

SC004085

Registered provider: Diverse Abilities Plus Ltd.

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is run by an independent charitable organisation. The home provides a short-breaks service for up to four children who may have sensory impairments, physical disabilities and/or learning disabilities. Day care for additional children is provided on the same premises.

The manager registered with Ofsted in 2014.

This inspection started on 8 May but was paused under the Ofsted guidance 'Ofsted inspections and visits: deferring, pausing and gathering additional evidence'. This was due to the very recent death of a child who attended the home for short-breaks. The child died in hospital and was supported by their family and the palliative care team. The inspection re-started on 15 May.

Inspection dates: 8, 15 and 16 May 2024

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	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 25 July 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
25/07/2023	Full	Good
15/11/2022	Full	Good
20/12/2021	Full	Good
13/08/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children enjoy varied and fun activities on their short breaks in this home. Despite significant staffing challenges, and gaps in management oversight, support for children and their families has been maintained to a good standard. Well trained staff know and understand children's needs and as such they provide enriching activities. The large sensory room provides a space for dancing or relaxation. Children bake cakes and make crafts. They help to plant and care for vegetables and herbs in the garden. When drivers are available children go out to the park or seaside.

Staff reflect on how children have enjoyed and engaged in activities, considering visual and verbal cues for feedback. Children have choices about activities and their food and drinks. Staff identify and understand children's communication needs. However, some plans could contain more clarity about the impact of vision and hearing impairments on children's communication.

The manager understands the importance of these breaks to children and their families. She carefully manages the times children attend to maximise the support to as many families as possible, while also allowing children to make new friendships.

Parents are positive about the support offered to their children. They say staff communicate well and clarify information when needed. Parents enjoy receiving photos of their children having fun and trying new things. One parent describes a 'safe and enriching' environment, with another saying their child gets excited when they realise they are on their way to the home.

Social workers say their children enjoy their stays. They say staff know the children's likes and dislikes, as well as who gets on well together. One social worker comments on the opportunities to go on trips from the home, which are positive experiences the child might not otherwise get. Social workers recognise that the manager is flexible and willing to support families if an emergency arises. The manager attends meetings about children. This helps her to understand the context of children's experiences at home.

Children benefit from an environment that is accessible and adapted to their needs. This includes a garden with raised beds and a sunken trampoline. However, the bedrooms are looking tired, with scuffed paintwork on the walls from the damage caused by children's equipment and room set up practicalities.

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

Staff receive safeguarding training relevant to children with disabilities and know the processes for reporting concerns. Staff recognise and respond to safeguarding concerns appropriately. Staff are aware of unexplained bruising or potential injuries to children,

and these are reported and managed effectively. Specific concerns have been shared appropriately to the local authority. Managers participate in relevant safeguarding meetings, including submitting written reports and taking action with recommendations.

The manager liaises with professionals involved in the children's care. This means that staff have access to relevant information about children's complex health needs and how to keep them safe and well. Staff ensure medication is safely stored and administered in line with children's plans. Staff identify and report medication errors when they happen, and managers complete thorough investigations. There have been three errors reported. Action taken in response to errors includes retraining and reassessment of staff competency. Wider learning is discussed with senior staff to avoid a repeat of the concern.

Staff record incidents that occur in the home. These are mostly clear and give a good account of what has happened. There have been no restraints used in the home. However, the management oversight of incidents is inconsistent. In some reviews learning is identified and implemented. In others, there is insufficient scrutiny of staff action. This means aspects are not fully considered, explored or discussed. In one incident, a child in a wheelchair had been moved away to prevent them from hurting others. The manager has not considered whether this action was restrictive and whether further action was needed.

Risk assessments identify specific worries for children. By avoiding generic considerations it is very clear what staff need to know and do to keep each child safe. The actions staff take to mitigate risk means that children can participate as fully as possible in experiences and opportunities.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

The arrangements for and execution of management oversight in this home are weak. The manager has struggled over several years to fully staff the home. The continued process of recruitment, training, and sourcing cover has left little time for her to review and develop the service. The manager and staff work tirelessly to ensure that children have positive experiences in this home. However, this is not sustainable and action to review the effectiveness of the current management structure is required to ensure that there is sufficient support in place to help the setting to progress.

Despite being aware of the gaps in oversight, action has not been taken to address the shortfalls. As a result of these management gaps, the manager does not submit her review of care, statement of purpose, or reports of independent monitoring to Ofsted as required. The independent person fails to critically evaluate how the service is functioning and identify areas for meaningful improvement. Consequently, the manager does not fully understand the impact of care in the home. As such, the service is not developed or further improved.

The experienced registered manager has support from a group of managers who know and understand the service well. This core of experience supports staff who may be newer to the home. They provide support to new staff to help them understand how to deliver care and support. The use of consistent temporary staff has helped to maintain the service. However, this puts pressure on permanent staff who remain responsible for many aspects of children's care. The recruitment of permanent staff is thorough. However, processes are not in place to ensure temporary staff working in the home have full employment checks completed.

Although regular team meetings take place, they do not provide a space for learning and discussion. Instead, they are used to share information. Staff supervision consists of brief conversations which do not support staff to reflect on their practice. As such, staff do not consistently have a forum in which they can explore their practice and the care and support they provide children.

A new nurse trainer is in post, which has improved the training offer to staff. Staff receive bespoke packages of training around children's individual needs. Training is comprehensive and can be responsive to both children's needs and staff learning needs.

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 leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(f)(h)) In particular, review the current management structure and ensure that there is sufficient support in place to enable leaders and managers to develop the service. In addition, ensure that sufficient time is given to completing management tasks as required by regulation, for example, reviewing important documents (statement of purpose and premises assessment) and ensuring independent reports and the quality of care review are submitted to Ofsted in a timely manner. Leaders and managers should ensure there are clear processes in place to monitor the care and support provided in the home. This should include proper scrutiny of incidents that occur and staff responses to them to identify any learning. The manager	28 June 2024

should ensure they use processes of monitoring and review to make improvements in the home.	
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— the individual is of integrity and good character; the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform; the individual is mentally and physically fit for the purposes of the work that the individual is to perform; and 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)(a)(b)(c)(d)) In particular, ensure that the necessary information required under schedule 2 is obtained for all staff who work in the home.	14 June 2024
The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month. The independent person must produce a report about a visit ("the independent person's report") which sets out, in particular, the independent person's opinion as to whether— children are effectively safeguarded; and the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being.	14 June 2024

The independent person's report may recommend actions that the registered person may take in relation to the home and timescales within which the registered person must consider whether or not to take those actions. The independent person must provide a copy of the independent person's report to— HMCI; (Regulation 44 (1) (4)(a)(b) (5) (7)(a)) In particular, the registered person should ensure that an independent person provides a report which critically evaluates care in the home to understand the impact of shortfalls on how the home is run. The subsequent report should be submitted to Ofsted in a timely way.	
The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ("a quality of care review") at least once every 6 months. After completing a quality of care review, the registered person must produce a written report about the quality of care review and the actions which the registered person intends to take as a result of the quality of care review ("the quality of care review report"). The registered person must— supply to HMCI a copy of the quality of care review report within 28 days of the date on which the quality of care review is completed (Regulation 45 (1) (3) (4)(a)) In particular ensure a review of care is completed and submitted to Ofsted within the timescales.	1 July 2024

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure they consider all potential forms of restriction when reviewing staff practice. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 47, paragraph 9.42)

- The registered person should ensure that plans contain clear information about how hearing or visual impairments impact on that child's communication needs. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.10)
- The registered person should ensure the environment is well maintained, in particular the scuffed bedroom walls should be addressed. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that staff receive good quality supervision which helps them to reflect upon their role and the care they provide. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 39, paragraph 8.15)

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: SC004085

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Diverse Abilities Plus Ltd.

Registered provider address: Barnabas Project Centre, 13-15 Manor Avenue, POOLE, Dorset, BH12 4LB

Responsible individual: Jonathan Seaward

Registered manager: Amiee Barnett

Inspector

Clare Nixson, social care inspector

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