

# SC035380

Registered provider: Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

The home is operated by a local authority. It provides care and support for children with physical and learning disabilities. The home offers short-break care for up to five children and one longer-term placement.

The manager registered with Ofsted in July 2022.

### Inspection dates: 20 and 21 May 2024

|                                                                                           |             |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| <b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people,</b> taking into account | <b>good</b> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|

|                                                             |      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| 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:** 31 October 2023

**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            |
|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| 31/10/2023      | Full            | Requires improvement to be good |
| 08/02/2023      | Full            | Good                            |
| 01/02/2022      | Full            | Good                            |
| 26/02/2020      | Full            | Good                            |

## Inspection judgements

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

Children receive well-planned introductions to this short-break service. Staff work well with families and professionals to understand children's individual needs before they start visiting. This ensures that children receive tailored care from skilled staff.

Children's bedrooms are personalised for their stays. Staff prepare rooms for children with their own bedding and items. This ensures that bedrooms are welcoming and familiar environments for the duration of children's stay.

Children have the opportunity to enjoy new experiences. Children engage in activities both inside and outside of the home. The property has an array of different activities for children. Children can spend time in a sensory room or soft-play area. Children also have access to large gardens with play equipment and climbing frames. The grounds have an orchard and wildlife walk for children to enjoy.

Children's views are sought regularly, and they are encouraged to be actively involved in the service. Children's meetings are a regular event, and any suggestions by children are responded to by managers. Children are included in interviews for new staff, and their feedback contributes to decisions about those who are appointed. This shows that staff value children's views.

Families value the support they and their children receive from staff. One parent said that the support their child receives 'is the best'. Another parent said that they feel confident leaving their child in the care of staff, they are kept up to date and staff have helped their child develop friendships and learn new skills.

Children are well supported to transition from the service. Staff work with children, their families and professionals to help children access other services when this is needed. Staff ensure that they capture important memories and events for the children so they have a record of their time visiting the home.

The property is old and in need of maintenance to ensure that it remains safe for children. Some windows, including ones in a bedroom, are not secure. The manager has closed off a bedroom until this can be made safe.

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

Children's risk assessments and care plans are detailed and provide guidance for staff to follow to reduce risks to children. Some assessments do not provide continuity of information on how to manage children's care. The manager's oversight of these documents has not identified these discrepancies. This could lead to confusion about how to best meet the needs of children.

Staff have conversations with children to help them develop new skills and work towards agreed goals. This helps to keep a focus on how to support children to develop skills for life, such as their social interactions and basic life skills. Staff take pride in children's progress.

There has been one incident where restraint has been used to ensure that a child was safe during a car journey. This was appropriately responded to, and managers had oversight of the incident. Staff spoke with the child, their parent and social worker to develop plans to prevent this risk from reoccurring.

Children accessing the service may have complex health needs and require support with medication. Staff receive appropriate medication training to ensure they administer medication safely and understand how to store this safely. The oversight of medicines is well established and effective.

A new fire alarm system has been installed. However, fire doors were not closing securely. The manager took immediate action to have these fixed.

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

The home is managed by an experienced registered manager who is supported by two deputy managers. Managers work well together to ensure that children receive a good standard of care and support. Staff said they feel well supported by their managers.

The manager and staff have good working relationships with professionals who are involved with the children. One professional commented on the good communications from staff and the contribution they make to children's care. Constructive multi-agency relationships are key to ensuring that children receive the care they need.

Staff receive regular supervision and support. Supervision sessions provide a space to focus on children and reflect on practice. This helps managers understand staff strengths and areas for development.

The registered manager ensures they have a skilled and qualified team to work with children. Training is included in team meetings and development days. This helps staff to improve their knowledge and skills when caring for children.

Safe recruitment practice is in place. Managers follow their procedures to ensure that they safely recruit to their vacant positions. This helps to ensure that only adults who are safe to do so are employed to work in the home.

## 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    |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| <p>The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that—</p> <p>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and</p> <p>promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.<br/>(Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(h))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that the monitoring systems are effective in identifying inaccuracies and inconsistencies across documents.</p> | 1 July 2024 |

### Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that the home complies with relevant health and safety legislations. In particular, the manager should ensure that all areas of the home are safe and in good repair. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

### 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:** SC035380

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

**Registered provider:** Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council

**Registered provider address:** Municipal Buildings, Church Road, Stockton-on-Tees, Cleveland TS18 1LD

**Responsible individual:** Debra Farrow

**Registered manager:** Dawn Coyle

## Inspector

Joanne Wallis, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

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