

SC032439

Registered provider: Wiltshire Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home is registered to provide a short-break service for up to seven children at a time. Some children may have physical disabilities, learning disabilities and/or sensory impairment. The local authority operates the home.

The manager registered with Ofsted in December 2020.

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 November 2023

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 13 June 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/06/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
22/02/2022	Full	Inadequate
28/10/2019	Full	Good
02/01/2019	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

This local authority home provides short-break support to over 20 children. At the time of this two-day inspection, four children were visiting the home. Children appeared happy and settled during their stay. Staff ensured children's favourite activities were set up for their arrival. One child was enjoying the garden and listening to their favourite music, while another child was making good use of the interactive floor projector.

Parents and professionals said they were very happy with the service provided to their children and described this as a 'vital' support. They feel that staff contribute to the progress their children are making. For example, one parent said their child has made progress with their communication and now has increased social experiences.

Good communication systems mean that parents and professionals are kept informed of their child's stay. Staff upload information and photos of children's stays to a secure online platform which parents and professionals can access instantly and also contribute to. Staff said some children enjoy looking at this with them and creating their own records. This promotes children's involvement in their care and their contribution to records of their time at the home.

Staff adapt their communication to suit the needs of each child. One parent said staff had received training in a specialist communication method suited to their child. This has improved communication and enabled their child to make more choices. Children's plans clearly detail important elements of children's communication styles.

Children frequently have the opportunity to share their views about their time here. Managers and staff act on this feedback. For example, activities and days out are planned following requests from children. In other examples, the manager takes action when children say they might not be happy to visit the service or have an overnight stay. They explore this with the child, family and professionals to ensure the child's voice is heard and acted on.

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

Staff get to know children well so they know what children are communicating and how to respond. A member of staff was observed offering calm reassurance to a child. Due to these types of positive approaches, incidents are rare. Restraint has only been used on one occasion, when it was proportionate to the risk.

Staff use their knowledge to create care plans and risk assessments which reflect the child's needs well. They work with parents and education providers to support children and reduce risk. One professional said their child no longer needs to use a

wheelchair to go out in the community or to wear a protective helmet, due to this joint working by families and professionals.

Managers have adapted how they plan children's stays so they now consider the group of children staying together. This has improved children's experiences when they stay at the home. Some children are enjoying more social time together and children who prefer a quieter environment also get these opportunities.

Children's safety and well-being are at the centre of staff practice. Staff are curious about children's welfare and report any concerns they have to leaders and managers. After managers have reported to safeguarding agencies, they robustly follow up on actions and outcomes to ensure they know how to safeguard the child.

Medication is safely stored and administered. Clear health plans ensure staff are fully informed on children's health needs and how to meet them. Staff have good links with the occupational therapy team, who offer frequent advice and guidance. All specialist equipment is serviced as required.

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

The registered manager is skilled and experienced. He is working hard to improve the service and ensure children receive an enjoyable short break. The leadership team understands the strengths of the home and are progressing with their development plan. The recent audit conducted by leaders demonstrates their understanding of the areas to improve.

Leaders have developed children's care plans, which are child-focused. Targets are set and taken from the child's education, health and care plan. However, it is not clear how staff are helping children to make progress with their targets. For example, one child's target is to help with meal preparation. However, during the inspection staff were not supporting children with their targets as detailed in their plans. Leaders and managers aim to make changes to the way they set targets and support progress.

The current process for managing and reporting observed injuries or marks on children has a potential risk of staff undertaking investigatory tasks before a qualified social work professional has assessed the information. On some occasions, contact was made with parents before taking advice from statutory safeguarding agencies.

Managers have responded appropriately to staff recruitment challenges to ensure that children's care is not compromised. Despite a high demand for the service, managers put children's needs first. While this meant closing the service for two days a week, it ensured children had sufficient and consistent staff on the other five days. The home is now sufficiently staffed to increase its offer again and new children are being introduced to the service.

Staff feel supported by leaders and managers and receive regular reflective supervisions. Most staff have completed their mandatory training and additional training relevant to the needs of the children. New staff receive a thorough induction and managers ensure progress with induction is reviewed regularly. When there are concerns about staff performance, managers act on this quickly.

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, The 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. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)) This relates to the registered provider ensuring that children have achievable targets and staff have clear guidance on how they can support children with these. It also relates to leaders and managers reviewing their current process for managing concerns about observed injuries or marks on children to ensure that the correct safeguarding procedures are followed.	7 January 2024

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: SC032439

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Wiltshire Council

Registered provider address: Director of Social Services, County Hall, Bythesea Road, Trowbridge, Wiltshire BA14 8LE

Responsible individual: Lucy Townsend

Registered manager: Kevin Derby

Inspectors

Nicola Lownds, Social Care Inspector
Tara Webb, Social Care Inspector

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