

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	20/10/2015
Unique reference number	SC035247
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Durham County Council
Registered person address	County Hall, DURHAM, DH1 5UL

Responsible individual	Ms Karen Robb
Registered manager	Mrs Helen Andrews
Inspector	Mr Colin Imrie

Inspection date	20/10/2015
Previous inspection judgement	Improved effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
how well children and young people are helped and protected	Outstanding
the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

SC035247

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- The manager is highly experienced, is very well organised and leads the staff team very well. She is skilled, knowledgeable, caring and motivated to provide a very good short break service.
- Children and young people are kept very safe while at this home. Staff understand risks well and take appropriate steps to ensure children and young people remain safe. Staff do encourage children and young people to try new activities and take a balanced approach to risk, which is excellent.
- The staff team has not had many changes. They are experienced and skilled at their work and they continue to be motivated and enthusiastic.
- Children and young people enjoy the care they receive from staff with whom they have good relationships. Children and young people enjoy the activities and the opportunities they have while at the short break service.
- Parents of the children and young people value the service they get. They know that their children are safe and they know that the staff help their children to become more confident and independent.
- The staff team have very close links with the local social work team and with a wide range of other professionals. This enables the children and young people to receive a joined up service that meets their needs well
- Children and young people do make good progress at the short break service and this progress is transferred back into their home environments so that family life is improved in many ways.

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

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 (England) Regulations 2015 and the *Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards*. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
6. In order to meet the quality and purpose of care standard, with particular reference to ensuring appropriate key-work session take place on identified goals and any significant events, the registered person must ensure that staff: (2)(b)(iv) provide personalised care that meets each child's needs, as recorded in the child's relevant plans, taking account of the child's background.	21/12/2015

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home is register as a short break service for children with a learning disability (LD) and is run by a local authority

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
05/03/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
07/10/2014	Full	Good
23/12/2013	Interim	Good Progress
16/07/2013	Full	Good

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	good
Children and young people enjoy staying at this home for their regular short breaks. They do make good progress and some young people make exceptional progress. All the children have a 'daily living plan' prepared for them. They are involved in the preparation of this document along with their parents and carers and these plans form their placement plans. These are comprehensive and very detailed and cover all aspects of their lives. Many of the children and young people who attend this service have complex and complicated needs and they require skilled care and supervision. From these plans a number of goals and targets are made and these are aimed at building confidence and increasing independence by improving living skills and social skills. This system does work well but there is room for this key-work to be done more regularly and in more depth so that children and young people have the opportunity to make more progress. Senior staff are working on improving this practice already and this work now needs to be developed. Children and young people enjoy their time at the home. Some of the children and young people were unable to speak to the inspector but were observed to be happy, relaxed and joining in well with the activities. There is a wide range of activities available in the home and also a wide range of activities, trips and visits that are on offer outside the home. Children and young people are encouraged to try new activities and to visit new places and have new experiences. The manager said, 'We'll have a go at anything.' This positive attitude means that staff do not feel restricted in what they can do and where they can go. This is balanced with excellent risk management and means the children and young people benefit in many ways. Recently trips to local sporting events have proved popular as well as trips to a variety of other cultural and leisure venues. Children and young people enjoy excellent relationships with staff and also build good, lasting friendships with other children and young people. Many of the children and young people have difficulties around communication and staff take time and have patience to ensure that they are able to say or demonstrate what they want and take an active part in making choices around daily events. Many children and young people grow in confidence because of attending the short break home. One parent said that they had helped her son become more independent and helped him to develop the confidence to know what he wants. She said, 'I wrap him in cotton wool but they let him make choices for himself,	

which is really good.' This parent went on to describe the service as a, 'massive blessing', saying she loved the service because her son loved it. Another parent said he, 'could not speak highly enough', about the service and other parents describe the service as, 'fantastic' and 'excellent'. Two social workers spoken to said it was a, 'very good service', one said it, 'was a real life saver for parents'.

Children and young people make good progress in all aspects of their lives and some young people make excellent progress. One young person who had an extreme fear of bathrooms and water when they first arrived is now happily bathing and swimming. This huge change has been made because staff have been innovative, patient, persistent and caring over a prolonged period of time. This change has meant that this young person has a much better quality of life and is significantly healthier. It has also meant that family life at their home is substantially improved.

Other young people make progress in a wide range of independent living skills, learning to prepare food, improving personal hygiene or making more informed and adventurous choices about their free time.

Many of the children and young people have complex health needs and these are well managed by the staff team. Staff talk regularly to parents and to health professionals and ensure children's health is given the highest priority. Medication administration practices are good and when medication appears not to be working a review is sought quickly. One young person has made excellent progress as a result of work around their medication by staff and has a much improved memory. Their life experience has been enhanced substantially.

Children and young people are able to make many choices around what they eat and what they do while at the centre and are encouraged to have a go at different things. This broadens their horizons and helps their confidence grow.

Staff do plan transitions well. A number of the young people are close to moving to adult services and plans are well underway. One social worker noted that staff were particularly good at ensuring young people were fully supported when visiting prospective placements.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
Children and young people at this home are kept very safe.	

Staff offer high levels of supervision at all times so that children and young people are protected from external risks and from any risks within the home.

Activities and outings are encouraged and staff try hard to ensure that children and young people try new things. This is balanced with a good understanding of the risks involved and is very well managed. Trips to local parks or to local beaches are encouraged for children and young people who have perhaps not had the chance to experience them before.

Some of the children and young people have challenging behaviour and this does potentially pose risks to other young people. Some children and young people become frustrated and hit out or throw objects and there are risks to others. However, these situations are well managed and the high staffing levels ensure that everyone is kept safe. Recently, there have been exclusions from the service. These decisions are evidence of good risk management. Good supervision by staff and good risk assessment and management are the key to keeping everyone safe and staff at the home clearly perform both functions very well.

The home and garden is well kept and well maintained and does not pose any unnecessary risks or health and safety hazards to children and young people. There are extensive fire precautions and practices in place. All children and young people have a personal emergency evacuation plan in place and staff are well trained in evacuation procedures. Some of the children and young people who have complex physical disabilities would need considerable assistance to be evacuated from some upstairs parts of the building but staff are trained and practice these evacuation drills in realistic circumstances.

No child or young person has gone missing during this period and there have been no concerns about exploitation.

Physical interventions are occasionally necessary but are kept to an absolute minimum and when they are used are appropriate and well recorded.

Some children and young people do on occasions self-harm but this is monitored very closely and appropriate measures are taken to ensure this is an absolute minimum. One young person caused minor harm to themselves while in their room and the manager is looking at how this could have been handled better. This incident was reported to safeguarding services as required but no further action was needed.

Parents and social workers have commented on how safe the environment is. Staff offer consistent boundaries to children and young people and this contributes to a feeling of well-being and security for children and young people.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
The registered manager has been in post for six years, is appropriately qualified and is highly experienced. The home is meeting the aims and objectives as set out in its Statement of Purpose. The manager does monitor care and practice at the home well and is looking into a couple of small recording issues that need to be a little better. The management role for a home of this size offering short breaks to a high number of children and young people is complex and demanding. The manager is well supported by her senior team and they share the management tasks appropriately. One aspect of the management that is particularly good is the way children and young people are able to have a say in when they come for respite and who else is there. Managers are able to plan for groups of children and young people who have become friends to have respite together. The manager prioritises the needs of children and young people. She knows each of the children and young people well and has a clear and in-depth understanding of their needs. There are good systems in place for recording and this ensures that all children and young people have their needs met well. Staff prepare good quality placement plans, and goals and targets are identified. Although children and young people do make good progress this could be better if more emphasis were placed on the goals and targets and more planned key-working was to take place. Children and young people do develop more independence and do grow in confidence over time and this is good. Staff comment on the support they receive from their manager and they are offered good quality, regular supervision and a good training programme. All the staff are appropriately qualified and their training is thorough, particularly around health and disability. Appraisals are carried out yearly as required. The manager is very well aware of the strengths of the home and does have a programme of continual improvement. The manager is aware that key-working could be further developed and has taken steps to enable this process to move forward. There have been a couple of complaints from parents and these have been properly investigated and resolved appropriately. The manager and staff work very closely with the social work team that cover children's disability and this excellent relationship means that children and young	

people get a very co-ordinated service. Communication between the two teams is excellent and joint planning works well. The staff also work very closely with the Learning Disability, Children and Adolescents Mental Health Service which provides invaluable specialist support to the staff, the children and young people, and to families and carers. Again this relationship is close and works very well.

There are good links between the manager, local schools and also with a range of other health professionals. The manager will challenge any service or profession when they are not effective.

The manager makes good effort to update her own development and enjoys keeping up to date with relevant research which can be used within the service.

There were two recommendations from the last inspection. The guidance around dealing with epilepsy that was previously misleading has been amended and the issue of taking young people to their rooms has been discussed, although the manager does need to issue some guidance for staff around this issue.

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of looked after children is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place, however, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, 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 who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This 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 Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the *Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards*.

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