

# SC035247

Registered provider: Durham County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This short-break children's home is operated by a local authority and is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to seven children or young people who have learning disabilities. The manager was registered in May 2017 and has extensive experience of working with children and young people in this setting.

**Inspection dates:** 28 to 29 August 2018

**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:** 15 May 2018

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** inadequate

**Enforcement action since last inspection:**

There were three requirements given at the last full inspection. Two of those requirements were subject to compliance notices. The registered manager has ensured that appropriate action has been taken and the notices are met.

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement    |
|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| 15/05/2018      | Full            | Inadequate              |
| 25/07/2017      | Full            | Good                    |
| 20/12/2016      | Interim         | Sustained effectiveness |
| 17/05/2016      | Full            | Good                    |

## 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   |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| <p>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(b))</p> <p>In particular, when new safeguarding issues are raised during individual staff supervisions, information should be shared promptly with all members of the staff team. Additionally, the registered manager should ensure that there is a system in place that ensures that each member of staff acknowledges receiving the information shared.</p> | 28/09/2018 |

### Recommendations

- Children who cannot or choose not to verbalise, have the right to have their views, wishes and feelings heard and respected in the same way as other children. There may be children whose abilities and understanding are such that regulations 7(2)(a)(iv), (b)(i) and (c) will need interpretation according to their individual circumstances in consultation with their social worker. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 24, paragraph 4.24)
- In particular, where there are incidents of bullying recorded, the views of children who cannot verbalise their views should still be considered. They should be recorded and acknowledged in a way that will be helpful for them.

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good**

The home is welcoming and well maintained. There are photographs of the young people displayed around the home undertaking activities and on outings. There is a good range of games, books and other activities that are suitable for the range of interests and needs of the young people. There is a large sensory room and outdoor garden area that is well used by the young people.

The staff team is very nurturing, and this helps the young people to settle during their stay. Young people look forward to meeting their friends and doing activities together. Outings are planned to ensure that there is the correct level of supervision for the young people. At the time of the inspection, the young people had enjoyed a trip to the cinema.

For planned stays, consideration is given to the preference and choices made by parents, carers and the young people. Consultations with families and stakeholders improve the experiences for those accessing this provision. Young people benefit from their stay. One parent commented, 'This place is just fantastic. It is good for [Name] and it is good for us. Communication from the team is great and they are so accommodating. I never thought [Name] would have achieved some of the things they have.'

Each young person has a set target to help them make progress from their starting point. Star charts are used to celebrate the achievements and progress of the young people. The use of stickers and rewards encourages the young people and helps them see for themselves where they are making progress.

The home supports a charity. This enables the young people and their families to fundraise and make a positive contribution to their community. This helps improve feelings of self-worth.

There is good evidence of the young people's views being sought. This is achieved through a letter box system, house meetings and via key-worker sessions. The manager writes a letter to the young people following the house meetings to acknowledge how their views will be acted on. To strengthen practice in this area, the views of young people with no verbal communication could be considered in more creative ways. In particular, there has been one bullying incident recorded that was dealt with appropriately. However, the views of one young person had not been recorded due to communication difficulties.

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

The registered manager and the staff team have worked hard to address the shortfalls within safeguarding practice. At the last full inspection, there were two compliance notices given. At this inspection, the inspector is satisfied that the requirements have been met.

Improvements have been made to risk assessments. Links are made to wider safeguarding issues and strategies are identified to mitigate risk of harm. Daily living plans and risk assessments are individualised to reflect each young person's care requirements. The staff team works hard to ensure that parents, carers and social workers read and sign the risk assessments to ensure that there is a clear and transparent approach to how young people will be helped and protected during their stay.

Recording systems have improved and now demonstrate how safeguarding protocols are being followed. The manager monitors incidents to ensure that effective and decisive action has been taken. The development of practice in this area makes it clear to track and understand decision-making responses to safeguarding issues.

The home takes a proactive approach to managing issues, including bullying. There have been anti-bullying workshops completed with the young people to help educate them and raise their awareness of the issues. Missing from care episodes and use of physical interventions have not been an issue of concern for this home.

Safeguarding has been added as a standalone agenda item to team meeting agendas and within individual supervisions. This has been effective as the staff team now discusses safeguarding issues in both arenas. There is not yet an effective system in place to alert the staff team to any new safeguarding issues raised within individual staff supervisions. Alerting the staff team to new concerns swiftly would strengthen safeguarding practice further.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

The registered manager has completed her level 5 diploma in management but is waiting for her certificate. She has extensive experience of working with children and young people accessing short-break provisions. She is supported in her role by a hard-working and dedicated staff team. The registered manager and the staff team understand the needs, likes and dislikes of each young person well.

The manager has a good understanding of the home's strengths as well as its weaknesses. Since the last full inspection, she has taken effective action to drive improvements forward.

There have been significant improvements made to the quality of recordings within documents. Body maps now include an evaluation as to how injuries have occurred and what, if any, action has been taken. The registered manager has developed a system to ensure that she monitors the decisions and actions made by the staff team. This also enables her to monitor for any themes that could have an impact on young people.

The staff team is well established. There is a range of skills and experience within the team. Staff members spoken to say that they feel supported by the registered manager and can approach her with any concerns without having to wait for their monthly

supervision.

Mandatory training has been completed. Additionally, the registered manager has ensured that the staff team received safeguarding training specific to children and young people who have learning disabilities and access short-break services. There is additional training due to be delivered around risk assessments in September 2018. This would further strengthen the strategies that are identified to help and protect young people.

## **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:** SC035247

**Provision sub-type:** children's home

**Registered provider:** Durham County Council

**Registered provider address:** County Hall, Durham DH1 5UL

**Responsible individual:** Karen Robb

**Registered manager:** Kathryn Bulman

## Inspector

Jacqueline Tate, social care inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

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