

SC040491

Registered provider: Cornwall Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This registered children's home operates as a short-break service and is run by a local authority. It provides care and accommodation for up to five children who have learning difficulties. In total, there are 13 children who visit this home.

A suitably qualified registered manager is in place.

Inspection dates: 12 to 13 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: 7 June 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
07/07/2017	Full	Good
26/04/2017	Full	Inadequate
23/02/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
07/12/2016	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
The registered person must ensure, by means of fire drills and practices at suitable intervals, that persons working at the home and, so far as reasonably practicable, children are aware of the procedure to be followed in case of fire. (Regulation 25(1)(d))	13 March 2019
The registered person must supply to HMCI a copy of the quality of care review report within 28 days of the date on which the quality of care review is completed. (Regulation 45(3)(a))	1 June 2019

Recommendations

As set out in regulations 31-33, the registered person is responsible for maintaining good employment practice. They must ensure that supervision of staff safeguards children and minimises potential risks to them. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1) In particular, provide formal supervision to staff on a regular basis.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children enjoy themselves and develop skills from spending time in this short-breaks home. Care is provided by a skilled and experienced team. Planning follows consultation with other agencies, parents and, where possible, children to maximise the benefit of short-break stays in this home.

The care team can provide for children who have very complex needs, including those requiring constant supervision. This bespoke care benefits children, all of whom have made some progress, as well as providing good-quality support for their families.

Moves both into the home and on to adult services are carefully orchestrated to meet the needs of the children and their families. Work with other agencies, including adult service providers, helps with planning and understanding the needs of children. Staff recognise the importance of children becoming adults; their time at the home is celebrated, often marked by special trips out and parties.

Specific targets help children to develop their independence skills and improve their

communication skills. This enables children to make choices, and significantly improves their ability to communicate when they need help with things such as personal care. Staff help children to make choices about activities, how they spend time in the home and the food that they like to eat. Success is shared between professional stakeholders and families. A parent said, 'I would not be able to cope without the help this home provides, my son loves spending time there. Feedback from both professionals and families is positive.

Children are made to feel at home. Each child has a large storage box to keep significant toys, photos and bedding, or any items that are important to them. These are then used to personalise the child's bedroom before they arrive for a visit. There are pictures of the children around the home and a large album with photos of the children doing activities and making things. These personal touches provide children with a welcoming and homely environment to visit.

Activities provide a good variety of opportunities for children to experience new things. Children enjoy trips to places of interest, local parks and sports facilities to name but a few. Where possible, children make choices about where they want to go. Staff are attentive to children's communication methods. They make notes if they feel children with very limited communication skills have made a conscious choice. This allows staff to build up a picture of likes and dislikes to inform care planning.

Continuous investment over recent years has improved the environment, making it cosy and homelier. There is a well-equipped outside play area and plenty of specialist equipment and resources to keep children occupied. Plans and finances have been approved for further alterations and extension of the facilities.

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

Children are kept safe in this home. The staff are aware of the vulnerabilities of the children they care for and have risk assessments in place. A shift plan is documented each day as part of the planning completed by staff when they arrive for work. This record promotes discussion of risk, vulnerabilities of the children they are looking after that day, as well as the progress targets for each child. Following each stay for a child, the staff reflect on what worked well and what could be improved. This process promotes the safety and progress of children.

Sanctions are not used in this home and physical intervention has not been necessary. Children are encouraged in positive behaviour by staff who understand their needs, particularly their communication and sensory needs. Several improvements have been made to help develop behaviour that is socially acceptable and preserves children's dignity.

Children have not gone missing from this home. To protect the safety of these children, the main door out into the community is kept locked. Children can access an enclosed garden area, and frequently spend time supervised by staff out in the community.

Arrangements for protecting children are well established. Staff have an enhanced level of safeguarding training with regular updates. They are clear about how to protect children in the event of a safeguarding concern and understand the vulnerabilities of children who

have learning disabilities and additional needs.

Arrangements for the recruitment of staff are safe and effective. The manager has created a pen-picture summary alongside a photograph for each child. This very useful document is available and used by temporary staff to help them to support the children effectively. The use of temporary staff has reduced over time.

Not all children have had the opportunity to practise fire drills so that staff understand fully their evacuation needs.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The team is led by an experienced and qualified manager. She is valued by the staff who appreciate her child-centred approach alongside the support, guidance and encouragement she offers them. The strengths and weaknesses of the home are understood, and a development plan is in place. Since the previous inspection, there have been some staffing sufficiency difficulties. These difficulties are now being resolved and staffing levels have recently improved. The staff rallied to avoid any disruption to the children who attended.

Working in partnership with other professionals, agencies and families contributes significantly to the progress made by children in developing confidence and independence skills. Sharing of what works in different environments and effective communication between all parties help with this progress.

Most of the staff have a childcare qualification, and all have a first aid qualification. The induction provided to new staff is thorough. New staff work alongside experienced staff who guide them and demonstrate how to effectively respond to the individual needs of children.

The home meets the aims and objectives as described in the statement of purpose. While monitoring by both the independent visitor and the manager has been robust and effective in driving improvements, Ofsted had not been sent copies of the monitoring reports in a timely manner.

Training for staff offers an extensive range of both mandatory and specialist courses which equip the staff in meeting the needs of children. Supervision frequency has improved since the last inspection, but still has some lengthy gaps between formal sessions for a small number of staff.

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: SC040132

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: Cornwall Council, Accounts Payable, Po Box 727, Truro TR1 9GP

Responsible individual: Tony Phillips-Jones

Registered manager: Tamsin Moorhouse

Inspector

Janice Hawtin, social care inspector

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