

SC035409

Registered provider: Northumberland County Council

Assurance inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this secure children's home

This secure children's home is operated by a local authority and is approved by the Department for Education to restrict children and young people's liberty.

The home can accommodate up to 15 children aged between 10 and 17 years. It has three designated living areas: Alder, Willow and Hadrian.

The home provides care for children accommodated under section 25 of the Children Act 1989 who are placed by local authorities.

The 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 January 2012.

There were 11 children living in the home at the time of this inspection.

We last visited this setting on 1 November 2022 to carry out a full inspection. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection date: 8 August 2023

Date of last inspection: 1 November 2022

Judgement at last inspection: outstanding

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

A child said, 'The best thing about here is the staff.' Children build positive relationships with staff. The home has an optimistic ambiance. There are lots of smiling faces and a relaxed atmosphere, with staff and children sharing jokes and having constructive conversations. This is helping children to feel safe and be confident in expressing their views and opinions.

Staff recognise the importance of involving children in all aspects of their care. This is achieved through daily discussions, children's meetings, care planning and key-work sessions. Children benefit from staff advocating on their behalf with their placing local authorities. This ensures that action is taken to make sure children's views are heard.

Staff know children well and understand their individual needs. This is accomplished by careful and well-thought-out planning with regular reviews. This ensures that children continue to make progress and have positive experiences that support them when they leave.

Children benefit from well-planned mobility, with trips out in the community being supported. They enjoy activities to such places as the hairdressers, the gym, seeing their family and visits to local shops and cafes. This helps them to make adjustments, plan for their next steps and prepare for leaving the home.

The safety of children

Children are kept safe. Risk assessments are detailed, constantly reviewed and updated. Staff are aware of each child's vulnerability and identified risks, and are effective in managing these.

Physical intervention, single separation and managing away events are only used when necessary and for the minimum amount of time. Children always have constructive discussions and reflective sessions to help them express their feelings and explore the reasons for their presenting behaviour. In the event of a physical intervention or serious incident, children are visited by one of the health team. This shows children that staff care for them and want to better understand them. In turn, this enables staff to provide more bespoke care and assists children to better understand and manage their emotions.

When serious incidents have occurred, the registered manager and senior team make certain that swift action is taken to ensure that the child's well-being and

safety are prioritised. All relevant professionals and agencies are informed, and appropriate follow-up action is completed. This ensures that children's needs are met, and they are kept safe.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers

There is a strong and dedicated senior leadership team that cascades a positive ethos that is child centred. The staff embrace this. Good planning, support and oversight of the service ensures the continued delivery of a high standard of care to children. The home's practice is shared with the wider secure estate to promote learning.

Staff are well supported through formal supervision and good mandatory and specialist training opportunities. This, along with routine and detailed communication through handovers and meetings, equips staff well to care and meet the diverse needs of each child.

The recommendation made at the last inspection has been addressed. Managers have undertaken organised work sessions with staff to improve the quality of recordings, including the language used. Children's records have been regularly reviewed. This has assisted in ensuring that children's records are written in a way that is more helpful to the child.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
01/11/2022	Full	Outstanding
01/03/2022	Full	Good
21/09/2021	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
26/11/2019	Full	Good

Secure children's home details

Unique reference number: SC035409

Provision sub-type: Secure children's home

Registered provider: Northumberland County Council

Registered provider address: Northumberland County Council, County Hall,
Morpeth, Northumberland NE61 2EF

Responsible individual: Adam Hall

Registered manager: Julie Tinkler

Inspectors

Debbie Foster, Social Care Inspector
Thirza Smith, Social Care Inspector

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