

SC037588

Registered provider: Portsmouth City Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is registered for a maximum of six children who have learning and/or physical disabilities. The home is owned and managed by the city council and provides short breaks from Tuesdays to Saturdays.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since April 2013.

Inspection dates: 14 to 15 February 2019

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: 20 September 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/09/2017	Full	Good
28/03/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
02/11/2016	Full	Good
23/03/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness

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
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. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(c)(d))	30/04/2019
The children's views, wishes and feelings standard is that children receive care from staff who— take their views, wishes and feelings into account in relation to matters affecting the children's care and welfare and their lives. (Regulation 7 (1)(c))	30/04/2019

Recommendations

- For children's homes to be nurturing and supportive environments that meet the needs of their children, they will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. Children's homes must comply with relevant health and safety legislations (alarms, food hygiene etc.); however in doing so, homes should seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than 'institutional' impression. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', paragraph 3.9, page 15)
- Just as in a family home, children should be able to access all shared areas of their home unless there are specific reasons why this would not meet a child's needs. Limits on privacy and access may only be put in place to safeguard each child in the home (regulation 21(c)(i)). Any decisions to limit a child's access to any area of the home and any modifications to the environment of the home, must only be made where this is intended to safeguard the child's welfare. All decisions should be informed by a rigorous assessment of that individual child's

needs, be properly recorded and be kept under regular review. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', paragraph 3.10, page 15)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children enjoy their short break and want to come back to repeat the experience. They make good progress, such as developing better sleep patterns, learning how to socialise with others, becoming less anxious about transitions and learning independence skills, such as taking their plate out to the kitchen. A placing social worker said, 'I have several children placed here. They really want to come to the service, they are happy here.'

Children enjoy a range of activities, such as using the trampoline, doing puzzles, playing ball and watching their favourite movies. They use the sensory room as a safe space to calm and have their sensory needs met. Staff ensure that they know the likes of any new child who comes for an initial teatime visit, so they have the preferred activity available to make their first visit a positive experience.

The registered manager plans the short stays in advance and considers the mix of children accommodated on the same night. Staff do not routinely get the children's views on their stay and especially how they feel about the group dynamics. The registered manager is aware of the need to consider the views of waking night staff on the sleeping patterns of children and how this might influence his decision on planning the short break.

The registered manager takes any comment or concern about the service seriously. He ensures that there is a prompt response to any issues raised and is not defensive in his approach. He ensures that staff reflect on practice and are on a journey of continuing improvement.

There are good arrangements for medication and especially the protocols for epilepsy management. Staff have clear guidance on the use of pro re nata (PRN) medication.

The local authority has invested considerably in this home since the last inspection. There have been substantial improvements to the environment, especially the replacement of bedroom doors and windows that are now fit for purpose, and the provision of equipment in the sensory room. Some other improvements are still required, for example a thumb turn lock on the sensory room door, relocating items stored in children's bedrooms and considering if safety guards are needed on the hinge side of external doors from some bedrooms.

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

Children are safe in this home. Staff are well versed in safeguarding procedures and training. They know what to do in the event of any concern. Staff are diligent at completing body maps for any unexplained marks or bruises they observe on children. They alert the parents and social worker immediately. The registered manager reviews the body maps to conclude if a child is at risk.

Staff are aware of children who may self-harm. They understand the underlying reasons for self-injurious behaviour and the strategies to minimise injury when such behaviour occurs. A clinical psychologist visits the home regularly to give advice on individual children. Staff use antecedent, behaviour and consequence (ABC) forms to record incidents and reflect on what could be done differently to prevent self-harming behaviour.

Some children require additional monitoring due to their complex needs, such as an audio-visual monitor in their bedrooms. Staff ensure that there are clear protocols for their use and that the necessary consents are in place. Staff respond quickly to any issues overnight to keep children as safe as possible. A parent said, 'Staff are on the ball. They follow diligently the protocol for seizures.'

For some children, staff may, on occasion, use door guards to keep children safe at night. Although staff gain parental consent for each individual, they do not agree a clear protocol that is under regular review. Such guards would benefit from being painted to match the bedroom they are intended for.

The registered manager has delegated responsibility for fire protection and staff take this extremely seriously. They ensure that the necessary routine checks are in place, including regular fire drills. Staff write personal emergency evacuation plans for children who need additional assistance to evacuate in the event of an emergency.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager is a familiar face to the children. He knows and understands their needs very well. He understands the strengths and weaknesses of the service and has clear plans for improvement. He has plans to revise the supervision template to include reflective practice and extend the range of external activities, with advanced plans to lease a new vehicle to expand the range of activities that children can access. He is aware of the remedial work required in the environment, such as repairs to the sensory waterbed and the replacement of the hoist in the sensory room. The registered manager has identified the skills gap of all staff, with plans to address their training needs.

A small number of children have additional complex health needs. The registered manager arranges for community nurses to provide training in the delegated healthcare

tasks. However, health professionals do not sign training records to certify the staff as competent, nor do they agree the timescale for refresher training and reassessment as laid out in the Care Quality Commission/Ofsted guidance.

The registered manager challenges other professionals to provide, for example, the most recent child in need review. He has clear plans to develop more succinct targets for the short break to support the child's education, health and care plan, looked-after child care plan or child in need plan.

Key workers have good contact with parents and ensure that documents are signed off, such as behaviour risk assessments. They support parents to make the short-break visit for their child as positive as possible. An example is creating a video of what is behind every door for children who struggle with 'theory of mind'. Staff keep good detail of the short break and the support they have given to each child in the diary sheets so there is a clear record for feedback to parents. A parent said, 'They know my child well, they are on the ball.'

A strength of this home is the staff team. There have been no new staff since the last inspection. A stable, well-trained, consistent and motivated staff team provides good-quality care, putting the needs of children at the centre of their practice. A professional said, 'It is a brilliant service; staff look after the children very well, they are superb.' A member of staff said, 'It is a lovely place to work, there are great young people and families. We are a good team who work well together.'

On one occasion, the registered manager had a limited number of options to provide cover for staff sickness. This meant that the staff had to cancel the overnight provision. The registered manager is aware that the use of external agency staff can be a positive choice to complement the skills and experiences of the permanent workforce, but he is limited by current local authority policy in his decision-making to ensure the continuity of the service provided. Likewise, the registered manager is limited in planning for future staffing shortages, caused by events such as staff retirement, due to local authority policy not to employ before a member of staff has left.

Staff work well with other agencies, including child and adolescent mental health services, social workers and other providers, such as adult services, to plan for transitions to adult care. The joined-up work that staff do with health professionals is noteworthy in relation to supporting a young person with a nursing package to access the short break and the sensory room at other times. The registered manager is working with other managers to form a network to share best practice.

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: SC037588

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Portsmouth City Council

Registered provider address: Civic Offices, Guildhall Square, Portsmouth PO1 2BG

Responsible individual: Gail Hancock

Registered manager: Clive Pfeiffer-Richardson

Inspector

Keith Riley, social care inspector

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