

SC003792

Registered provider: Lifeworks Charity Limited

Assurance inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is run by a charitable trust. It provides care for children either on a residential basis or for short breaks.

The home is registered to provide care for up to 10 children with sensory impairment, learning disabilities and physical disabilities.

The manager has applied to register with Ofsted.

At the time of this inspection, three children were living in the home and 15 children visited for short breaks.

Inspection date: 17 November 2022

Date of last inspection: 21 June 2022

Judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Information about this inspection

At this inspection, the inspector evaluated:

- the care of children
- the safety of children
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers.

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children, using the social care common inspection framework. This assurance 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'.

Findings from the inspection

We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance inspection.

The care of children

The home's physical environment has greatly improved. Children have been involved in the redecoration of the home and updating outside areas. They have chosen the colour of new carpets, themed decoration for the dining room area and many new furnishings for the home. A new sofa has been ordered, which all children will be able to use. A broken projector has been replaced and a child was enjoying watching a programme after school. These changes promote inclusion and have increased children's comfort and enjoyment.

Parents have been involved in personalising children's bedrooms. Some children have new beds. There are large canvases of children hung on walls in the home that reflect their personalities. Some photos include children's families. Other changes planned for the home are designed to benefit children and staff.

Children's memory books reflect positive events. The recommendation made at the previous inspection relating to staff collating photos and information to support children's life stories is met. Memory book champions have been implemented to ensure that these books are kept up to date and remain meaningful for children.

During this inspection, staff were observed as providing nurturing and skilled care. This included a staff team member and child communicating fluently through Makaton. The child was encouraged to use words, which is supporting their speech development. A warm and caring relationship was observed between the staff team member and child.

Outcomes set for children are realistic and in line with individual needs. They are meaningful and inform care planning. Children receive certificates when they achieve their goals to celebrate their successes. Further review of these processes would help to ensure that goals are succinct and achievable for children in a timely way.

The safety of children

Children's personal emergency evacuation plans have been revised. While some strategies provide clear direction to staff, other strategies need further review. This is to ensure that children are evacuated safely in the event of a fire. For instance, when two members of staff are required to respond to one child, strategies to respond to other children cannot be implemented at night when there is reduced staffing in the home.

The home's medication administration records are clear. The manager and external professionals have worked together to improve the recording and audit system. This improves the safe care of children and reduces the risk of medication errors occurring.

Staff do not use restraint in response to children's needs. However, children's plans provide conflicting information about the use of restraint.

Careful recruitment of permanent staff is robust. While there are different processes in place for the recruitment of agency workers, all necessary information and checks have been verified by the manager and held on file. This reduces the risk of unsuitable people working with vulnerable children.

On one occasion, there has been a concern raised about staff practice. There was a short delay in responding to this incident because the manager was not in work. While no harm was caused to the child over this short period, leaders and managers should ensure that responses to safeguarding are immediate. Following the manager's return to work, appropriate action was taken.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers

Leaders and managers have taken action to address the concerns raised at the previous inspection. This has improved standards of care and children's experiences.

Since the previous inspection, training for staff has progressed. The inspector observed specialist care provided to children, including at mealtimes. Staff are clear about their roles. This includes specific care that can only be provided following necessary training.

All children's plans have been reviewed and updated. They are individualised and provide clear information about children and their daily care. In addition, up-to-date assessments have been gathered to inform care planning.

However, some protocols need further review. For example, on occasion, additional prescribed medication is given to one child when they are distressed. While this is agreed by health professionals and the child's family, there is not a clear protocol in place to guide staff when to use this.

The quality of staff supervision is mixed. While some records demonstrate effective reflection and learning, others do not. This is important because good-quality supervision seeks to develop the knowledge and skills staff need to continually improve children's care experiences.

A creative approach to recruit permanent staff has been successful. This will reduce agency staff working in the home. However, when agency staff do work in the home, the same staff are used to ensure that children are provided with continuity of care.

The requirements and recommendation made at the previous inspection are met. One requirement relating to effectively planned care is made. The home's progress will continue to be reviewed through external reporting and at the home's next routine inspection.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
21/06/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
16/06/2021	Full	Good
03/12/2019	Full	Good
19/12/2018	Full	Good

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 care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)) In particular, leaders and managers should ensure that clearly defined protocols are implemented to promote children's safety and welfare. This includes protocols relating to fire evacuation, restraint and when additional medication is administered.	9 December 2022

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: 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: Sarah Gontsi

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Louise Bacon, Social Care Inspector

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