

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC031698
Inspector	Anna Williams
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	East Sussex County Council
Registered person address	County Hall St. Annes Crescent LEWES East Sussex BN7 1UE
Responsible individual	Elizabeth Rugg
Registered manager	Helen Denise Simmons
Date of last inspection	13/08/2014

Inspection date	23/03/2015
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Previous inspection	good
Enforcement action since last inspection	None

This inspection

This home was judged good at the last full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has **sustained effectiveness**.

Children continue to make good progress as a result of their short breaks. Some staff are successfully working with young people who have anxieties linked to clinical and medical environments. This supports children with their health and well-being now and in their future. Some young people have progressed with their independence skills such as washing and dressing themselves. Other children have increased their vocabulary since visiting the home. This improves their personal communication across all aspects of their lives and supports them to make more choices. Children continue to access a wide range of activities during their stays. These include theatre trips, swimming, beach walks, gymnastics and using public transport to visit local attractions. These activities give children new experiences, opportunities to socialise with new friends and keep them healthy.

Parents speak positively about the short breaks service. One parent commented 'I cannot fault the care. The staff are lovely. My child is very happy to go there. My child has settled well from the start of their visits'. Another parent said 'It's a really nice atmosphere every time we go to the home. It's like one big family'.

The Registered Manager ensures that any significant event relating to the safety and welfare of children is notified to the appropriate external agencies. This includes incidents which require input from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). This now consistent approach, promotes good working relationships with safeguarding professionals and ensures children are protected. Children enjoy using the house I-pads to listen to music and to play suitable games. A new E-safety policy now informs children, staff and parents of the procedures for the use of electronic equipment in the home. This protects children when using digital devices during their visits.

A new risk assessment is now in place which considers the risks involved with transporting hot food around the home. This ensures that staff now have clear guidance to follow in order to move food around the home safely and hygienically. Improvements have been made in the quality of children's case records. Any handwritten amendments to individual children's placement plans are now clearly dated and signed by the author. This reduces any confusion about who has made changes to this important document. Daily observations records are now routinely sampled to ensure all entries are clear. Feedback is given to staff if records checked require improvement. This ensures children's stays are well-documented.

The Registered Manager demonstrates a good understanding of safe recruitment procedures. Since the previous inspection, the staff team has remained stable. No new staff have been recruited. Since the previous inspection no children have been placed for short break assessment. A previous recommendation to ensure children on assessment stays have identified goals, and clear aims and objectives for staff to follow cannot be evaluated. This recommendation is repeated.

Agency staff who work shifts in the home now receive one-to-one supervision on a more frequent basis. However, the quality of this supervision could be improved. Records are brief in content and rarely include discussion about individual children. Agency staff do not receive feedback on their performance to improve their practice.

Internal monitoring reports are completed and sent to Ofsted within required timescales. They evaluate some, but not all, areas as listed within the relevant regulation. Examples of topics omitted include complaints, staff supervision and training and new children who have commenced short breaks. Consequently, these reports do not demonstrate if the Registered Manager has monitored all these areas and taken appropriate action to maintain a good quality of care.

Since the previous inspection, the Registered Manager now has quarterly meetings with senior managers from adult services. Discussions take place around the needs of young people who are nearing or have reached 18 years old and require ongoing support into adulthood. This improves communication between social care professionals and supports good transition planning.

Information about this children's home

This children's home is operated by the local authority. The service is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to eight young people with learning disabilities and physical disabilities for short breaks.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/08/2014	Full	good
12/02/2014	Interim	good progress
31/10/2013	Full	outstanding
11/03/2013	Interim	good progress

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

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 Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
34 (2001)	establish and maintain a system for monitoring the matters set out in Schedule 6 at least once in every 3 months; and improving the quality of care provided in the children's home; and the system shall provide for consultation with children accommodated in the home, their parents and placing social workers. (Regulation 34 (1) (a and b) (3))	25/05/2015

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure staff have access to support and advice, and are provided with regular supervision by appropriately qualified and experienced staff, with particular reference to agency staff who work on a regular basis in the home (NMS 19.4)
- ensure children are cared for in line with their individual placement / short break care plan; with specific reference to ensuring clear aims and objectives for assessment placements. (NMS 25)

What inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspections we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The 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 relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the framework of inspection for children's homes.