

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 10 children receive short breaks. One child was present during the inspection.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since April 2023.

Inspection dates: 15 and 16 October 2024

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: 7 November 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
07/11/2023	Full	Good
20/09/2022	Full	Good
12/01/2022	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
14/07/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Ten children are currently receiving short breaks at this home and one child lives in the home full time. One child was seen and spoken to during the inspection. Children enjoy their short breaks and seem happy during their stays. They enjoy a range of opportunities during their stays that include playing with toys and puzzles, visiting places of local interest, going to the seaside and swimming. Children can spend time with other children who are familiar to them, and this helps them to make friends.

One child enjoyed a counting puzzle during the inspection and this child has made good progress with their speech and development. They are now recognising numbers and can count to 10. This child is making rapid progress because of the increased learning opportunities that are provided to them in this home. The child was observed exploring the home with ease and approaching the adults for cuddles and affection. Staff work hard to provide children with positive levels of nurture, love and care. The family time arrangement in the home for one child and their family member has been crucial in enabling the child to spend quality time with their family on a regular basis. This is something that may not be achieved without the support of staff in this home.

Children have their care needs met to a good standard. Staff know the children well and really understand their needs. Children's care is managed well, and the staff ensure that children are cared for in a way that maintains their privacy and dignity. There are positive routines and boundaries in place for children. Inspectors observed that one child kept getting down from the table while eating their meal. The adults encouraged them to sit back down at the table, and the child responded to this request. The child was able to enjoy a healthy meal on their return home from school.

There are positive working relationships between staff and people who are important to the children. Professionals provided feedback about how well the team communicates with them. One professional said that 'there is fantastic communication taking place between the staff and other people'. The staff regularly communicate with school, family, health professionals and the child's consultant. This ensures that everyone in the child's network really understands what is happening for the child. This means that there is a team of people who are all working together in the best interests of the child. This helps to keep children safe and to ensure that their care needs are fully met.

The home is welcoming, clean and comfortable. There are comfortable spaces to sit and spacious areas for children to play. This helps children to feel relaxed and at ease. The rooms are bright and cheerful, with colourful decor. The bedrooms are decorated in a child-friendly way. There are photos on the walls of children having fun and children's artwork and craft is also displayed in the home. There is a large garden for children to play in, with trees to sit under on a hot sunny day, and a vegetable garden that children are encouraged to help with. There are some areas of the home that are being developed to make improvements to the bedrooms for children's future stays.

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

Staff manage safeguarding well in this home. They really understand the vulnerability of the children that they care for and place children's needs at the centre of their practice. Staff take positive action to ensure that children remain safe. Although there have been some behavioural incidents with children, overall these have been managed well. When staff have worries for the safety of children, they promptly report their concerns to the social worker to ensure that children are safe.

Staff appropriately record and act when children are seen to have marks or injuries. They maintain detailed records to describe the mark and are curious about the potential causes of this. When marks are unusual or unexplained, managers report their concerns promptly to social workers appropriately and continue to work in partnership with them to ensure that children are safe.

Physical interventions have been used on one occasion in relation to one child. This has been necessary to keep the child safe. The incident was recorded thoroughly and there was a considered rationale as to why this intervention was required. Staff promote positive behaviour throughout the home to ensure that restraints are only used when absolutely necessary.

There is positive practice around prescription medication. When worries about medication are identified, these are checked and followed up by staff. There are regular audits taking place and this supports the manager and staff to ensure that there is good practice in this home. When children have attended the setting without the appropriate medication from family, staff have appropriately escalated this and sought medical advice when this is needed. Medication is stored appropriately, and records are maintained for each individual child.

When a concern was raised by staff regarding another professional, there were concerns that staff did not follow the correct safeguarding procedure to report this to another safeguarding agency. Reflection and learning have been taken from this event to ensure that the correct procedures are followed in the future.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager has been in post since April 2023. She has good knowledge about the children and the staff in this home. She knows the children well and is regularly involved in their day-to-day care. During the inspection, one child approached the manager with ease and went to sit on her knee for a cuddle. This indicates that this child feels safe in the presence of the manager. The manager is ambitious for children, the staff and the home. She is thoughtful about the strengths of the home and any areas that require further development.

Children's complex needs are understood and well supported. There is a constant drive from the manager to support children to have new experiences and to make progress from their starting points. The manager strives to ensure that staff have the skills and knowledge to care for children appropriately. When training needs are identified, these are quickly implemented and this helps to improve practice in this home.

The home has some permanent staff and some vacancies. Managers are advertising for new staff. Support is being provided by agency staff on some occasions. Although some agency staff are familiar to the children, there are some who are less familiar. Some members of staff have been worried about the impact that this has on children's stability when unfamiliar staff are working in the home. One professional commented that the communication is not always as clear with staff who are new or unfamiliar to them and the children.

Staff spoke positively about the training they receive and said their managers support them to develop their knowledge and skills. They feel that they are well supported by their managers, who are very approachable. They have access to regular supervision and appraisals and can speak to their manager in the interim when this is needed. Staff said that when new children move into the home, specific training is identified for them, when this is needed.

Team meetings are held regularly and staff receive regular supervision, handover meetings and having individual support if this is needed. In some older supervision records and team meetings, there has been a limited focus around safeguarding. This is an area of practice that managers are striving to improve, and this improvement is seen within the records that are held.

One gap was identified in relation to the recruitment of a new member of staff. This is being followed up by the manager and is being addressed promptly. When the manager identified concerns about a new member of staff prior to the inspection, this was followed up with another organisation. Leaders and managers then took prompt action to address the areas of concern.

Although one child's personal evacuation plan appeared to need review, the electronic system does show that this was reviewed by staff. However, no changes were made to the document itself. Children participated in fire evacuations so that children and staff are clear about what action they would need to take in an emergency.

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
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; take effective action whenever there is a concern about a child's welfare. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(vi)) In particular, all staff need to be clear about safeguarding procedures and how to manage such concerns. Safeguarding needs to be a priority and should be explored regularly in supervision and during team meetings. If there are concerns raised for professionals, managers of the home should take responsibility for ensuring that those concerns are shared directly with the appropriate safeguarding agency.	2 December 2024

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: Devon County Council

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

Inspectors

Sarah Sheffield, Social Care Inspector
Charlotte Tippet, Social Care Inspector

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