

SC032315

Registered provider: Brighton & Hove City Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

A local authority runs this short-break children's home. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to five children who have learning disabilities and/or physical disabilities.

On occasion, the service may extend its provision to longer stays for children and their families who already use the service and are in need of crisis support.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since November 2017.

Inspection dates: 14 to 15 January 2020

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	Outstanding
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	Outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	Outstanding
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The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 19 February 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
19/02/2019	Full	Outstanding
23/01/2018	Full	Outstanding
23/03/2017	Full	Outstanding
10/05/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness

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 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)(a)(b)) Specifically, ensure that revised copies are sent to HMCI.	31/03/2020
The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month. The independent person must provide a copy of the independent person's report to— HMCI. (Regulation 44(7)(a))	31/03/2020

Recommendations

- Staff should be familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective, and clear recording. Staff should record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third-party information. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)
- Specifically, undertake a review of the current administrative and recording systems so as to avoid unnecessary repetition.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Staff create a genuinely warm and convivial atmosphere that welcomes the children and helps them to enjoy their stays. The staff strive to create a sense of family and community, where the children's needs are of paramount importance.

Skilled staff use a range of total communication methods, adapted and tailored to meet the children's individual needs. For example, the staff have access to visual symbols and keyrings for quick and direct communications. Their highly effective use of social stories provides the children with a clear understanding of the plan for their day and upcoming events.

The staff understand very well how to respond to the children's needs and behaviours. Highly innovative work, by working to the children's behaviour support plans, helps to reduce challenging behaviours. On one occasion, the staff worked effectively with a parent to make clear and precise arrangements for the child to have regular time with his family. This contributed greatly in stabilising the child's feelings, worries and concerns.

Lead support workers identify the children's key interests and hobbies clearly through their observations and perseverance. Embedded systems, such as sensory integration targets, inform daily planning for the children and help their development.

The staff go to great lengths to ensure that the children enjoy meaningful and fun short-break experiences. In one example, a child enjoyed a trip to the park so much that she chose to walk most of the way, leaving her wheelchair behind.

Parents and carers are reliably informed of their child's stay. Good communication results in joined-up thinking and planning about how the children will and do benefit from their short breaks. The children's progress is a source of real pleasure and excitement for the staff and the children. A staff member said, 'Every smile counts.'

In exceptional circumstances, children stay for longer periods following agreed multi-agency decisions. One current example demonstrates the drive and commitment of a staff team that is working incredibly hard to support a family during difficult circumstances. The staff team is particularly commended for not losing sight of all of the children's rights and experiences during this period. Staff are strong, committed advocates for all children and they make appropriate challenges to senior leaders in the children's best interests.

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

Staff have an excellent knowledge and understanding of the children's vulnerabilities. Highly detailed risk assessments, combined with staff vigilance and awareness, ensure that the children are kept safe. Clear plans are in place that guide the staff to help minimise risk. Carefully assessed staffing levels ensure that the children receive appropriate support and supervision while being free to move safely in their home.

Lead support workers successfully set individual targets for the children to promote safety awareness. One example of this is a 'body parts chart' that encouraged a child to identify different parts of his body. Staff undertaking this work understand the complexities for this child to recognise and communicate when he is in pain. Beyond this immediate target, staff also thought about contextualised safeguarding and giving children the tools that they need to respect and protect their bodies. Such important messages are delivered to children sensitively, using communication methods that best

suit their understanding. A parent said, 'Staff combine a sense of fun and professionalism.'

Staff continue this theme of the child's voice into their own communication with visitors to the home. They readily inform visitors of how the children prefer to communicate and interact. This ensures that the children's welfare is afforded top priority. During this inspection, a staff member explained to visitors and other children the importance of not walking behind one child's wheelchair because he finds this unsettling. Such attention to detail enhances the children's feelings of safety when they are staying away from home.

The home's premises are appropriately secure, providing a safe environment for the children. Safety equipment such as hoists and shower trolleys are appropriately in place and regular compliant checks and fire drills take place. Every child has a personal emergency evacuation plan so that the staff know how to support them in the event of a fire. Children participate in regular fire drills during their short-break experiences. This ensures that they remain familiar with the procedures should an emergency occur.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

Excellent management places the needs of the children at the heart of everyone's practice. This is complemented by the staff team's dedication and commitment, which serves as a vital link in the chain to continually drive the service forwards.

Staff morale is incredibly positive. The team feels valued by managers and describes them as 'going over and above to support our personal and professional development'. Recently, the registered manager obtained places on mental health awareness courses for individual staff. This was linked to the current team plan and aimed at to support those attendees in their designated role of mental health champions for the home. One staff member said, 'The registered manager never misses an opportunity to develop the staff team.'

The registered manager seeks to learn from all events. A recent example includes the improvements made to further strengthen the process when children come to stay at the home. The potential impact of the groups of children staying at the same time is meticulously considered to increase the likelihood of the best possible experiences for all of the children when they come to stay.

New staff benefit from individually tailored induction processes that allow them to settle into their roles confidently. Existing team members provide an added layer of guidance and support to new colleagues. Consequently, this inclusive and welcoming environment results in excellent staff retention. Children benefit greatly from the stability and permanence that this brings.

Good-quality training is positively reported on by staff who say that it helps them to meet the range of needs of the children. Communication methods as a topic are frequently revisited, including a recent two-day Makaton course, to endorse the inclusive total communication approach. The routine and systematic application of the staff appraisal process means that staff are supported to continually develop and hone their skills. This approach endorses and encourages a learning culture.

Staff are able to provide detailed descriptions of the children's needs and how they meet these. Managers play to staff strengths when planning events and duty rosters. Consequently, children are looked after by staff whom they feel safe and comfortable with. Excellent communication and clear handovers result in the children experiencing well-planned, high-quality care.

Staff know what to record, when and how. There are, however, a number of recording tools and systems that result in unnecessary repetition, which, in turn, take the staff longer to complete. There have also been occasions when updated documents, including the revised statement of purpose and some of the independent visitor reports, have not been sent into Ofsted in a timely manner. Such shortfalls do not directly impact on the quality of the care provided for the children, but they are indicative of complicated administrative systems that would benefit from revision.

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: SC032315

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: Hove Town Hall, Norton Road, Brighton BN3 3BQ

Responsible individual: Carl Campbell

Registered manager: Clare Brunt

Inspector

Kelly Monniot, social care inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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