

2587315

Registered provider: Herefordshire and Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The service provides short breaks for up to four children who may have sensory impairment, physical disabilities or learning disabilities.

The service is dual-registered with Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission.

The registered manager is a qualified learning disability nurse, and holds the level 5 diploma in leadership and management of residential childcare.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

This is the service's first inspection since it was registered in November 2020.

Inspection dates: 9 and 10 November 2021

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **requires improvement to be good**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

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: not applicable

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
Not applicable		

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

This is the service's first inspection since it opened in November 2020. However, the service as a whole has been operational for a number of years under a Care Quality Commission registration. The service already has an established staff team and policies and procedures in place.

During this inspection, one child was enjoying his short-break stay. This was to enable him to receive the support he requires to be able to safely enjoy his stay. Thirteen children in total enjoy their stay at this service.

Children benefit from consistent, well-planned and personalised care. Staff take the time to meet with children and their carers prior to them visiting the service. This enables staff to create bespoke care plans that incorporate children's often complex health needs. These plans also include achievable targets for children. Staff gather as much information as possible about children, who experience a seamless transition into the service.

Children really enjoy their short-breaks stay. They enjoy spending time with their friends and with staff. One child said they enjoy it so much that 'I want to live here and never go home'.

Children receive care from a familiar, experienced and caring staff team. Many of the staff have worked at the service for over 20 years. Some new staff members also complement the team. Staff are enthusiastic and committed to making sure that children's stays are enjoyable.

Staff are creative in providing stimulating activities for children and ensure that they can join in everyday activities. For example, children went trick or treating at Halloween, and they enjoy visits to the local garden centre to purchase plants for the garden. Also, children make the most of activities within the service such as the hydro pool, sensory room and playing with puzzles.

The service has remained open during the COVID 19 pandemic. The service has effective safety measures and has arrangements to fast-track polymerase chain reaction testing (PCR testing). This has meant that children and their families continue to receive vital support during a very difficult time.

Staff develop good working relationships with parents. Parents are complimentary about the service. One parent commented, 'My son loves staying there and looks forward to going... and they are always there if you need to talk about anything.' Another parent told the inspector, 'I would not cope without the support I get and it is a lifeline to me.'

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

Despite children making good progress and having good overall experiences, there are a number of shortfalls identified in this area.

Although the environment is bright, welcoming and well designed, health and safety concerns are not always given priority. For example, there has been a delay in completing all of the necessary work identified as required in the fire risk assessment. As a result of this inspection, these are now in place. This potentially compromised children's safety in the event of a fire.

The registered manager completes and verifies most of the necessary checks to confirm the suitability of staff to work with children. However, on one occasion the manager did not seek a full employment history and failed to pick up inconsistencies in the work history that was provided.

The service is situated on a site where adults also enjoy their short-break stays in two separate buildings. There is also a hydrotherapy pool on the same site. Although staff and managers are able to clearly talk through the identified risks and strategies that exist to minimise any risk, this has not been captured in the location risk assessment. A recommendation has been made in this respect.

Staff have extensive knowledge of children and are clear that consideration takes place when groups of children undertake their stays. However, there are no records to demonstrate this. The registered manager is aware of this shortfall and has plans to put this in place.

More positively, risk assessments guide staff on how to best support children when their anxieties increase. Consequently, staff intervene quickly to de-escalate behaviours. As a result, no child has needed to be held to keep them safe.

Since the service opened, there have been no occasions when children have gone missing from the service. Nevertheless, managers and staff are acutely aware of children's significant vulnerability should they wander off from staff. To reduce these risks, managers ensure that there is a high staff ratio available to support children during their stays. This means that children can safely access the local community.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager and her deputy show an ambitious vision. They have high expectations for what all children can achieve and ensure high standards of individualised care. Furthermore, they promote each child's unique qualities and see what children can do rather than what they cannot do.

Staff are passionate and many staff wrote to the inspector during the inspection to tell their story of working within the service. Their passion for their work shines through. Staff are motivated and child focused. They are complimentary of the

senior team's support and guidance that continues to support their practice. A member of staff told the inspector, 'My supervisor is very open and honest with me. He is always keen to encourage me and boost my confidence when necessary, and he and all the nurses were incredibly supportive while I was doing my diploma.'

Staff receive regular supervision and receive their annual appraisals once a year. The quality of these appraisals are good and they help staff to monitor and improve their practice. Staff feel supported and that their opinion matters. This helps to maintain a positive staff morale.

Training reflects children's individual, and often complex, health needs. Consequently, staff have the specialist skills and knowledge they need to deliver good-quality care and support to children.

The service receives good-quality reports from an independent person. These, along with staff's passion, continue to help the service to develop and improve. The management team is clear about the areas of strength and has clear plans on how to develop the service.

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 quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(i)) This particularly refers to ensuring that prompt health and safety measures are put in place to help ensure children's safety.	10 December 2021
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The registered person may only— employ an individual to work at the children's home; or if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home, if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). The requirements are that—	10 December 2021

full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3)(d))

This particularly refers to ensuring that the full work histories are sought and verified where necessary.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the short-break service offers the chance for children to develop friendships, by carefully matching groups and, where possible, by arranging for children to frequently stay with the same group. This decision-making should be recorded. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 40, paragraph 8.20)
- The registered person should ensure that, under regulation 46, they review the appropriateness and suitability of the location and premises of the home at least once a year. This includes any risks identified of services located on the same site as the short-break service. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 64, paragraph 15.1)

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: 2587315

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Herefordshire and Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust

Registered provider address: Unit 2, Kings Court Business Park, Charles Hastings Way, Worcester, Worcestershire WR5 1JR

Responsible individual: Sarah Dugan

Registered manager: Amanda Ewer

Inspector

Louise Battersby, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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