

# 1233307

**Newcastle City Council**

Monitoring visit

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## **Information about this children's home**

This local authority home provides care and accommodation for up to six children with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Ofsted last visited the home in February 2020. There have been changes to the management in the home since the last inspection. The current manager registered with Ofsted in August 2020.

Ofsted is aware of the challenges that COVID-19 (coronavirus) is currently posing to those we inspect and regulate. During the visit, the inspector took into consideration the measures taken to manage risks of COVID-19 in the home, particularly the impact that this is having on staffing and the resources available for children.

**Inspection date:** 27 January 2021

## **This monitoring visit**

The visit was completed in response to safeguarding notifications received by Ofsted.

The inspection was carried out off site, and considered the following:

- home conditions
- care planning for children
- the response to managing children's behaviour
- staffing levels and supervision of staff.

We identified widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children.

Children have poor experiences while living in this home. There has been a significant reduction in the management oversight of the home. The COVID-19 pandemic has led to staff absences, including that of the manager and deputy. In some cases, including the registered manager, this has been for long periods of time. Staff are working extra hours and are covering shifts for other staff. Sometimes, bank staff are used to provide additional cover. The senior leadership team has not provided any additional management support.

The staffing pressures have affected the frequency of staff supervision, the quality of written records and the use of monitoring systems. Staff say that this has left them feeling vulnerable. This means that there is no review of the quality of care so any shortfalls in practice are not dealt with and may affect children's progress.

When children are due to move into the home, the decision-making processes do not consider all relevant information. This means that children are not matched appropriately each time, so they live together even when this is not in their best interests. This impacts on all the children who live in the home and affects the progress that they make.

Staff do not manage the children's behaviour, which leads to increased risk for all involved. The staff offer guidance to encourage positive behaviour, for example setting goals and offering incentives, but this is not effective. Behaviours often escalate, which results in staff requiring a police presence to help them to manage the situations. This means that children do not receive the help needed to develop positive behaviour, which increases their risk of being criminalised.

Records of the incidents are not clear or evaluated, and the manager does not consistently inform Ofsted of incidents. This prevents the regulator from having an overview of the actions taken by staff in the home to ensure that the children are increasingly safe.

Areas of the home are damaged, including walls, radiators and children's bedroom doors. There are no pictures or personalised items around the home to reflect the children who live there. Staff remove these items to manage the situation and prevent further damage. Redecoration and repairs are not promptly carried out. Staff lock some rooms to manage situations, which prevents children from moving freely within the home. The children spend most of their time in their bedrooms or out in the local community.

Staff support children when they want to complain about the quality of care that they receive. An independent manager, who does not work in the home, undertakes the investigation. However, the investigations and outcomes do not acknowledge shortfalls or show how improvements will be made. The written responses to children from the investigating manager are not child-friendly, which makes the process difficult for children to understand. This means that they feel powerless and unable to influence what happens in their lives.

When children go missing from home, staff follow the missing-from-home policy. They understand their roles and responsibilities, including searching for the child and informing other agencies. When found, children can talk to an independent person about their experiences in the home and why they went missing. One professional spoke positively about the way staff respond and said that they are very good at sharing information. This helps agencies to work together to find the child sooner.

Children say they have positive relationships with staff. One child said that they like the staff, and another child gave the staff a score of 10 out of 10. Staff treat children as individuals and care about them. The staff advocate on behalf of children when they need the help of external services. This raises children's self-esteem.

## Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
17/02/2020	Full	Good
04/02/2019	Full	Outstanding
30/01/2018	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
09/05/2017	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 positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on—</p> <p>mutual respect and trust;</p> <p>an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and</p> <p>positive responses to other children and adults.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>meet each child's behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child's relevant plans;</p> <p>help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone;</p> <p>communicate to each child expectations about the child's behaviour and ensure that the child understands those expectations in accordance with the child's age and understanding;</p> <p>help each child to understand, in a way that is appropriate according to the child's age and understanding, personal, sexual and social relationships, and how those relationships can be supportive or harmful; and</p> <p>that each child is encouraged to build and maintain positive relationships with others.</p> <p>(Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(iv)(v)(vi)(b))</p>	14 March 2021
<p>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p>	14 March 2021

<p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>help each child to understand how to keep safe;</p> <p>that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm;</p> <p>that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(ii)(b)(d))</p>	
<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>lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose;</p> <p>understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home;</p> <p>demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on—</p> <p>feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received; and</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)(a)(f)(g)(ii)(h))</p>	<p>14 March 2021</p>
<p>The care planning standard is that children—</p>	<p>14 March 2021</p>

<p>receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home's statement of purpose. (Regulation 14 (1)(a) (2)(a))</p>	
<p>The registered person must ensure that all employees—</p> <p>receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(b))</p>	14 March 2021
<p>Subject to paragraph (6), the registered person must establish a procedure for considering complaints made by or on behalf of children.</p> <p>The registered person must ensure that a record is made of any complaint, the action taken in response, and the outcome of any investigation. (Regulation 39 (1) (3))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that feedback given to children is clear and helps them to make a decision about how satisfied they are with the outcome.</p>	14 March 2021
<p>The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if—</p> <p>a child is involved in or subject to, or is suspected of being involved in or subject to, sexual exploitation;</p> <p>an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious;</p> <p>there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there;</p> <p>a child protection enquiry involving a child—</p> <p>is instigated; or</p>	14 March 2021

concludes (in which case, the notification must include the outcome of the child protection enquiry); or

there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious.  
(Regulation 40 (4)(a)(b)(c)(d)(i)(ii)(e))

\*These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

## Information about this inspection

The purpose of this visit was to monitor the action taken and the progress made by the children's home since its last Ofsted inspection.

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

## Children's home details

**Unique reference number:** 1233307

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

**Registered provider:** Newcastle City Council

**Registered provider address:** Barras Bridge, Newcastle upon Tyne, Tyne and Wear NE1 8QH

**Responsible individual:** Jayne Forsdike

**Registered manager:** John Murphy

## Inspector

Catherine Heron, Social Care Inspector

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