

1183826

Registered provider: Sunderland Care and Support Limited

Assurance inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned and managed by a private provider. The home provides care for up to seven children under short-break arrangements. The home can provide care for one of these children for an extended period.

Inspection date: 21 March 2023

Date of last inspection: 20 June 2022

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'.

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

There are strong relationships between the staff and children. Staff ensure that they understand children's communication needs so children can share their views, wishes and feelings. Staff use visual tools and cues such as pictures, using Makaton sign language and observations of children to understand the emotions children are expressing. This enables staff to respond to children's needs and helps children develop trusting relationships with staff who care for them.

Children who use the short-break service are provided a broad range of opportunities to enjoy. Activities are specific to children's needs, likes and wishes. Children are supported to attend activities with one another to build peer relationships. These opportunities enhance children's life experiences and help develop their social skills.

Children are supported to take part in community activities, such as fundraising and celebrations. Families and relatives are invited to attend events organised by the home and be part of children's experiences. Compliments from parents convey that they value these opportunities. This helps build trusting relationships between staff and children's families and wider network.

Children who use the service have individualised targets and plans that are developed in conjunction with the child's family and involved professionals. Pre-admission assessments have been developed which identify children's individual needs.

The safety of children

Children who use the service have complex needs and their vulnerabilities are understood by staff, who have a range of experiences. Children often have detailed medication plans. Where issues have arisen with medication errors, staff acted promptly and appropriately to ensure children's safety.

Physical holds are rare. If holds are necessary, they are used appropriately and to ensure the safety of children and staff.

The home environment helps to keep children safe. The home has specialist equipment to ensure children's safety in communal areas and in their bedrooms. Children receive personal care in a dignified way that ensures their physical safety. One room has a 'safe place bed' for children who need this to feel safe and comfortable when it is time to rest and sleep.

Children who have lived at the home on a long-term basis are safely supported to move to their new home. Staff consider children's vulnerabilities and risks as part of the transition plan. This minimises any negative experiences children face as a result of a change of circumstances.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers

The registered manager and leadership team have developed a service development plan to address identified shortfalls. The plan acknowledges improvements made to date, and actions to make further improvements. The registered manager and leadership team demonstrate that they are developing a culture of transparency. They are motivated to improve the quality of care provided to children.

The registered manager and leadership team act promptly to address any safeguarding concerns, such as when medication errors occur. Responsive measures, such as staff debriefs and observations of staff in their practice, help to reduce future incidents. However, the registered manager has not always notified Ofsted of these incidents, which reduces the opportunities for external oversight by the regulator.

Staff have opportunities to attend training and development days to enhance their skills. However, the system for monitoring staff training means that information about when mandatory training needs to be updated for staff is not always available. This limits the ability to monitor and ensure that suitably trained staff are always supporting children.

Some children's files have out-of-date documents, such as education, health and care (EHC) plans. The registered manager has not challenged the accuracy of information from professionals or used formal channels to escalate any concerns with children's local authorities. This means there is a missed opportunity to ensure that all necessary details are included in children's plans.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/06/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
08/02/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
03/09/2019	Full	Good
27/11/2018	Full	Good

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered persons 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 persons must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which— include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child; and are kept up to date. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)) This specifically relates to up to date Education Health and Care plans	31 May 2023
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— a child is involved in or subject to, or is suspected of being involved in or subject to, sexual exploitation; an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious; there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there; a child protection enquiry involving a child— is instigated; or concludes (in which case, the notification must include the outcome of the child protection enquiry); or there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(a)(b)(c)(d)(i)(ii)(e)) This specifically relates to notifying the regulator about medication errors.	31 May 2023

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that training records are kept up to date and staff receive training specific to the individual needs of the children. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 53, paragraph 10.8)

Children’s home details

Unique reference number: 1183826

Provision sub-type: Children’s home

Registered provider: Sunderland Care and Support Limited

Registered provider address: Civic Centre, Burdon Road, Sunderland, Tyne & Wear SR2 7DN

Responsible individual: Graham King

Registered manager: Emma Charlton

Inspector

Cat Clasper, Social Care Inspector

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