

2529667

Registered provider: Devon County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home provides short-break stays for disabled children. On occasion, it provides longer-term placements for children. Currently, one child lives in the home and nine children receive short breaks. Two children were present during the inspection.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since April 2023.

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 November 2023

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 20 September 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/09/2022	Full	Good
12/01/2022	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
14/07/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good
11/09/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Staff work hard to make this a loving, nurturing home for children. Improvements are constantly being made to ensure that this home is welcoming and homely. Staff take pride in keeping the home tidy and well maintained. The many sensory items, photos and artwork completed by children complement the home and show the preferences of those who live here. Staff take care to prepare children's bedrooms ready for their stay. Individual touches, such as cosy blankets, preferred soft toys and sensory lighting, are available.

Children are happy and safe visiting this home. They have positive experiences and make good progress towards meeting their individual goals. Staff, family and external professionals recognise the very good progress being made several children have made since being here. There are many examples of children's physical development improving, their communication skills increasing, and the need for environmental restrictions, that are used to keep them safe, reducing.

Children have trusting and secure relationships with staff. Staff were observed to be demonstrating care, respect and love for the children. They confidently and proudly talk about children and recognise their many attributes and achievements. Children respond well to staff's approach; lots of smiles, reaching for cuddles and positive interactions were seen.

Staff know children's needs very well and provide personalised care and support in line with children's preferences and care plans. Care plans are comprehensive and provide a lot of very good information about children's individual needs, likes and dislikes, and how they need to be supported. Currently, these plans are written using the first-person narrative, without children contributing their views.

Staff understand how children communicate their needs, and help them to make meaningful choices during their stays. Staff use objects of reference, social stories and communication devices effectively to help children.

Children enjoy a range of activities when they visit. These include sensory activities, such as massage, water play and interactive stories, alongside baking, arts and crafts, and trips out to the local area. 'My stories' and 'positive moments' are a lovely way of capturing and documenting these important memories and achievements.

Staff work in partnership with children's families and schools to support children consistently. Approaches to care are shared, and families are encouraged to contribute to the plans for how their children are to be supported during their stay.

Professionals and families who contributed to this inspection are very pleased with the support provided at the home and the care given to the children. They recognise

the progress that children have made and report positive partnership working and communication from staff.

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

Children's individual vulnerabilities and needs are well understood by staff. Staff recognise the additional monitoring, observation and support that is needed due to children's complex communication, physical and health needs. Staff quickly recognise when children are feeling anxious, unhappy or unwell, and take appropriate action in response.

Restraint is rarely used. When it is used, detailed records are maintained and staff and children are supported to reflect on what happened, how they felt and what can be done differently next time to help children. Staff and managers reflect on incidents and identify where lessons can be learned; actions are taken in response.

Children are helped to take managed risks that support their development. For example, several children need additional monitoring or support to help them to stay safe. Managers recognise that these practices can be restrictive, and carefully consider the appropriateness of them with an external team to keep them under regular review. Restrictions have reduced. For example, a child has moved from sleeping in a restrictive bed to a normal divan, and another child no longer has audio or visual monitoring at night.

Staff appropriately record and act when children are seen to have marks or injuries. Detailed records are maintained to describe the mark and identify the possible cause. When marks are unusual or unexplained, managers report their concerns to external safeguarding agencies appropriately and work in partnership with them to ensure that children are safe. Records relating to these actions are not consistently stored in one area to ensure that there is a clear audit trail.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The responsible individual and registered manager work effectively to ensure that this home is well lead and managed. The responsible individual is an experienced practitioner who provides good leadership and oversight in the home.

Governance has strongly developed since the last inspection. There are good systems and opportunities in place for leaders and managers to review the quality of care, understand its impact on children's experiences, and identify and progress ways to make further developments in the home. Development plans are put in place and action is taken to implement them.

Staffing levels are appropriate to meet the needs of the children. Mostly, this is one-to-one care, but provision is increased and decreased when assessed as necessary. On a small number of occasions, staff have rearranged children's stays when staffing levels unexpectedly fall short of the required provision. Good action has been taken to fill vacancies with permanent staff and provide temporary support from known

and regular agency staff and staff from other homes. This has ensured that children are cared for by staff who they know and trust.

Staff are well trained to meet the requirements of their role and provide children with the right care and support. Permanent employees' practice is regularly assessed to ensure that they are competent and have the right skills to support children's complex health needs and undertake shift-leading responsibilities. Similar competency assessments and guidance are not routinely in place for agency nurses who work in the home.

Staff receive training in safeguarding children with disabilities. This helps them to understand the vulnerabilities of children with disabilities and the expectations of keeping them safe. New staff do not always complete basic safeguarding children training as a matter of priority when they start in post.

Leaders and managers understand their responsibilities to ensure that staff are safely recruited. Staff do not start work until the necessary checks, such as Disclosure and Barring Service checks and employment references, are in place and scrutinised. Full safer recruitment checks are also in place for agency staff.

Staff receive regular supervision and are helped to develop their practice. In one supervision, staff had raised concerns to their supervisor about staffing levels and practice. Appropriate action was taken to address the concerns, but the supervisor failed to document these actions to demonstrate a clear audit trail.

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
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— Ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)) Ensure that child protection training is prioritised to be completed at the start of new employees' placement in the home. Ensure that agency staff's competence to undertake shift-leading responsibilities and carry out medical tasks is assessed in the same way as for permanent staff.	29 December 2023

Recommendations

- The registered person should review the practice of writing children's plans in the first-person narrative to ensure that all information in children's records is recorded in a way that is helpful to the child and accurately reflects their views. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.5)
- The registered person should ensure that when staff raise concerns in supervision sessions, supervisors document the actions taken in response. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.3)
- The registered person should ensure that child protection records are stored together in relation to specific incidents to show a complete audit trail of actions.

(‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 61, paragraph 14.2)

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: 2529667

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: Devon County Council, Chief Executive's Directorate, County Hall, Topsham Road, EXETER EX2 4QD

Responsible individual: Glenn Lobb

Registered manager: Heidi Rowlinson Jones

Inspector

Paula Lahey, Social Care Inspector

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