

SC433451

Registered provider: St Cuthbert's Care

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned and managed by a charitable organisation. It is registered to care for up to six children who may have emotional and/or social difficulties.

The manager registered with Ofsted in August 2011.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

Inspection dates: 5 to 6 October 2021

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 5 November 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
05/11/2019	Full	Outstanding
14/11/2018	Full	Outstanding
06/02/2018	Full	Outstanding
02/03/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children enjoy trusting relationships with the staff and are making significant progress from their starting points. One child scored living in the home as 10 out of 10. Staff use numerous ways to ensure that they are listening to the children's views, including children's meetings and key-work sessions. Children also provide their views to staff meetings and contribute to the staff's supervision and appraisal. This supports children in making strong, meaningful relationships with the staff.

Children know how to complain and say that they feel safe and confident to raise any concerns that they have with the staff. When the children do make a complaint, the manager takes this seriously and undertakes a thorough investigation. The complaints leaflets are readily accessible in the home and are also included in the children's guide, which the children are given a copy of on admission. This approach gives the children a clear message that staff are keen to hear what they have to say if they want to raise an issue; thus encouraging children to feel that they have a right to express their opinions on matters that are important in their lives.

Staff ensure that the children's health needs are well met. Children attend routine health appointments as well as specialist and therapeutic services. For children with complex health needs, the staff support them during hospital admissions and with all aspects of their care. Staff challenge health professionals appropriately, when necessary, to ensure that the children's health needs are properly assessed and diagnosed. One health professional said: 'The staff stand their ground with health professionals and are very persistent.'

Children attend education and are progressing well. Children who have previously experienced barriers to attendance and learning are now attending full-time education. For some children, this is considerable progress.

Children are treated with dignity and respect. Staff support the children's differences and individuality. They are sensitive to each child's specific needs and challenge others appropriately. This allows the children to develop a positive self-image and a sense of their own identity.

The home is decorated and furnished to a good standard. Children are given the opportunity to redecorate their bedroom when they first move into the home, and their views are sought when redecorating the rest of the home. However, there are some decoration and maintenance tasks, such as loose door handles, that need to be undertaken, and some cleanliness issues with some of the toilets that should be addressed.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

Children say that they feel safe living in the home. Staff take immediate action to keep the children safe and provide appropriate follow-up steps, including seeking medical support when necessary. Safeguarding procedures are consistently implemented by the staff, who understand their responsibilities. This consistent approach gives the children a clear message that their safety and well-being are given a high priority.

On the few occasions when children go missing from the home, staff are proactive in their efforts to secure their safe return. This includes trying to contact them by telephone, as well as driving to all known locations where they might be to locate them. Once children are found, return home interviews are offered.

Safer recruitment processes are followed when staff are appointed. This provides assurance that they are suitably vetted and qualified to provide care.

Matching reports are completed when considering whether a child should come to live in the home. They consider the potential impact on the children already living in the home, as well as the risks for the child moving in. However, it is not clear from these documents when they are completed and in one example, there was no evidence of any management oversight. This lack of scrutiny potentially places all children at risk.

Reports, including impact risk assessments, are clear and easy to read. They have a detailed plan of how the risks will be managed by the staff. There is a system in place for keeping records up to date, and to ensure that the staff have read the revised documents. However, the inspectors identified two examples where it was not clear whether the staff had familiarised themselves with the revised documents. Although this has not had a negative impact on the children, it is important that the staff have the correct information to provide appropriate care for the children.

Staff occasionally use sanctions to help the children to understand that they are accountable for their actions. However, the sanction records do not appropriately record the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure. It is also not clear from the record whether the user of the measure, or the child, has been spoken to in the specified timescale. This shortfall hinders the manager's ability to identify patterns in the children's behaviour.

The inspectors' review of documents shows that there is one serious incident that has not been notified to the regulator. This failure means that Ofsted is unable to scrutinise the information to ensure that the provider has taken suitable action to keep children safe.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The manager is suitably qualified and experienced. She is passionate and inspirational and leads by example. She has a strong presence in the home, ensuring that she spends time with the children. The manager is supported by a small, stable and highly motivated staff team. This means that the children benefit from consistent staffing arrangements, which helps to provide the children with stability and security.

The manager has a clear vision for the home and the improvements that she wants to implement. She has high expectations of herself and her staff. She ensures that the children are provided with the best possible care. This, along with the manager's highly effective auditing processes, ensures that the children's care experiences continue to improve.

The manager supports staff effectively with their professional development. Through regular, high-quality, practice-related supervisions and team meetings, the staff can reflect on the children's progress and their own performance. This also enables the staff to share and develop their knowledge and skills. Staff feel supported and informed of plans and decisions relating to each individual child, which enables them to provide good and consistent care for the children.

The manager ensures that the staff have a structured training programme that is relevant to the individual needs of the children. The manager and her team undertake mandatory training. Training records are up to date and are clear with regards to the type of training completed and when training needs to be reviewed. This enables the staff to continue to meet the children's complex needs.

The manager and the staff have excellent communication with other professionals and family members. This was a common theme in feedback during the inspection. One parent said: '[Name] is doing fantastic.' One professional said: 'The care by staff is second to none.' Effective multi-agency working ensures that all the relevant professionals are well informed of all matters relating to the children.

Children's records are up to date and of a high standard. The manager welcomes external scrutiny from the independent visitor. She shares the recommendations in staff meetings, to make further improvements and to raise the standard of care that the children receive. This demonstrates a culture of openness and willingness to listen and change.

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>The registered person must prepare and implement a policy (“the behaviour management policy”) which sets out—</p> <p>how appropriate behaviour is to be promoted in the children’s home; and</p> <p>the measures of control, discipline and restraint which may be used in relation to children in the home.</p> <p>The registered person must ensure that—</p> <p>within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline, or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes—</p> <p>the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so (“the authorised person”)—</p> <p>has spoken to the user about the measure; and</p> <p>within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (1)(a)(b) (3)(a)(vii)(b)(i)(c))</p>	<p>5 November 2021</p>

Recommendations

- The registered provider should ensure that the home is maintained to a good standard. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered provider should ensure that all records are kept up to date and are signed and dated by the author of each entry. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 62, paragraph 14.3)

- The registered provider should ensure that all serious incidents relating to the protection, safeguarding or welfare of a child living in the home are notified to Ofsted. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 63, paragraph 14.10)

Information about this inspection

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

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC433451

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: St Cuthbert's Care

Registered provider address: St Cuthbert's House, West Road, Newcastle upon Tyne NE15 7PY

Responsible individual: Amanda Head

Registered manager: Jody Scott

Inspectors

Paula Shepherd, Social Care Inspector
Cherie Chen, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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