

SC003792

Registered provider: Lifeworks Charity Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is run by a charitable trust, providing care and accommodation for children and young people on both a long-term basis and for short breaks. The home provides six short-break and four residential placements for children and young people who may have learning disabilities, physical disabilities or a sensory impairment.

Inspection dates: 10 to 11 May 2017

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 **good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 1 March 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: Improved effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection

None

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because

- The leadership and management of the home are very strong. The leadership team has an ambitious vision for developing the service and high expectations

for what children and young people can achieve.

- The manager can clearly demonstrate how children and young people are making good progress and enjoy their time at the home.
- Children and young people are actively involved in the community through a good range of activities and by volunteers helping with the development of the home.
- Staff are supported by excellent management processes. As a result, they deliver high standards of care and provide good support to help children and young people work towards their identified targets and outcomes.
- Staff have a good understanding of children's and young people's needs. There are good relationships. Staff, children and young people have fun together. A young person commented that the home is good because there are 'nice staff, nice pets, a nice bedroom and a nice (cinema) lounge'.
- The manager addresses all issues raised by parents, carers and social workers promptly and efficiently.
- Safeguarding arrangements are good. There is clear and detailed recording of significant incidents and escalating concerns to appropriate parties. In addition, there is good evidence of managers sharing necessary information with children's and young people's parents/carers and their placing authority.
- The home is well resourced and maintained to a good standard.

The children's home's areas for development

- Staff use two way radios to communicate with each other. This practice detracts from an otherwise homely environment.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
01/03/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
17/11/2016	Full	Requires improvement
17/03/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
16/09/2015	Full	Requires improvement

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Recommendations

- For children's homes to be nurturing and supportive environments that meet the needs of their children, they will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. Children's homes must comply with relevant health and safety legislations (alarms, food hygiene and so on). However, in doing so, homes should seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than 'institutional' impression. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards April 2015', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children and young people receive good-quality, individualised care and support. As a result, many of them are making good progress and enjoy living or staying at the home. Examples of the progress that children and young people make includes developing their communication skills, learning how to complete independence tasks, expanding on the variety of activities that they enjoy, improving their social skills and interaction with peers.

Children and young people engage well in activities in the local community. They regularly visit different shopping environments, theme parks, local festivals, theatre shows, parks, beaches, swimming pools, youth clubs and indoor trampoline parks. They make friends at the home. Children and young people are helped by staff to share mealtimes together and include each other in group activities.

Children and young people who live at the home decorate their bedrooms exactly how they want them. Those that receive short-break care have their favourite personal items out on display in their rooms ready for their visit. Children and young people have good relationships with staff. They can choose which staff member works with them and they particularly like staff from their core team with whom they are most familiar with and like the best.

Staff prioritise children's and young people's attendance at school and other education services. They work well with the education providers and placing authority to help children and young people to do well and give them confidence to work towards their goals. Children and young people complete certified programmes to improve their life skills, such as cooking and independent living.

Staff support residential children's and young people's contact with their family well. As a result, some children and young people are able to see their family more since they

moved into the home and their relationship has improved because of this.

Children and young people are effectively supported to use their communication aids to make choices and to develop their independence skills. Staff are mindful that some children and young people are more experienced in using communication aids than others, therefore those who are not as experienced are given just as much time, encouragement and opportunity to express their views. Children and young people use a wide variety of communication resources available at the home and some respond well to staff using 'intensive interaction' approaches.

Staff provide a wide range of care to meet the variety of children's and young people's needs and objectives. They assist children and young people who need a lot of emotional support and reassurance to overcome difficult situations. Individualised night-time routines are in place to monitor children and young people and keep them safe.

A recent exercise undertaken by staff to gain parents and carers feedback found that all who answered were satisfied with the care that their child received. No significant concerns about the children's and young people's welfare were highlighted by the survey. Comments from the individuals taking part included 'staff are very professional', 'overall, we are very pleased and grateful for the service' and 'our son always comes home settled and he has a variety of trips to go on'.

Social workers' feedback is very positive. One social worker spoken to as part of the inspection stated that, 'Everything is brilliant for (name), they are doing really well, they have stabilised their behaviour and are blossoming.' Another social worker had recently provided feedback to the manager that, '(Name) has transitioned to this home very well as they appear happy and comfortable.'

The home is well resourced and staff strive to provide a relaxed, child-friendly and homely feel. Children and young people are involved in developing the interior of the home and choosing the resources available to them. They enjoy using the projector to watch movies on, having speakers in their room to listen to music, superhero capes to play with, handling the guinea pigs and rabbits, using the games room, spending time in the sensory room or just chilling in the reading area. The manager is required to assess the use of two way radios by staff, in keeping with providing a homely environment throughout.

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

Children and young people feel safe living at the home and staying for short breaks. Parents/carers confirmed that they too are assured of their child's safety.

Staff consistently promote positive behaviour well. They use effective de-escalation techniques and create alternative strategies that are specific to the needs of each child and young person and are planned in consultation with them or their family.

Significant incidents are routinely followed up by team leaders and the manager as part

of ongoing incident analysis. Monthly meetings take place with the manager, deputy manager and team leaders, where incidents are analysed to identify learning outcomes and themes to inform the staff's practice. Staff have been reminded to give a young person additional space and be mindful of other young people in their vicinity as a result of this effective analysis.

The manager reviews all accidents thoroughly to establish where there are lessons for staff's practice or health and safety changes to be implemented.

Restraints are rarely used and staff are skilled at finding alternative methods to help children and young people where possible. Staff do not use holds that involve taking or holding a child or young person on the ground. The restraints that have been used are proportionate, they are clearly recorded with appropriate monitoring and follow up actions are taken by the manager.

There is a clear, auditable trail that parents/carers and lead professionals are always informed following accidents, incidents and restraints.

The manager can evidence the effectiveness of careful planning and decision making for a young person who moved into the home. As a result, the young person quickly settled and has gone on to form very strong relationships with their core team and re-establish positive links with their family.

The manager ensures that all the necessary health and safety aspects of the home are taken care of. All environmental and physical assessments of the building are carried out at the necessary intervals.

Recruitment processes are satisfactory. All new staff are carefully selected and vetted prior to starting work at the home.

There have been no reported incidents of children or young people going missing from staff's care.

The manager escalates any concerns about the welfare of children and young people to their placing authority. He also appropriately challenges parents/carers requests for restrictive practice techniques to be used in the home, when he assesses that staffing levels at the home do not require such techniques.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Leaders and managers are inspirational, confident and ambitious for children and young people. The responsible individual and manager know and understand the home's strengths and weaknesses. As a result, they prevent shortfalls in practice and take effective action to develop the service for the benefit of children and young people. They have high expectations of staff to change and improve the lives of children and young people, and they create a culture that is aspirational and positive.

The home's statement of purpose is an excellent document. The statement starts with the sentence, 'This home provides care for some of the most amazing young people.' This sentence sets the tone for the ethos of the document, it is very child-focused and includes many real-life examples of children's and young people's experiences to demonstrate how the service meets their needs. Additional quotes from children and young people, families and associated professionals bring the document to life and make it an interesting read.

The statement of purpose provides an accurate reflection of the service provided at the home. It is informative for families and placing authorities to help them to make an opinion on using the home. There is also a simplified children's version available using symbols.

A key philosophy of the home is that managers and staff listen to children and young people and empower them to make choices. This philosophy is achieved. Children and young people are encouraged and supported to make decisions about their lives in day-to-day matters, and to influence the way that the home is run. Staff encourage children and young people to have control, so promote opportunities to be part of their meetings about 'My Plan'. Staff prepare them well for these meetings and sometimes communicate for them on their behalf. A parent has reported to the manager that they are happy because, 'They (staff) give him choice whenever choice is possible.'

The home's annual developmental plan clearly describes the service and what the responsible individual and manager want to achieve over the next 12 months. This plan includes targets that aim to improve the quality of care and experiences for children and young people.

Although there have been no written complaints, the manager will interpret certain actions by children and young people with associated communicated difficulties, as something that they may not be happy with. For example, after further investigation into a young person's action of blocking a corridor with their wheelchair, it was established that the young person wanted their bedtime changing. Staff took action to address this.

The manager has a clear understanding of the progress that children and young people are making towards meeting their care plan. He uses the six-monthly monitoring system to demonstrate to Ofsted the progress and achievements that children and young people are making. This information is also given to families and at placing authority review meetings.

Staff are happy and feel well-supported by their line management arrangements. They receive the necessary training as part of their six-month induction period before then being enrolled on to the required level 3 professional qualification. The use of agency staff has continued to remain at an acceptably low level for several months. Any agency staff that are used enter into a supervision arrangement, which monitors their practice and safeguarding responsibilities while working at the home.

The manager has effective links with local community charities. A local branch of a

national supermarket donated toys for the children and young people and a national bank provided volunteers to work on improving the home's garden. The parents' forum also contributes to the upkeep and development of the outdoor space.

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 difference 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 who 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: SC003792

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Lifeworks Charity Limited

Registered provider address: Blacklers Park Road, Dartington Hall Estate, Totnes,
Devon TQ9 6EQ

Responsible individual: Tina Tozer

Registered manager: Andrew Edwards

Inspector(s)

Guy Mammatt: social care inspector

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