

2529785

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 registered in March 2019 to provided care and accommodation for up to five children at a time. The home provides short breaks for children who have learning disabilities and may also have physical disabilities and/or sensory impairment. The home is operated by a local government authority.

A registered manager is in place and has completed a Level 5 Diploma in Leadership and Management.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

Inspection dates: 19 to 20 May 2021

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: 16 December 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: Good

Enforcement action since last inspection: None

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
16/12/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Carers are skilled at understanding the needs of individual children. Innovative and solution-focused approaches to dealing with problems are common practice. This method of working protects children's well-being and emotional health as well as reducing behaviour which challenges adults.

The manager and carers have responded effectively in providing for disabled children during the COVID-19 pandemic, which, alongside continuing with the usual short breaks services, additional support, advice and the delivery of day care, have been essential for some children and their families during this time.

Careful planning for the short breaks and/or care shared with parents are an important aspect of providing a positive experience for children. Prior to admission, carers gather as much information as possible from parents and professionals about the needs, likes and dislikes of children. Working in partnership with those who understand the child avoids unnecessary distress and anxiety for children, allowing them to settle in the home.

Carers work to progress children's independence skills. A main focus for improvement is communication, through which children are encouraged to understand the world around them and to make choices. Bespoke targets for developing children's life skills are in place. Information about children's success and their developments is shared with parents and professionals so that progress can be replicated.

The home is spacious and well equipped for children with additional needs. Personalisation, particularly of bedrooms, helps children to feel comfortable. The activities provided are linked to things children enjoy, and children are also encouraged to try out new things which broaden their experiences.

Feedback from parents is entirely positive and comments include, 'it is a wonderful, wonderful place, we wish our child could live there permanently,' 'our child is calmer and happier and not self-harming any more,' and 'staff have been brilliant, they saved our family'.

Full-time education is available to all children. Following a crisis at school, teaching staff use these premises to educate one of the children. The care plan lacks sufficient detail of how and when this child will be returned to school as soon as possible.

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

The children accessing short breaks or living in this home will require the lifelong support of others. For the majority, their understanding of risk is minimal or non-existent. Children need to be accompanied and supervised by an adult when leaving the home, and for this reason the main door out into the community is kept locked. Children do not go missing from this home.

Carers are skilled in understanding risk. Assessments and care plans included the additional attention and support needed to keep these very vulnerable children safe. The carers work in partnership with other stakeholders and access specialists support when needed, to understand and respond effectively to behaviour which is not appropriate in some circumstances and/or is challenging to others.

Restraint is not used to manage children's behaviour. Carers make use of physical intervention techniques which involve gentle guides or blocking (usually with cushions) to avoid injury to others. As children progress, their anxiety reduces, and incidents of behaviour which require any physical intervention are reduced. Appropriate interventions are agreed by stakeholders and by those providing training to the carers.

Additional precautions are in place to guard against the spread of COVID-19. Most carers are vaccinated and undertake tests twice a week. Visitors to the home complete a health questionnaire and their temperature is taken prior to entering the home. Staff and children have remained safe.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

A suitable qualified registered manager is in charge of the home. Staff and other stakeholders are confident in her ability to provide a home which meets their expectations and is as described in the statement of purpose.

Strengths and weakness of the home are understood by the manager, and a purposeful development plan is in place. The senior team gave a sterling response to meeting the additional support needs of children and their families during the COVID-19 pandemic, the manager is now utilising her development skills. Developments are based on research and in response to the needs of the children. A current focus is around increasing some children's understanding around puberty, arousal and appropriate sexual behaviour.

The support, supervision and training provided to staff equips them to fulfil their responsibilities to children. Staff are dedicated to the children. Staff enjoy their work and report feeling listened to and valued.

The new recording system has great potential and already provides understanding of children's experiences and evidence of the quality of care provided.

Records include pictures and a commentary about children's time in the home. Children enjoy looking at these 'my story' books which are printed off for children and parents. These documents are also presented at planning and review meetings to demonstrate the progress made and the value to children of spending time in this home.

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 registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which includes the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 and ensure they are kept up to date. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b))	30 July 2021
The registered person must help a child who is excluded from, or who is of compulsorily school age but not attending school , to access educational and training support throughout the period of exclusion or non-attendance and to return to school as soon as possible. (Regulation 8 (2)(viii)) This specifically relates to the provider ensuring school reintegration plans are in place and that they are regularly reviewed.	30 July 2021

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: 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

Janice Hawtin, Social Care Inspector

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