

SC035971

Registered provider: St Helens Metropolitan Borough Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home provides residential short breaks for disabled young people aged seven to 18 years old. The home is run by a local authority.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since June 2012

Inspection dates: 3 to 4 December 2019

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: 27 November 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
27/11/2018	Full	Outstanding
06/12/2017	Full	Outstanding
11/01/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
01/09/2016	Full	Good

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

Recommendations

- The home should work in partnership with relevant people as appropriate to ensure that each child is provided with support (appropriate to their age and understanding) to communicate their views, wishes and feelings and participate as fully as possible in all aspects of their care planning and daily care. This may include the use of and support to use communication aids, equipment and/or any necessary language support ('Guide to the children's home's regulations including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.6). Specifically, the home should develop detailed communication profiles to support young people's communication needs.
- Any home using CCTV or other monitoring equipment should have a written policy describing how this will support the safeguarding and well-being of those living and working in the home in accordance with regulation 24. Homes must gain consent to any monitoring or surveillance by the placing authority in writing at the time of placement. ('Guide to the children's home's regulations including the quality standards', page 16, paragraph 3.16)
- The registered person must ensure that staff have the relevant knowledge to be able to: respond to the health needs of children; help children to manage long-term conditions and where necessary meet specific individual health needs arising from a disability, chronic condition or other complex needs ('Guide to the children's home's regulations including the quality standards', page 34, paragraph 7.12). Specifically, clearer guidance is needed to support staff to monitor and respond to young people's healthcare needs.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Young people receive outstanding care and support that is tailored to meet their individual complex needs. Young people enjoy their short stays and look forward to the next one. One parent said, 'He loves it there. It's fabulous. His face lights up when you tell him he's going there.'

Young people are cared for by an experienced and consistent staff team. As a result, young people are making excellent progress. Young people are encouraged to try new activities and they are learning new skills. One social worker said, 'The staff have a good insight into the young people and support them to achieve fabulous outcomes. Young people want to come here. It's a very positive experience for them.'

Staff are skilled at communicating with young people. They understand the methods and

behaviours young people use to communicate their needs and are extremely responsive to them. They encourage and support young people to express their wishes and make choices in a meaningful way, including those who do not communicate verbally. One parent said, 'My daughter feels valued and listened to. They have an excellent understanding [of] how best to communicate with her, which takes a high degree of skill, negotiation and patience.' Communication profiles to capture and record this knowledge are under development, and a recommendation has been made to progress this.

Staff carefully plan each young person's stay. Young people are encouraged to personalise their rooms to reflect their individual tastes. Whenever possible, staff will make sure that young people visit at the same time as their friends or with young people they are familiar with. As a result, some young people have formed friendships that have been sustained outside of the home.

Introductions into the home are sensitively planned and well managed. Staff take time to get to know young people, and this helps to ease young people's anxieties. Staff have successfully introduced routines that help young people to feel safe and settled. For example, at bedtimes staff read stories with some young people and sit with them until they are asleep. One parent said, 'All the staff are outstanding. They are very caring and totally dedicated to the young people in their care.'

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

Young people receive safe, effective and well-planned care. Parents reported a high level of confidence in the staff team's ability to keep their child safe. One parent said, 'I know he is safe there and that the staff care for him. I have complete and total peace of mind when he's there.'

A high staffing ratio means that young people benefit from constant supervision and support to keep them safe. There are robust risk assessments in place for each young person. This ensures that disability is not a barrier to their participation in activities. One parent said, 'He had no social life before he went to [name of home] and he wasn't accessing activities. Now he does things I wouldn't be able to do with him, like going swimming, trips to the theatre and meals out.'

Each young person has a detailed and comprehensive care plan that outlines all their care needs. These plans are live documents, which are kept under review and adapted as young people's behaviour or needs change. This ensures that staff use consistent approaches with young people.

The staff team demonstrates a high level of understanding of young people's individual complex health needs. This means that they are able to respond to young people's health needs safely and effectively. However, some recording and monitoring systems are not sufficiently clear to underpin this knowledge. A recommendation has been made to address this.

Incidents that require staff to use physical interventions to manage situations are very rare in this home. Staff have an in-depth knowledge of the young people and are skilled in de-escalating situations safely and effectively. Parents reported that the calm environment and the consistent staff team has meant that some young people do not display behaviours at the home that they exhibit elsewhere.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The home benefits from excellent leadership. The manager is suitably experienced and qualified to undertake the role. He is supported by a very experienced deputy manager and together they form a strong and visible leadership team. They are committed to providing a high-quality, child-centred service to the vulnerable young people in their care.

The manager demonstrates a commitment and enthusiasm for continuous service development. He uses learning from internal and external monitoring systems to identify and address areas for improvement. He also encourages the involvement of young people and staff in the development of the service. One member of staff said, 'The manager is incredibly supportive and he is very open to new ideas.'

The staff team has a wealth of experience and benefits from a comprehensive training programme that further equips them to fulfil their roles. The management team has also sourced specialist training that is aligned to the communication and healthcare needs of young people who use this service.

Staff are highly motivated and expressed pride in the home. They are committed and enthusiastic about providing young people with fun activities and new opportunities during their short stays. Staff feel valued and supported by their managers, and morale is high. One member of staff said, 'The manager has an open door. He is really approachable, and there's no formality. The management team [goes] above and beyond to support us.'

External professionals spoke highly of the manager and were very complimentary about the service. They reported good levels of communication and have experienced positive joint working with the home. One social worker said, '[Name of home] offers an excellent service to our families. It is a solid, reliable service that you can have great confidence in.'

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: SC035971

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: Children and Young Peoples Services, Atlas House, 2 Corporation Street, St. Helens, Merseyside WA9 1LD

Responsible individual: Pauline McGrath

Registered manager: Paul Spencer

Inspector

Sophie Thomson, social care inspector

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