

1233307

Registered provider: Newcastle City Council

Assurance inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is operated and managed by a local authority. It is registered to provide care for up to six children with social and emotional difficulties.

There are five children currently living in the home. The inspectors spoke to the one child who was present in the home during this inspection.

Inspection date: 15 September 2022

Date of last inspection: 17 May 2022

Judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Information about this inspection

At this inspection, the inspectors evaluated:

- the care of children
- the safety of children
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers.

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children, using the social care common inspection framework. This assurance 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'.

Findings from the inspection

We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance inspection.

The care of children

Children are encouraged by staff to believe in themselves and to develop an interest in learning. All the children either attend education or they are employed, which is excellent progress. The support that the children receive from the staff helps them to develop confidence, aspirations and enthusiasm for their future.

The manager assesses the competing needs of the children already living in the home when new children move into the home. This includes when children need to move in urgently. The manager provides the staff with guidance to help them to immediately understand and mitigate the children's competing risks.

Children are supported by staff to attend routine health appointments and to access additional help with more complex health needs, including substance misuse. Staff use guidance from health professionals to help them to understand how to supplement the specialist support that the children receive.

Staff help the children to prepare for adulthood by supporting them to develop age-appropriate independent living skills. However, there is no current record of the local authority's plan for one child. The manager has not prioritised this issue. This shortfall hinders the opportunity for staff to provide a personalised plan for this child.

Staff check the children's bedrooms daily and are expected to provide support, where necessary, to help the children to maintain their bedrooms. However, while staff carry out checks, they do not always notice issues. Consequently, some issues are not promptly addressed.

The safety of children

Staff manage the children's known risks well and they put measures in place when they identify potential vulnerabilities. Children's risk assessments are detailed and clear. They are updated promptly with new information so that they remain current.

There is a reduction of incidents of children going missing from the home. One professional said, in relation to the staff's response to children who do go missing, 'The staff go out looking for the children and often locate them themselves. Each child has a great relationship with their key worker.'

Key-work sessions take place regularly and are centred around the children's needs. The staff are sensitive to the children's experiences and demonstrate an empathic, nurturing approach, which helps the children to feel supported and understood.

Staff share information with children about additional services that are available to them, including independent services, such as advocacy. Children can access this service with or without staff assistance, as they choose. This offers children an alternative outlet, should they need it, to share any concerns that may arise.

Recruitment procedures follow safer recruitment guidelines. This gives assurance that adults are suitably vetted prior to caring for the children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers

The manager has implemented effective monitoring systems that he uses to scrutinise and evaluate the care that the children receive. The manager promotes good practice and challenges staff effectively to address practice issues. This helps to ensure that raising the quality of care that the children receive is a continual process.

Staff meetings are held regularly and are well attended. Children are routinely discussed so that staff remain current in their knowledge of how to meet each child's needs.

Most of the staff have completed all of the local authority's mandatory training. The rota is arranged to ensure that staff who are suitably trained are available to meet the needs of the children.

The manager is in the process of making improvements to the home. Some areas of the home, including the games room and hallways, are more welcoming and homely. However, the door closures in children's bedrooms are yet to be addressed. The manager has added this to the development plan for the home.

Closed-circuit television devices are appropriately placed so that they act as a suitable security measure to protect the home from intruders. However, the manager has not obtained the necessary permission for this measure for one child. This means that for one child there is no written consent for this practice.

The requirements and recommendations made at the last inspection have been met.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
17/05/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
16/11/2021	Full	Good
17/02/2020	Full	Good
04/02/2019	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, 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>In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff—</p> <p>seek to secure the input and services required to meet each child's needs;</p> <p>if the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority's or a relevant person's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 5 (b)(c))</p>	15 October 2022
<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 the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children;</p> <p>use this understanding to deliver care that meets 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>provide personalised care that meets each child's needs, as recorded in the child's relevant plans, taking account of the child's background. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(iv))</p> <p>The specifically relates to ensuring that daily checks of children's bedrooms are sufficiently thorough and effective.</p>	15 October 2022

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the home is a nurturing and supportive environment which complies with relevant health and safety legislation, such as alarms and food hygiene. However, in doing so, the home should seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than 'institutional' impression. This specifically relates to addressing the door closures in children's bedrooms. ('Guide

to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

- The registered person should ensure that they obtain written consent to any monitoring or surveillance by the placing authority at the time of placement. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 16, paragraph 3.16)

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 1233307

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Newcastle City Council

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

Responsible individual: Jayne Forsdike

Registered manager: Reinder Dam

Inspectors

Paula Kelly, Social Care Inspector
Cherie Chen, Social Care Inspector

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