

SC004085

Registered provider: Diverse Abilities Plus Ltd.

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The children's home is run by an independent charitable organisation. The organisation provides a short-break service for up to four children with sensory impairment and physical and/or learning disabilities. Day care, for additional children, is provided on the same premises.

The registered manager has been in post since December 2013.

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.

Inspection dates: 20 to 21 December 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: 13 August 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/08/2019	Full	Good
18/09/2018	Full	Good
16/02/2018	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
17/05/2017	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children experience a wide range of opportunities for social and emotional development both in the home and wider community. Children benefit from opportunities to go bowling and visit soft play, as well as doing cooking and crafts in the home. During the inspection, children made Christmas trees out of painted pasta and one child helped to cook a Christmas lunch. Another child had fun in the sensory room. Children enjoy spending time with friends from school in a relaxed social setting.

Staff know and understand the children that they work with. This helps them to support children to meet individualised goals and make progress. One child is now able to choose what to wear from two options and another is working towards doing the same activity as another child. Staff treat children with dignity and respect, managing complex health and care needs sensitively. Staff communicate clearly with children when acting for them.

Leaders and managers foster positive relationships with parents. Parents report that their children look forward to attending the home and enjoy their short breaks. Carefully planned transitions for new children help parents to feel safe with the service. One parent reported that after his first stay, her son enjoyed himself so much that he did not want to leave. Families value the short breaks their children access, having confidence in staff's abilities to support and meet their children's needs.

Staff effectively liaise with children's schools to ensure seamless transitions at the start and end of the day. Staff integrate recommendations from health and social care professionals into care plans to ensure consistency of care for children.

Leaders and managers have enabled the home to remain open throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, providing continuity and consistency to children and their families. Staff follow clear procedures and are provided with the equipment needed to reduce the risk of infection. Day-care services have been scaled back to maintain the delivery of overnight short breaks.

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

Suitable training ensures that staff recognise safeguarding concerns. Strong, effective links exist between staff, professionals and families. Staff share concerns or worries. Staff manage children's complex health needs well. Prompt reporting of medication errors leads to comprehensive investigations by leaders and managers. Where necessary, the manager reassesses staff competencies to ensure safety for children.

Staff understand children and their individual methods of communication. Staff make effective use of individual behaviour plans to prevent children's distress from escalating. As such, there are few incidents of restraint. Staff follow clear procedures around monitoring and surveillance systems to ensure privacy and dignity for all children.

The manager has identified that not all staff are appropriately assessed for competence in fire evacuation procedures.

Leaders and managers have failed to consistently verify references for newly recruited staff. In addition, there is a lack of scrutiny about information provided by prospective employees. As such, safer recruitment processes are not consistently followed.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

A long standing, qualified manager leads the home. She knows the service and the needs of the children well. Positive feedback from professionals notes that leaders and managers are flexible in their approach and child focused when planning for short breaks. Social workers say that managers attend meetings about children and maintain strong communication links.

Staff receive training suitable for their role. Leaders and managers tailor training to meet children's individual complex needs. Staff report feeling well supported and share that their role is enjoyable and fulfilling.

Care plans and risk assessments contain clear and relevant information. This helps staff to provide consistent quality of care to children. Staff collaborate with parents to plan for their children's care. For one child, parents have provided images of how to safely transfer their child in a sling. Leaders and managers make effective use of reference photographs in children's care plans. This provides staff with clear guidance about specialist equipment and positioning, which ensures the equipment is used appropriately and safely to support children.

The manager maintains a monitoring system of incidents and accidents to ensure oversight. This information allows the manager to identify patterns, and feeds into children's plans. However, external monitoring does not consistently capture feedback from parents and professionals.

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
After consultation with the fire and rescue authority, the registered person must— ensure, by means of fire drills and practices at suitable intervals, that persons working at the home and, so far as reasonably practicable, children are aware of the procedure to be followed in case of a fire. (Regulation 25 (1)(d)) In particular, the manager should ensure that night staff receive appropriate support to practice fire drills to safely evacuate children in case of a fire.	7 January 2022
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))	28 January 2022

In particular, the manager should ensure that information provided by applicants is scrutinised and references are verified.	
The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month. When the independent person is carrying out a visit, the registered person must help the independent person— if they consent, to interview in private such of the children, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home as the independent person requires. (Regulation 44 (1) (2)(a)) In particular, the registered manager should ensure that the independent person obtains feedback from parents, professionals and staff about their experiences of working with the home.	28 January 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: 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 Nixon, Social Care Inspector

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