in how the provider executes stringent internal and external monitoring. The provider has commissioned a new independent visitor who is scrutinising care practice and the home's operation and management. Early signs are that the independent visitor is identifying and challenging shortfalls in a positive way. This approach encourages open and transparent discussions that improve the children's day-to-day experiences.

## **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:** 1234990

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

**Registered provider:** The Percy Hedley Foundation

**Registered provider address:** Percy Hedley School, Forest Hall, Newcastle Upon Tyne  
NE12 8YY

**Responsible individual:** Ann-Marie Watts

**Registered manager:** Post vacant

## Inspector

Debbie White: social care inspector



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