

SC013144

Registered provider: Barnardo's

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This short-break children's home cares for up to six children. The service is provided by a national charity in partnership with the local authority. The home's statement of purpose states that most of the children using the service have complex needs and/or have an autism spectrum disorder.

The home has not had a registered manager since 28 February 2022.

Inspection dates: 15 and 16 August 2022

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 **requires improvement to be good**

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

Date of last inspection: 20 September 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/09/2021	Full	Good
21/05/2019	Full	Good
13/06/2018	Full	Good
19/06/2017	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children receive care that reflects their individual needs. Staff ensure that children with health needs and/or a disability are provided with the appropriate support and care.

When new children are being introduced to the service, staff complete child-centred assessments with the help of children's parents, carers, health professionals and teachers. Pre-visits and introductions sessions are arranged, and children only commence their stays when they are ready. One parent said, 'Even though my son struggled to settle at first, he quickly grew to like staff and has fun during his visits.'

Managers, staff and families share positive and professionally balanced relationships. Staff work closely with parents and other professionals and share information which guides the care provided to children and promotes consistency. A social worker said, 'This service offers families a sense of security and gives children a valuable break and a form of independence.'

Children benefit from their stays as they build confidence and become more independent.

Staff encourage children to express themselves using a variety of communication aids. For example, children use verbal communication, PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System) and the 'Proloquo2Go' app. As a result, children are able to share their thoughts, feelings and wishes in a variety of ways and feel listened to and valued.

Staff support children to visit local shops where they can purchase items of interest with their pocket money. This empowers children and helps them gain life skills.

The home is clean and well maintained. However, not enough consideration has been given to some areas. For example, the laundry room storage space is not effectively used to store cleaning detergents. The sensory room, parts of the garden and some bedrooms are cluttered, and this limits the available space for children to be able to unwind and play.

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

Staff, nurses and managers work closely with families to identify risks and ensure that assessments are in place to help to keep children safe. However, these assessments are not always reviewed within the required timescales and result in information on how to safeguard children becoming out of date.

Children do not go missing at this home. Clear protocols are in place to guide staff on actions to take in the event a child was to go missing.

Staff are trained and skilled in identifying potential risks and triggers that can result in children becoming distressed and their behaviour escalating. By using calm tones and verbal de-escalation, staff are able to provide children with the necessary assurance. As a result, staff do not use any form of physical intervention.

Managers and leaders adhere to safer recruitment processes. Thorough checks are carried out before individuals are recruited. This ensures that children are cared for safely.

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

There is a new manager in the home who commenced their post on 21 June 2022. However, Ofsted was not informed of this new appointment. At the time of this inspection, the new manager is in the process of applying to register with Ofsted.

The new manager has implemented new systems to help to track children's progress. However, established systems have not been regularly reviewed to ensure that records relating to children's care and progress stay up to date.

Staff, nurses and managers receive regular and effective supervisions and clinical support. Staff continue to be supported to develop their knowledge and understanding of required practice.

Staff receive a wide range of training which includes bespoke health-related training to enable them to meet children's additional health needs.

The independent monitoring visitor's reports are not always shared with the regulator soon after a visit has occurred.

Staff carefully consider the religious, racial, cultural and linguistic backgrounds of children and their families. For example, staff ensure that a child from an Asian background is able to maintain their halal diet during their stays.

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— use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1) (2)(h)) In particular, to ensure that managers monitor and review children's individual risk assessments and progress reports.	31 October 2022
If the registered provider appoints a person to manage the home, the registered provider must, without delay, give HMCI notice of— the name of the person so appointed; and the date on which the appointment takes effect. (Regulation 27 (2)(a)(b))	31 October 2022
The independent person must provide a copy of the independent person's report to— HMCI; upon request, the local authority for the area in which the home is located; the placing authorities of children;	31 October 2022

the registered provider and, if applicable, the registered manager; and the responsible individual (if one is nominated). (Regulation 44 (7)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e))	
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Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the children's home is a homely and domestic environment. Children's homes must comply with relevant health and safety legislations; 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', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

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: SC013144

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Barnardo's

Registered provider address: Barnardo's, 1 Lumley Court, Drum Industrial Estate, Chester Le Street, County Durham DH2 1AN

Responsible individual: Michelle Kukielka

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Alphie Khumalo, Social Care Inspector

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