

SC035409

Northumberland County Council

Monitoring visit

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This secure children's home is operated by a local authority and is approved by the Secretary of State to restrict children and young people's liberty. The home provides for up to 15 children who are aged between 10 and 17 years and placed by local authorities. Children are accommodated under section 25 of the Children Act 1989. 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.

The commissioning of health services in this home is the statutory responsibility of NHS England under the Health and Social Care Act 2012. Education is provided on site in dedicated facilities.

The manager registered with Ofsted on 30 September 2014 and is appropriately qualified for the role.

Inspection date: 19 June 2020

This monitoring visit

This visit was in response to a letter received from the Office of the Children's Commissioner outlining a range of concerns that had been raised by children in the home. Inspectors did not find evidence to support the concerns raised. However, some shortfalls in practice were identified.

During the timescales identified in the letter to the Office of the Children's Commissioner, children have been admitted to the home using the Public Health England guidance in relation to prevention of the spread of COVID-19 (coronavirus). This change of practice is appropriate in the current circumstances.

When children's behaviour becomes a danger to themselves and/or others, children are appropriately separated from the group. This method of control should be only

used when certain criteria are fulfilled and for the shortest time possible. Records of two such occasions, which were for extended periods of time, were of poor quality and did not demonstrate that the criteria for the use of such controls were in line with regulations. Failure to keep accurate records on incidents that restrict children's liberty of movement is a significant shortfall.

Contact between children, their families and those significant to them is managed appropriately. Children are able to stay in touch with family and professionals through private telephone calls. Arrangements for the monitoring of calls are agreed with the placing local authority. Children have access to private calls directly to the Office of the Children's Commissioner, Childline and advocacy services if they have any concerns. This enables children to feel listened to and valued.

The police have been appropriately called on three occasions to manage high-risk behaviours that could not be safely managed by staff. The manager notified Ofsted and the placing authorities in line with requirements. This ensures that risk management is monitored by external authorities.

Physical restraint is not consistently recorded in line with regulations. One record was not clear as to whether staff had actually used physical restraint before calling the police to help manage the situation. Another report did not include an injury that had occurred to a child and how this had happened. These recording shortfalls are significant. Monitoring by managers had not identified and addressed these issues to ensure that children were protected. Inspectors also found that information relating to children with similar initials had been mis-identified in monitoring records which does not protect children's information.

Commissioning and contracting arrangements for dedicated healthcare are insufficient. The assigned nurse is not able to provide direct healthcare to children due to commissioned arrangements. Staff are signposted by the assigned nurse to access appropriate external health services. Where physical intervention has been used, the assigned nurse is not always notified. Due to the limited availability and the commissioned arrangements for the assigned nurse, children do not always have the opportunity to see a registered nurse or medical practitioner, which they should have even if there are no apparent injuries.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
26/11/2019	Full	Good
04/07/2019	Interim	Improved effectiveness
11/12/2018	Interim	Improved effectiveness
03/07/2018	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, 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 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 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)(a)(b)(2)(h))</p> <p>Specifically, ensure that records are monitored so that they reflect practice and are in line with regulations.</p>	31/07/2020
<p>The registered person must ensure that—</p> <p>within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes—</p> <p>details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of the measure;</p> <p>a description of the measure and its duration;</p> <p>a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure</p> <p>within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person</p> <p>adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure.</p> <p>(Regulation 35(a)(ii)(iv)(viii)(c))</p>	17/07/2020

Recommendations

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

Specifically, ensure that only information relating to a specific child is kept securely on that child's file/records.

- Children subject to restraint procedures see a health care professional as soon as possible after restraint and any injuries sustained are fully documented. ('Health care standards for children and young people in secure settings', paragraph 6.7.3, page 30)
- Children in secure settings are confident that health care professionals are focused on addressing their individual health and wellbeing needs, and healthcare staff in secure settings deliver high quality services to support the physical health and wellbeing of the children in their care. ('Health care standards for children and young people in secure settings 2019', paragraphs 1.1.2 and 1.2, page 12)

Specifically, review, with NHS England, the role and responsibilities for nursing provision so that they reflect the 'Health care standards for children and young people in secure settings 2019'.

Information about this inspection

This monitoring visit was carried out in response to a letter from the Children's Commissioner for England stating that children had made contact over a period of months, raising concerns about their care at the home.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

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

Shaun Common, social care inspector

Sue Atkinson-Millmoor, social care inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit

www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2020