

2529785

Registered provider: Devon County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is a local authority short-breaks service registered to provide accommodation for up to five children and young people at any one time who may have physical disabilities, learning disabilities and/or sensory disabilities. Currently, a total of 14 children receive a service.

This long-established short-breaks home was re-registered under local authority ownership and management in March 2019. This is the first inspection under the current ownership and registration. The registered manager has been in post since March 2013.

Inspection dates: 16 to 17 December 2019

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: not applicable

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

This short-breaks service is a much-valued lifeline for children, young people and their families. Excellent relationships between the staff, children and young people and their parents help families to feel confident about using the service.

The children and young people have made very good progress since they first started to visit the home. They have improved their communication skills and behaviour. Some are now much more able to take responsibility for some aspects of their care.

One young person, who was unable to live in the family home for a period, has been able to return home under a shared care arrangement. Another young person, who previously struggled to accept certain items of clothing, has learned to tolerate these. This means that he can now go out into the community, which was not previously possible. This has made a tangible difference to his life.

Children and young people enjoy outings to local attractions, beaches and theme parks. One young person goes to the gym and is about to start swimming lessons, while another young person attends a community choir.

Although the children and young people's parents oversee their healthcare and educational arrangements, the staff at this home do attend some medical and dental appointments with the children and young people who have the most complex medical needs. This close collaboration with parents helps to ensure that there is a consistent and accurate approach to healthcare.

There are safe and effective systems in place for the receipt, storage, administration and disposal of medicines in the home. One member of staff has worked exceptionally well to help a young person to understand the effects of his medication. Learning how to administer medicines is an important life skill which promotes personal independence.

The children and young people are consulted daily about every aspect of their care. The staff involve them in shopping for and preparing healthy meals. The staff, children and young people enjoy their meals around the dining room table, as they might experience within their own families. Some children and young people, who would previously only eat factory-made foods, are now accepting home-made, wholesome alternatives.

This short-breaks home has been extensively refurbished in recent years to provide an attractive, nurturing environment. Adapted bedrooms and bathrooms ensure that there are appropriate aids to daily living, so that the children and young people receive personal care safely and with dignity.

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

The registered manager ensures that every aspect of care is well planned, recorded and

risk assessed. Risk assessments are updated whenever there is a change in the children and young people's circumstances or behaviour.

There has been only one restraint since the home was re-registered in March 2019. This was of short duration and appropriate to the incident.

The children and young people do not go missing from the home. Health and safety checks, fire safety and behavioural incidents are well managed, recorded and monitored. The home's staff team has been recruited safely.

The staff are well trained in safeguarding and physical intervention. The home has good relationships with the local authority designated officer. The local authority designated officer has been invited to attend a team meeting to help ensure that all staff understand their safeguarding role.

Effective action is taken when there are concerns about changes in a child's behaviour. The home works well with other agencies to keep children and young people safe. For example, the registered manager responds appropriately to requests from parents or placing social workers to put restrictions in place, such as camera monitoring of children and young people for their own safety. She calls a multi-agency meeting to discuss the proposal and to ensure that the child is cared for in the most proportionate and least restrictive way.

The manager has already substantially reduced the use of restrictive and institutional measures since she first came into her role over six years ago. The small number of remaining restrictive measures are kept under review. For example, the home has a high-sided cot bed which is currently used for a small number of children and young people who are at risk of falling if they try to stand up and walk about at night. The individuals who use the bed cannot get out without assistance from staff. The registered manager has a clear plan to reduce the use of, and eventually remove, this bed from the home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The home has a long-established, stable and motivated staff team. Clear leadership and comprehensive training help to achieve consistently high standards of practice. This provides the children and young people with exceptionally good experiences when they come to visit this home.

The well-qualified, experienced registered manager is an excellent role model for her staff. Through regular, effective supervision and inspiring example, she supports her team to be creative in their work.

The registered manager and staff advocate for the children and young people exceptionally well. Specific projects with some children and young people have empowered them and resulted in them making a positive difference in the local community.

Children and young people helped the managers and staff to challenge the local council about the difficulties faced by wheelchair users in accessing walkways in the area. The council undertook works to improve accessibility, which has had a lasting impact beyond the home itself. This has shown the children and young people that they can have an effective voice and initiate change for the better in the community.

The registered manager already has a good understanding of the home's strengths and areas for development. She would like to further improve the way in which the home reports on and analyses children and young people's progress.

Two recommendations were made at the home's last inspection on 24 September 2018. Although that inspection was conducted under the previous registration, the home has the same premises, staff team and registered manager, so the recommendations were reviewed at this inspection. The manager was asked to arrange safeguarding training, specifically in relation to children with disabilities. The second recommendation was to improve the clarity of staff supervision records. Both recommendations have been met.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. 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 whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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: 2529785

Provision sub-type: Children's home

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

Responsible individual: Glenn Lobb

Registered manager: Louise Davey

Inspector

Heather Chaplin: social care inspector

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