

**TITLE OF REPORT:**           **Inspections by OFSTED of Gateshead Children’s Homes  
and Regulation 44 visits**

**REPORT OF:**               **Caroline O’Neill, Strategic Director Care, Wellbeing and  
Learning**

---

---

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report outlines Ofsted regulation 44 independent visits and inspection outcomes carried out in the Council’s children’s homes between March 2018 and June 2018.

The Children’s Homes have two types of inspections:

- Formal inspections are made by Ofsted twice a year in the form of key and interim inspections
- Monthly independent Regulation 44 management visits are undertaken by an Independent worker who took up this role in October 2016, after the reciprocal arrangement with Newcastle ended. She is undertaking the Reg 44 visits for both Grove House and Blaydon Children Home and this should give a consistent standard of scrutiny across both services

The report notes many positive areas from inspection and outcomes of visits. It also highlights some issues and actions.

---

---

### **POLICY CONTEXT**

1. The statutory requirements under the Care Standards Act 2000, in particular the Children’s Homes Regulations 2001 amended with new Children’s Homes Regulations and Standards in April 2015. When the new framework of regulations and standards were introduced Ofsted also changed the inspection framework for children’s homes.
2. Children’s Homes are regulated services and inspected by Ofsted. Historically there have been at least two unannounced Ofsted inspections every 12 months, however the Social Care Common Inspection Framework (SCCIF) was introduced by Ofsted in April 2017. One of the inspection principles is to prioritise their work where improvement is needed most. If leaders and managers have shown that they can consistently deliver services for children well, they may decide to return less often or do a more proportionate inspection.
3. They inspect children’s homes that were judged inadequate or require improvement to be good at their last full inspection at least twice in each year-long inspection period (from 1st April – 31st March)

Ofsted carry out at least 1 full inspection of homes that were judged as outstanding or good during a year long inspection period.

They carry out an initial risk assessment for every children's home judged as good or outstanding at the start of the inspection year to inform an initial decision of whether these homes will be subject to a second inspection (interim) in addition to a full inspection.

This takes into account:

- The most recent interim inspection
- Reports received under regulations 44 and 45
- Notifications received under section 40
- Information from complaints, whistle-blowers and local authorities
- Changes to the home's management
- Any other relevant information

4. Ofsted can choose to visit unannounced at any time in addition to these inspection episodes. Also on a monthly basis unannounced independent visits are undertaken as required within the regulations for each Children's Home, the outcome of these visits are reported to Ofsted every month.

### **Blaydon Children's Home**

5. Blaydon children's home is a five bed long term provision for young with complex needs. They currently have 5 young people in placement, consisting of 4 males and 1 female. They have had 2 male residents move on and 2 new male resident admitted.

### **Ofsted Inspection**

6. Blaydon children's home had a full inspection on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2018. The inspection report has been published and Blaydon Children's Home received an overall judgement outcome of "good".
7. The Inspectors looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. They talked to young people and their families. and in addition the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people who it is trying to help, protect and look after.
8. The report looks at the
  - The overall experiences and progress of children and young people
  - How well children and young people are helped and protected
  - The effectiveness of leaders and managers

All areas were judged as good

9. Requirements and recommendations:

- There are shortfalls in the home's practice, mainly in relation to the quality of record-keeping and planning documents. These do not have a substantial impact on outcomes for young people.
- The independent monthly overview of the home does not routinely record all aspects of regulatory requirement. This means that external, impartial judgement about the quality of care is missing.

These recommendations have been acted upon and there are no outstanding requirements or recommendations from Ofsted

### **Regulation 44 update**

10. The Reg 44 reports state that the Reg 45 reports produced by the managers are of a high standard, with the information in the reports being factual, giving a good overview of the standard of care and work undertaken in the home
11. The home continues to be well managed by an experienced manager who is assisted by a team of skilled, experienced and appropriately trained staff. 2 new staff have been appointed and are very positive about joining Blaydon's staff team. Their induction has covered everything necessary and they have been made to feel very welcome by the team.
12. The reports identify that the home has a warm, welcoming comfortable feel to it and that staff follow the appropriate procedures for visitors to the building.
13. The independent visitor stated the standard of care provided by the home is very good and that staff are very positive about all of the young people they look after. They work hard to develop positive relationships with the young people in order to ensure their individual needs are met to a very good standard.
14. Interactions between staff and young people have been observed by the independent visitor on all 3 visits and she has noted that interactions are very positive and the young people appear to enjoy chatting with staff, relaxing watching tv with them and eating meals together.
15. They identified how young people's views and opinions are important at Blaydon and they are included, consulted and involved in making plans or decisions about all aspects of their lives and the running of the home. There are weekly consultation meetings and regular 1:1 meetings to obtain the young people's views and if they do not want to attend these their views are obtained via text and phone, which are recorded in the consultation file.
16. Positive behaviour is encouraged through praise, rewards and incentives and the young people are aware of the additional incentives they can receive for attending education employment or training, not going missing, being respectful to others within the house and helping with appropriate tasks around the home.
17. It is recorded by the independent visitor that engaging young people in education and training continues to be a priority for the home and it is impressive that all the young people are in education or training that meets their individual needs..

18. Risk assessments are clearly a priority within the home and are updated, sometimes on a daily basis. Safeguarding the young people is clearly a priority for staff and the daily handover discusses individual risk assessments so that staff are updated of any changes. Risk assessments continue to be emailed to each individual member of staff so that nothing is missed.
19. Missing episodes continue to be reported appropriately and recorded in detail, with evidence that staff attempt to keep in touch via phone or text with any young person that is classed missing or absent. Missing episodes have increased slightly with 2 of the young people and these are managed well by the staff.
20. Incidents of drug misuse and alcohol misuse, continue to be an area of concern for the manager and the staff team however they have reduced in this 3 month period. Staff work continuously with young people as a group and on a 1:1 basis to educate them and to try and help them reduce or stop their drug and/or alcohol use. This is well documented on young people's files, as is the support they receive in relation to services available to support them. Information is also shared with the police in a n appropriate way
21. The independent visitor has spoken with 2 of the families of the young people living in Blaydon and they were very happy with the care their children were receiving and very complimentary about the staff team.
22. There have been some challenges in relation to the dynamics within the home, which staff have managed very well.
23. The home continues to provide a very high standard of safe and stable care for young people. The staff are committed to ensuring the young people have the very best opportunities to reach their individual potential

#### 24. Recommendations from independent visits

There were no recommendations from the three Reg 44 visits undertaken in this period

There are no outstanding recommendations

### **Grove House Children's Home**

25. Grove House is a respite home for children with disabilities. The home had an Inspection on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2018 and were again judged by Ofsted as "outstanding". The full report is not available but the feedback from the inspector indicated that they were outstanding in every area.

### **Regulation 44 update**

26. The independent visitor has commented that the short break service provided by Grove House is excellent, which consistently provides outstanding care.

27. The manager and the staff are highly skilled, experienced and committed to ensuring children are safe and have an enjoyable stay at Grove House
28. The home has a lovely warm and welcoming feeling, and the independent visitor observed how the children were warmly welcomed as they returned from school. They were given individual attention and seemed very relaxed in the company of the staff on duty.
29. The home continues to be well run with a conscientious, highly motivated staff team who clearly know the children well. They are able to adapt their approach to meet the individual needs of the children and young people using the home, which enables the young people to feel safe and enjoy their stay at Grove House.
30. Grove House is clearly a very child focussed children's home and the staff team ensure the young people are involved and included in continuously improving a service which already operates to the highest of standards.
31. There is good evidence that the manager and staff put a lot of effort into involving young people in decision making and planning, and it is apparent that children's views and opinions are taken into account in all aspects of running the home, which takes time and patience given the profound disabilities of some young people who use the service.
32. Daily handover meetings ensure that all staff are familiar with the most up to date information about the children they will be looking after.
33. Education is a priority and staff work closely with schools and parents, completing home/school diaries and encouraging and supporting young people to complete their homework during their stay.
34. There is good evidence that young people regularly receive praise, encouragement and rewards for positive behaviour and progress they make, with children receiving certificates and a choice of treats.
35. Incidents are still very low considering the challenging behaviours presented by many of the young people using the service, however when they do occur they are often violent and aggressive causing minor injuries to staff. Every incident is recorded in detail and there is evidence of management oversight and debriefings with staff involved. Additional behaviour management training is being sourced at the request of staff to help them manage such situations.
36. There are 54 young people currently using the service. All files are in good order, records are maintained to a high standard and there is evidence of file audits being carried out.
37. Grove House is a very safe place for young people to stay. Staff ratios are good and children who use the service are carefully matched to ensure their needs are met to the highest standards. The home is well equipped with suitable disability aids to meet the needs of children who use the service
38. Recommendations from independent visits

There was one recommendation from the three Reg 44 visits. This relates to extracts from consultations and feedback from parents being placed on the compliments file as this is not routinely done,

This has been completed and the manager will ensure this is routinely done to capture all compliments

## **RECOMMENDATION**

39. The Committee is asked to consider and comment upon the contents of this report

**CONTACT:** Jill Little  
Service Manager  
Looked After Children and Corporate Parenting  
Extension 3420