

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 are provided for up to six children and/or young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. This may include young people with a learning disability.

The post of registered manager is currently vacant.

Inspection dates: 17 to 18 February 2020

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 4 February 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
04/02/2019	Full	Outstanding
30/01/2018	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
09/05/2017	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Young people are well cared for by a staff team which is child-centred and provides them with consistent, individualised care. Staff have worked well to build strong, trusting relationships with young people. This means that young people feel safe and are more self-confident. Professionals and parents commented on how well staff work with the young people at supporting them in all aspects of their lives.

Young people are confident in expressing their views in meetings and on a one-to-one basis. As a result, the young people contribute to their future plans and can influence how the home is run. Young people know how to complain and are helped by staff and advocates to do so. Complaints are handled sensitively, and feedback is given to the young people on the outcomes of the investigations. However, few complaints are made, with most issues and 'grumbles' being dealt with informally or through restorative approaches.

Staff support children well in education and attendance is good. This ensures that young people can achieve their potential. One member of staff is designated as the education lead for the home and works collaboratively with education providers to ensure that education plans are up to date and are clearly focused on the individual needs of the young people. Education is considered holistically, and there is a good range of less formal learning opportunities for young people such as activities and direct work.

Young people have very good opportunities to embrace new experiences through the wide range of activities available. Young people are involved in choosing both group and individual activities. These include holidays and participation in local youth groups. One young person had the opportunity to be part of the Tall Ships event. Activities are also used well to enable young people to contribute to the local community. This year the young people were proactive in fundraising for local charities for the homeless and for victims of domestic abuse.

Collaborative work by the staff with other agencies, combined with detailed planning, ensures that the young people's physical and emotional health needs are well met. To promote their independence the young people are encouraged to be involved in their day-to-day health needs such as attending medical appointments and managing their own medication under supervision.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

Young people are increasingly protected and feel safe because staff have a good knowledge of safeguarding. The safeguarding needs of young people are well considered through regular supervision and ongoing risk assessment. Risk management is comprehensive, including detailed risk assessments and robust care planning.

When the young people return after being missing from the home they are always seen by an independent worker. The reports of these meetings are comprehensive, evaluated well and incorporated into care planning to ensure that risks for the young people are identified and, where possible, reduced.

Staff manage the behaviour of young people well. De-escalation techniques are being used to good effect, leading to a reduction in the number of incidents and use of sanctions. Incentives and rewards for positive behaviour are also used well. However, the current policy on behavioural management focuses predominantly on physical intervention and has not been updated to include new approaches and wider strategies for behaviour management.

Staff are working well to ensure that the young people also have the skills and knowledge to keep increasingly safe and manage their feelings. One member of staff has the lead role for well-being work with the young people. This has included some effective work in building young people's confidence and self-esteem and their understanding of risks about substance and alcohol misuse, missing and exploitation.

Care planning is comprehensive and is complemented by good direct work focused on improving outcomes and sustaining the young people in transition to independence. Despite not always having up-to-date information from other professionals, staff have worked determinedly to make sure that plans fully address the wide-ranging needs of the young people.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The acting manager is committed to improving outcomes for the young people. He is child-centred and has worked hard to sustain standards of care for the young people following the departure of the previous manager.

Staff feel well supported by the acting manager and deputy. Staff supervision is thorough, reflective and well-focused on learning and development, ensuring that staff have the necessary skills to help the young people progress and succeed. Group supervision is also used well to reflect and consider the needs of the young people. Recommendations from the last inspection have been met in respect of the recording of supervision and the inclusion of a safeguarding element in supervision meetings.

Staff feel valued and are very committed to developing the service for the young people. The acting manager has created an inclusive working environment that identifies the strengths of individual staff members and gives them the opportunity to take lead roles in various aspects of the young people's care, such as participation, well-being and education. In taking on these roles, staff are working very well in partnership with other professionals in meeting the needs of the young people.

Staff are well qualified and experienced. There are clear expectations of staff to develop and learn, and there is an extensive training programme, including online training options. The acting manager knows what further training is required. However, there is no formal written workforce development plan to make sure that staff have the training

necessary to deliver the home's recently changed statement of purpose and meet the individual needs of the young people.

The acting manager monitors the standard of care every six months and produces a report. The process includes case auditing and feedback from the young people, professionals and parents. However, the report, while detailed, does not include enough analysis of trends to identify improvements and areas for development in the quality of the service provided. In addition, there is no action plan to inform service development.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Recommendations

- The behaviour management policy should address general principles for behaviour management in children's homes which include: treating each child with understanding, dignity, kindness and respect; building, protecting and preserving positive relationships between each child and the adults caring for them; understanding each child's behaviour to allow their needs, aspirations, experiences and strengths to be recognised and their quality of life to be enhanced; involving children and relevant others wherever practical in behaviour management; supporting each child to balance safety from injury (harm) with making appropriate choices; making sure the child's rights are upheld. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.35)
- The registered person should have a workforce plan which can fulfil the workforce related requirements of regulation 16, schedule 1 (paragraphs 19 and 20). The plan should be updated to include any new training and qualifications completed by staff while working at the home and used to record the ongoing training and continuing professional development needs of staff – including the home's manager. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.8)
- Regulation 45 sets out requirements for the registered person to have a system in place which allows them to monitor the matters set out in the regulation at least once every six months; also see regulation 13(2)(h) (the leadership and management standard). The registered person should undertake a review that focuses on the quality of the care provided by the home, the experiences of children living there and the impact the care is having on outcomes and improvements for the children. Reviews should be underpinned by the Quality Standards as described in regulations 5 to 14.

The review should enable the registered person to identify areas of strength and possible weakness in the home's care, which will be captured in the written report. The report should clearly identify any actions required for the next 6 months of delivery within the home and how those actions will be addressed. The whole review process and the resulting report should be used as a tool for continuous improvement in the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', pages 64 and 65, paragraphs 15.2 and 15.4)

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people, 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: Newcastle City Council

Registered provider address: Barras Bridge, Civic Centre, Newcastle-upon-Tyne
NE1 8QH

Responsible individual: Jayne Forsdike

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Fiona Millns: Ofsted Inspector

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