

SC028599

Registered provider: Children and Family Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home offers care and accommodation, in two houses, for up to seven children who have a learning disability and/or a physical disability. A private company owns and operates this provision.

Inspection dates: 18 to 19 December 2017

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 **good**

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

Date of last inspection: 24 March 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: improved effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection:

None

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- The children have good experiences at the home. The staff support them to engage with a number of activities.
- The staff support the children to express their views and wishes.
- The staff meet the children's complex health needs.
- The staff help the children to work towards achieving an identified skill or activity, promoting their independence and building their confidence.
- Prior to the children arriving at the home, the manager undertakes comprehensive and effective impact assessments.
- The manager and the staff have good relationships with the children's parents and families.
- The staff and the manager communicate effectively with external professionals.
- Placing authorities are happy with the care provided to their children.
- The staff feel well supported and they are happy in their roles.
- The staff are committed to providing good levels of care to all of the children.

The children's home's areas for development:

- Staff competency to administer medication is not consistently reviewed and recorded by the senior members of staff.
- Not all of the children's risk assessments have been updated on a regular basis.
- Not all safeguarding incidents have been notified to Ofsted.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
24/03/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
11/08/2016	Full	Good
04/03/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
03/12/2015	Full	Requires improvement

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

Recommendations

- The registered person must ensure that staff have the relevant skills and knowledge to be able to: help children to manage long-term conditions and when necessary meet specific individual health needs arising from a disability, chronic condition or other complex needs. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 34, paragraph 7.12)
This is with particular reference to ensuring that each staff member's competency in relation to administering medication to the children is regularly reviewed and recorded.
- Staff should continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5)
This is with particular reference to ensuring that all of the children's risk assessments are regularly reviewed and updated.
- The registered person should notify Ofsted and other relevant persons if one of the situations specified in the regulation 40(4)(a)-(d) occurs, or if there is an incident relating to the protection, safeguarding or welfare of a child living in the home which the registered person considers to be serious. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 63, paragraph 14.10)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The children are happy and settled. They have good experiences while living at this home. Most of the children have been living at the home for a significant period of time. The staff take time to get to know the children, their individual personalities and their likes and dislikes. The staff nurture positive relationships that help the children to feel secure and happy, giving them a sense of belonging.

The care is provided in two houses that are opposite each other on a quiet side street. The houses are very much integrated with each other, with the staff working at both homes and building relationships with all of the children. Each house provides a small, family feel for the children in a homely environment. The children spend time with each other on a regular basis but they also have their own space. Many of the children have complex needs; the layout of the accommodation enables the provision of a good level of individualised care. The children say that they are happy in their homes and that they get on well with each other.

The staff support the children to attend school. The staff liaise well with education

professionals via telephone or the children's communication books. An education professional said, 'We feel that the children are very well looked after. We have regular meetings with the staff and the manager. We know that we can always pick up the phone to them. We have a really good relationship with them [the staff].' These positive relationships support the children's progress in their education and facilitate effective communication between the professionals who work with the children. The school staff are able to address any issues with the children on arrival at school, and the staff at the home address any issues that have arisen for the children during their school day.

The children have complex health and behavioural needs. The children attend all of their health appointments. The staff and the manager build positive relationships with health professionals, taking on board advice to enable them to provide the best possible care to the children. A health professional said, 'Whatever I ask them [the staff] to do, they do this. A child recently had a major operation. He recovered very quickly due to the high level nursing care that they [the staff] provided. I often pop in unannounced for a cup of tea.' The staff are attentive to the needs of the children and are committed to helping them to achieve good outcomes.

The staff enable the children to participate in a number of activities in the community, such as accessing the gym and going horse-riding. These activities help the children to develop their social skills and confidence as they are encouraged to try new experiences. A social worker said, 'The staff ensure that the children do lots of activities. They [the staff] will adapt them to meet the needs of the children. If they [the staff] have to come back early with one child, then they will do this. They make sure they [the children] are all included.'

Placing authorities and parents are happy with the level of care provided to the children. A social worker said, 'I am really happy. They [the staff] look after my child according to his care plan.' A parent said, 'The home is lovely. I know that my child is making progress. I can see this.' The staff ensure that there is effective communication with families and professionals, to provide a consistent and inclusive approach. The staff support the children to have ongoing contact with their families. Consequently, the children continue to have good relationships with their siblings, carers and parents.

Any medication errors are addressed quickly and effectively. Learning from these incidents has improved the current processes and no further errors have occurred. The manager and deputy manager oversee and investigate any issues efficiently. However, the competency of each staff member to administer medication is not consistently reviewed and recorded by the senior members of staff. This does not demonstrate that there is a systematic approach to ensure that all staff are adequately skilled. The managers have taken action to make improvements in this area.

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

Prior to the children arriving at the home, the manager undertakes a comprehensive impact assessment that considers the complex needs of all of the children. The assessments identify potential areas of concern or risk and outline strategies to manage them. The admission process is effective. The manager and the staff recognise when it is not possible to place a new child due to the potential impact on the children who are already living at the home.

A new child has recently moved into the home. He has settled extremely well because of the careful planning, which has ensured that his transition has been smooth. The children are well matched because of the effective decision-making process.

Recently, a child went missing from the home by accessing an outdoor gate at an opportune moment. The staff responded appropriately and the child was quickly located. There has been significant learning from this incident. The child has had a social story highlighting the risks, and he was spoken to by an independent person on his return. The manager has installed door keypads on the external doors of the home for additional security. This has been discussed at length with the team and the staff members involved. Practice has been tightened in response to this incident. The staff are on high alert knowing that this is a recent change in behaviour for this child.

The location risk assessment is current and comprehensive and identifies potential concerns in the locality. General risk assessments are undertaken when the children are involved in new activities in the community. The children use the internet, closely monitored by the staff. This means that the children are kept safe.

Some of the children present with behavioural challenges. However, the staff do not use physical intervention; they are able to quickly de-escalate behaviours. A social worker said, 'I have observed the staff use different methods with different children. These are well managed and individual to the children. The children are kept safe.'

All of the children have personal emergency evacuation plans, which inform the staff and the children of emergency action in the event of a fire. These plans are regularly updated and comprehensive. Fire drills take place regularly to enable the children to become accustomed to the noise of the alarm and familiar with the evacuation procedures.

The children have comprehensive and detailed individual risk assessments. Some of these, however, are not updated regularly. For one child, updated information was not routinely included in their risk assessment. This does not provide a consistently clear and current guide for the staff.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The experienced registered manager is suitably qualified to level 5. She has been managing the home since it opened. The deputy manager supports the registered

manager in her role. The deputy manager plans to take up the position as registered manager in the near future, and is in the process of making a formal application. The deputy manager knows the home well having worked there for a number of years.

The staff receive regular supervision and appraisal. They have access to a suitable induction and relevant training. A staff member described the manager as 'open and honest' with an 'enormous amount of knowledge'. The staff say that they feel well supported as there is an open-door policy when approaching the manager and the deputy manager. The staff benefit from ongoing guidance and support.

The staff team is stable and consistent. There is a dedicated team of bank workers and night-wake staff to provide round-the-clock care to the children. The night-wake staff receive individual supervision and attend training and team meetings. The bank staff receive group supervision. A dedicated night manager provides ongoing support and guidance, ensuring that the night staff are delivering a good level of care to the children. The staff enjoy their jobs and are happy working at the home. They describe it as a family environment. One staff member said, 'I absolutely love it here.'

The manager and the staff have good relationships with parents and families. Communication is effective and regular. Family members are well informed by the staff, and they are pleased with the level of care provided to their children. One parent described the manager as 'amazing' and, when asked about the care provided to her child, said, 'They [the staff] are committed to the care of the children. They take on board my views and listen to me. They all care about the children. You can see this.' The staff enable the children to continue to have positive and close relationships with their families.

The external and internal monitoring is effective. The registered manager seeks the views of others to inform her monitoring of the care provided. She is clear about the progress made by the children, and she has plans to move the service forward. The external monitoring provides clear tasks for the manager to address. This continues to help the home to progress and develop.

A safeguarding notification relating to a medication error was not reported to Ofsted. Although appropriate action was taken to address this concern, the lack of reporting at the time meant that Ofsted was not aware of the incident and was not able to review how the incident was managed.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and 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 whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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: SC028599

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Children and Family Services Limited

Registered provider address: Prospero House, 46-48 Rothesay Road, Luton LU1 1QZ

Responsible individual: Ruth Kirchner

Registered manager: Ruth Kirchner

Inspector

Debbie Young, social care inspector

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