

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	14/09/2016
Unique reference number	SC013144
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Barnardo's
Registered provider address	Barnardos, Unit 13A Silver Fox Way, Cobalt Business Park, Newcastle-upon-Tyne NE27 0QJ

Responsible individual	Julie Gibbard
Registered manager	Ruth Clacy
Inspector	Rosie Dancer

Inspection date	14/09/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Sustained effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

SC013144

Summary of findings

The children's home's provision is good because:

- Children develop good trusting relationships with staff.
- Parents are highly confident about leaving their child in the home, and know that their children are excited to go to stay in the home and enjoy their stays there.
- There is good attention paid to planning stays so that children develop relationships with peers and have fun during their time there.
- Children develop new skills through taking part in an impressive range of activities and events that would otherwise be unavailable to them.
- Children's confidence and self-esteem increases, and their life chances are enhanced.
- Children's health needs are well met, with due care and attention paid to following some complex health regimes.
- Children's views are sought about all aspects of life in the home, and are met where possible and appropriate.
- The manager and her staff are of a high calibre and are passionate about their roles.
- The manager and staff develop the service and ensure that children are safe, enjoy their short breaks and learn and develop new skills so that they reach their full potential.

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person(s) meets 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 with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
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, allow that individual to work at the home, if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). This is with specific reference to ensuring that the recruitment of staff safeguards children and minimises potential risks to them through obtaining a full employment history for every applicant and developing a clear policy about when to carry out police and other checks with other countries when a person has lived or worked overseas. (Regulation 32 (1)(2)(a)(b)(3))	21/10/2016
The registered person must ensure that: - within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes: - within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ('the authorised person'): - has spoken to the user about the measure, and has signed the record to confirm it is accurate, and within five days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(b))	21/10/2016
The registered person must: keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it, and notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision. (Regulation 16 (3)(b))	21/10/2016

Full report

Information about this children's home

This residential short-break service caters for up to six children or young people at any time. The service is provided by a national charity in partnership with a local authority and a primary care trust. Children and young people can therefore be provided with care and health packages. Most of the children and young people using the service have complex health needs, or are on the autistic spectrum and have associated challenging behaviour. The home is also registered with the Care Quality Commission as a domiciliary care agency that provides occasional support to families in the family home.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
21/12/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
11/08/2015	Full	Outstanding
03/03/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
01/10/2014	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
Children and their families are well prepared to settle into their planned series of short-break stays. Staff visit the family home and the child and family visit the service. This helps children become familiar with the staff, and the surroundings and routines. Children settle into their overnight stays well because the build-up to them sleeping in the home is taken at their and their parents' pace to ensure that all are confident about the arrangement. Staff are extremely welcoming and the environment provides a stable place for the young people to relax and have fun. A parent said, 'It (the home) has a lovely atmosphere.' Another parent spoke about how staff work with her to help her son settle during each stay. She said, 'They (the staff) let me know well in advance of a stay so I can tell him when there is a change in his routine.' Planning for which children stay together in the home is carefully considered so that the needs of children there at the same time are compatible. Children make friendships with others staying in the home. Families are provided with a high level of flexibility, for example the manager provides additional stays for families who may be having a crisis or, in one case, a child's request to have a stay to coincide with a local event he wanted to attend has been accommodated. The relationships between children and staff are warm and affectionate and contribute significantly to the progress they make. Staff are interested in each child, spend good quality time with them and are extremely child-focused. Great care is taken to find out about the child and their needs and meaningful care plans are developed. Staff are highly sensitive to the children's individual needs. They interact with each child effectively through using the child's favoured means of communication. In some cases, staff use innovative ways to establish a child's wishes, for example by using an electronic tablet. Education remains the responsibility of parents but staff ensure that children get to school safely and support children's learning and development through purposeful activities and play in the home and in the community. Children enjoy spending time in the sensory room, lounging in the Jacuzzi or playing in the well-equipped garden. They go bowling, on trips to local parks and theme parks that are further afield, some have been on a canal trip and some of the older children attended a garden party at the palace hosted by the Duchess of Cornwall. The service applied for and received funding for new outfits for the children attending this. It is commendable that staff are determined to support children to have the same opportunities as others of their age.	

Children have developed skills in many areas of their lives as a result of the activities they take part in during their short breaks, and have developed confidence in their abilities. Some examples of this are: children learning to bake, one young person who wanted to build something using tools was supported to make a 'bug house' out of wooden pallets, a child's anxiety about going out was alleviated through staff supporting her to arrange a visit for herself and her doll to the bowling alley, and a child who wanted to practise self-propelling her wheelchair was supported to do this, and as a result her independence has increased.

Children's health needs are the responsibility of their parents. However, during their short-break stays the staff, who are supported by nurses, ensure that children's, often complex, physical and emotional health needs are met. The arrangements for the storage and administration of medicines are safe and effective and errors in medication are rare. When errors occur, the reasons are fully investigated, lessons are learned and practice is changed accordingly. There is great care taken in menu planning to ensure that choices, allergies and special diets are catered for. Children's dignity is assured when staff undertake personal hygiene tasks and some children have developed skills in relation to their personal hygiene through the use of social stories. The staff have provided some children, whose own homes do not have adequate facilities for them to shower safely, the chance to attend the home to shower outside of their official stay. Other children have been supported to improve their sleep patterns, though taking part in a physical activity before bedtime.

Young people's moves into adult services are well supported by the staff. Young people have been supported to arrange their leaving parties and have positive endings to using the service. For one young person, whose adult short-break service does not have sufficient facilities for him to shower, the staff have negotiated for the new service to borrow the equipment needed for him to shower during his stays there.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
Children feel safe during their stays in the home and are well cared for by staff whom they trust. Staff are skilled at helping children to express their views about anything that is worrying them and ensure that their worries are addressed. A parent said, 'Nothing is too much trouble and usually staff accommodate their (the children's) wishes, where they are able to do that.' Risks to children are identified because there are close working relationships with	

social workers and parents and careful planning for their stays. There is a strong approach to risk management and it is ensured that as needs change assessments are reviewed. This ensures that children are kept as safe as possible.

Children are effectively supported to manage their behaviour. Staff understand how each child's emotional and physical discomfort is communicated through their body language or behaviour. They recognise the subtle signs that a child is in distress and proactively address this. Staff use diversion tactics, including encouragement and high levels of praise, and this approach helps to minimise disruptive incidents. A parent spoke about how staff support her child to manage his difficult feelings more effectively. Another parent spoke about how they have discussed with staff strategies to use with their child. This ensures that the approach to him is consistent and predictable to him and lessens his distress.

Staff are trained in physical intervention techniques and these are only used when absolutely necessary to avoid a child being harmed. Records are made and maintained of each physical intervention, but the record book does not detail that the manager has discussed the event with the staff or, where children have the ability and understanding, the child.

Children do not go missing from the home because of the high levels of supervision. The exterior door is locked as a precaution and this has been risk-assessed as being necessary to safeguard children.

The recruitment process for staff who are from, or have lived, overseas has not been rigorous. There has been a failure to adequately explore, or in one case gain, a full employment history. There was no attempt to carry out police checks or to take up references from other countries that applicants had worked or lived in. This has the potential to put children at risk from unsuitable people working with them.

While the manager has established relationships with the local community police officers and the designated officer for safeguarding within the local authority, there have been no child protection, safeguarding concerns or significant incidents. Therefore, there has been limited contact with these professionals. The designated officer visited the home recently and spoke to staff about his role, and this clarified his responsibilities for them.

The staff work closely with social workers and parents and follow multi-agency support plans where these are in place. Staff are trained in and aware of the action they should take if they are concerned about a child's safety or well-being. The manager has recently negotiated improvements in the arrangements for transporting children to and from the service so that children are only transported by people who have been vetted as suitable.

The physical environment of the house is safe, secure and well maintained. It is child-friendly and there are lovely pictures of activities and events the children have

taken part in. This provides them with lovely reminders of fun times and their achievements, which they are very proud of.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
This is a well-managed home that is staffed and resourced well to meet the needs of children. The manager is very experienced in caring for children and in management and she has a degree in social work and a management qualification. She has managed the home since 2011. The manager and her staff are passionate about providing high quality care to the children, and are enthusiastic to help children to grow and develop to reach their full potential. Staff get to know the children exceptionally well and meet their needs to a high standard. The children really look forward to their stays because of the commitment of staff to ensure that they have an interesting stay. A parent said, 'He always is pleased to go. It is always welcoming.' Another parent described how, when her son started to have short breaks at the home, he did not want to go and used to unpack his case. She went on to say that now he packs his own case when it is time for his stay and is very excited to go there. The staff team is stable and many of them have worked at the home for a number of years. Children know the staff who work with them well. Staff who work at night spend time with the children during the day so that should they wake and need attention the staff are familiar to them. Staff feel very well supported through supervision and training. Team meetings are held regularly and are used to discuss the children and the plans for them. Peer support is cited as being excellent and the team works effectively together to provide a high quality of care to the children. There is a clear statement of purpose that provides interested parties with information about the aims and objectives of the service. This has been updated but a copy of the revised statement has not been provided to Ofsted. There is a guide for children about the service and this is in an accessible format and provides children with useful information about what they can expect from their stays in the home. There are good quality monitoring arrangements that ensure that the home operates in line with its statement of purpose and shortfalls identified are addressed. Shortfalls identified from the last inspection about the monitoring arrangements have been addressed, as has a requirement made about risk-	

assessing the practice of locking the front door. The service is continually evolving and developing to meet the best interests of the children.

Care planning is of a good quality and is highly individualised. Care is planned in conjunction with parents and social workers and clear aims and objectives for the placement are identified and monitored. When the aims are met, plans are reviewed and new objectives set. This ensures that children grow and develop as a result of their short-break stays.

Partnership working is strong. Staff work closely with social workers and parents. The relationships that staff build up with parents are extremely positive and parents expressed their confidence in the quality of care that staff provide to their children. A social worker described the service as, 'vital' and a parent said that she feels that staff listen to her about the care of her child and how important this is to her. She went on to say, 'The staff have got to know my child very well. They show amazing concern and support to my child.' Parents really value this service, as they see it as a safe enjoyable experience for their child that allows them to spend time away from their caring responsibilities. A parent said, 'It is such a help to have space with my other child and I don't worry when he is away as they care for him so well.'

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of children looked after is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place. However, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, 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.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service 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'.

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