

1155757

Registered provider: Northumberland County 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 and provides care for up to three children who may have social and emotional difficulties.

The manager registered with Ofsted in May 2015.

Inspection date: 18 December 2023

Date of last inspection: 26 September 2023

Judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Information about this inspection

At this inspection, the inspector 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'.

Outcome from the inspection

We identified no serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance inspection.

Findings from the inspection

There were three children living at the home at the home of inspection.

One child has moved into the home since the last inspection. The move to the home was well planned and staff helped the child to feel welcome and supported. This helped the child to settle quickly and feel at home.

The children are supported by a stable staff team. Staff provide children with continuity of care that helps them to develop and sustain their positive relationships. The children feel able to seek support from the staff and the manager whenever they need.

The manager and staff support the children to attend their education provisions. Some children are engaging with their learning and making clear progress. One child is not in education. The staff help them with alternative learning at home, encouraging the child to develop important life skills, such as cooking, tidying and budgeting. This helps children to learn and also develop skills for later life.

Staff support the children to ensure they are up to date with their routine health appointments. When children require specialist services, staff encourage them to engage and help them attend their appointments. Staff help to educate the children about good health and support them to make informed choices about their own well-being.

Children's risk assessments provide staff with clear actions to follow to reduce the risk of harm to the children. Staff know the children's risks and know what they need to do to keep the children safe. Staff talk to the children about how to keep themselves safe.

Children receive praise and rewards from the staff to encourage and reinforce positive behaviours. Staff implement clear and consistent boundaries to help the children to learn and understand acceptable behaviours. Staff use restorative consequences when the children's behaviour is inappropriate. The manager reviews the consequences in a timely manner. This helps to ensure that management strategies are effective.

When children need to be held in order to prevent harm to themselves and others, the staff act appropriately. This practice is used as a last resort. Debrief sessions take place with the staff in a timely manner. Staff also spend time discussing incidents with the children. This helps children to reflect on their behaviour and

learn how to better manage their emotions in the future. Staff use these reflective conversations to identify how their practice can improve.

The manager ensures that staff are able to access required training, such as first-aid and medication training. However, on one occasion medication was administered to a child by a member of staff who had not completed the required training. This could put children at risk of harm.

Staff view the use of the children's bedroom door alarm system as a standardised practice. At the time of the inspection, the bedroom door alarm remained in use despite only one child being at home. This created an unnecessary intrusion into the child's privacy and movements around their home.

The manager has taken steps to address most of the shortfalls identified at the previous inspection. Two requirements have been restated.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
26/09/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
07/06/2022	Full	Good
25/01/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
10/09/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be 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 registered person must make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the children's home. (Regulation 23 (1))</p> <p>In particular, the registered person must ensure that staff have completed relevant medication training prior to administering medication to children.</p> <p>This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.</p>	24 January 2024
<p>The registered person may only use devices for the monitoring or surveillance of children if—</p> <p>the monitoring or surveillance is no more intrusive than necessary, having regard to the child's need for privacy. (Regulation 24 (1)(d))</p> <p>This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.</p>	24 January 2024

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 1155757

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Northumberland County Council

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

Responsible individual: Adam Hall

Registered manager: Stephanie Scott

Inspector

Cherie Chen, Social Care Inspector

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