

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	03/08/2016
Unique reference number	SC042994
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered manager	Theresa Clarke
Inspectors	Tracy Murty Judith Longden

Inspection date	03/08/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Improved effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Requires improvement
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

SC042994

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Children and young people enjoy their short-break stays at this home. It provides them with an opportunity to socialise with their peers and to enjoy new experiences. Feedback from parents and carers is consistently positive about the quality of care and support provided to their children by the staff team. They feel it provides their children with new and fun experiences, while enabling parents and carers to 'recharge their batteries'.
- Careful planning for short-break stays enables children and young people to spend time with known peers and to enjoy consistency of care from the staff team. Staff and managers work hard to ensure that short-break stays are positive and enjoyable. They keep in regular contact with parents and carers and provide clear feedback and photos to family members following each visit. Such attention to detail is highly valued by family members.
- Staff clearly place the needs of the children and young people at the centre of their practice at all times. They demonstrate a commendable commitment and understanding of children's and young people's needs. They work positively as a team to ensure that children and young people have positive and enjoyable stays at this home.
- The registered manager supports staff very well to provide good care and support to children and young people. She has very positive monitoring and recording systems in place to oversee all aspects of the care and support provided. She is supported by an equally committed and skilled deputy manager. Staff report feeling very well supported and valued by managers.
- Staff manage behaviour well and demonstrate a good understanding of the behavioural needs and issues of children and young people. The use of physical restraint in this home is rare and reflects staff members' ability and skill in de-escalating situations.
- A number of shortfalls have been identified as a result of this inspection. These relate to feedback to the manager from the independent advocacy visits, the updating of records, planned activities, training and supervision, recording of complaints and responding to potential safeguarding concerns. These shortfalls have not had a negative impact on the experience and progress of children and young people, which are good.

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person(s) meets 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
Ensure that case records are kept up to date. This is with specific reference to the updating and amending of care plans, incident reports, medication and risk assessments. (Regulation 36 (1)(b))	23/09/2016
12. The protection of children standard In order to meet the protection of children standard, the registered person must: (2)(a) ensure 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.	23/09/2016
Ensure that a record is made of any complaint, the action taken in response, and the outcome of the investigation. (Regulation 39 (3))	23/09/2016

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further, the service should take account of the following recommendations:

- Ensure that independent scrutiny is actively sought for the home and make best use of information from independent and internal monitoring to ensure continuous improvement. This is with specific reference to ensuring feedback is sought from independent advocacy visits to the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph 10.24)
- Ensure that staff have the knowledge and skills to recognise and be alert for any signs that might indicate that a child is in any way at risk of harm. The registered person should ensure that skills in safeguarding are gained, refreshed and recorded in the home's workforce plan. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 43, paragraph 9.12)

- Ensure that children are offered a wide range of activities both inside and outside of the home and are encouraged to participate in those activities. Staff should support children to take part in out of school and other clubs, volunteering and leisure activities. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 31, paragraph 6.5)
- Ensure that recruitment, supervision and performance management 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)

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home is registered to provide short breaks for up to six children and young people at any one time. It is owned and run by the local authority. The home provides short breaks for children and young people with learning disabilities and physical disabilities.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12/02/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
19/10/2015	Full	Outstanding
28/01/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
11/06/2014	Full	Adequate

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
Children and young people enjoy their short-break stays at this home. They like the staff and present as happy and relaxed during their visits. Over time, they develop in confidence and social skills. Staff set them clear and achievable targets for each stay. Targets may include making their own bed, taking their dishes to the kitchen or cleaning their teeth. Staff closely monitor progress made by children and young people against set targets and praise them for their achievements. Such work will greatly assist young people when they make the transition to adult services and increases their independence skills. Parents' and carers' feedback is consistently positive about the experiences and progress made by their children during their short-break stays. Feedback includes such comments as: 'We get an excellent service, the staff are brilliant and I have no worries at all about the care my son receives.' Another parent states: 'My child enters with a smile on his face and exits with a smile on his face. This is his only way of communicating and he would cry if he was unhappy there.' The home has one emergency bed and uses it to provide care and support for families in crisis. The use of the bed reflects the need for such a service and has been well used to date. Staff and managers have worked closely and proactively with the local authority, parents and other accommodation providers in order to assess and ensure robust and appropriate forward planning for the young person currently placed in the emergency bed. Assessments have been undertaken of the young person's complex needs, with regular visits and meetings by staff and managers from the identified new placement taking place. This will ensure a smooth transition for this young person and minimise the distress and anxiety that a further move could lead to. The home employs a cook, who works closely with managers and staff to consider the dietary needs of each child and young person. Detailed forward planning enables the cook to consider any allergies, likes and dislikes and to plan menus in advance of each short-break stay. Full consideration is given to those children or young people who may have special dietary requirements. An example of this relates to a young person who eats a vegetarian diet. All children, young people and staff will also be encouraged to eat vegetarian meals prepared by the cook for that particular stay. This reflects the commitment of the entire staff team to ensuring that individual needs are met and that children and young people experience different foods.	

Staff use a system called 'My Voice' to elicit the wishes, views and feelings of all children and young people during their stays. For those who do not have verbal communication skills, this includes descriptions of their physical presentation and how they communicated their feelings to staff during their stay. The manager considers the responses each month and uses the information to inform her monitoring and management oversight of the home and care provided. This is a positive and imaginative way of eliciting the views of children and young people.

Parents and carers feel fully involved in the care of their children, during their short-break stays. Staff ensure that parents and carers receive detailed accounts of what their child has done during their stay, as well as providing photographs of activities they have taken part in. Parents really appreciate this, as summed up by one parent who said: 'The staff are always at the end of the phone if you need advice and always send home detailed information of what they have done with our son while he has been on his break. We can ring at any time and we have good relations with all of the staff.'

There have been no recorded formal complaints reported by children, young people or their parents/carers or others for some considerable time by the manager. The manager did record one recent issue from a parent as a representation and not a formal complaint. The manager has responded to the concerns and issues raised by the parent, but this should have been recorded as a complaint and records should then reflect the actions taken and the outcome of the investigation undertaken.

Children and young people have access to a large and well-tended garden area. This outdoor space is very secure and provides a wide range of fun and stimulating equipment and play options. A sensory room within the home is also very well used and provides a calm and relaxing environment, which some children and young people may not be able to access elsewhere. Activities for the summer holiday period have not been planned in a detailed way. Some activities have taken place, but more needs to be considered and put in place for children and young people. This would further increase their enjoyment of their time at the home and assist staff in planning for each day.

The health needs of children and young people are well met by the staff team. Staff receive comprehensive training and support from a team of specialist nurses in relation to complex healthcare support. One specialist nurse who provides the training and annual refresher assessments of staff stated: 'The staff team is brilliant. They are skilled and highly competent and work very closely and positively with our service at all times.' One medication administration record considered during this inspection did not clearly reflect all medications prescribed, or when they were given by education staff instead of care staff. There is a need for all records to be kept up to date to reflect any changes, and for it to be clear when other agencies may be administering medication during school time. There has been no adverse impact as a result of this shortfall.

Each child and young person has a care plan, setting out the care and support they will receive during their stays. The plans are completed in the voice of the child and present as very detailed and clear in all areas of their needs. One care plan considered during the inspection had not been updated to reflect recent changes to the long-term care plan for a young person. Records should be kept up to date and reflect the current care plan for each child and young person. There has been no adverse impact on the young person as a result of this minor shortfall.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Requires improvement
Parents and carers consistently report very high levels of satisfaction with how their children are kept safe and protected from harm during their short-break stays. This is summarised by one parent: 'The home is definitely a safe respite centre, all staff are extremely careful about who they let in and the doors are always kept locked.' Managers have improved the recording and monitoring processes for potential safeguarding concerns since the last inspection. Body maps are completed if any potentially concerning marks or bruises are identified on children or young people during their stays. Procedures have been implemented for what action staff and managers should take in such situations, including contacting the placing authority. One incident considered during this inspection did not provide sufficient evidence of staff and managers fully considering the actual or potential safeguarding issues for one young person. More robust and clear management oversight is required to ensure that all potential concerns are considered and responded to in a timely manner. There has been no adverse impact as a result of this shortfall. There have been no incidents of children or young people going missing from care from this home. This again, reflects the competence of staff, the security measures in place and the high staffing ratios. Children and young people receive 1-to-1 support and supervision during their stays. Waking night staff, and the use of internal door alarms, provide further support and safety. Staff would benefit from receiving training in relation to radicalisation, as this has not been provided and would further assist them in identifying any concerns and in feeling confident in responding to them. Detailed risk assessments are completed for each child and young person using the service. There is a need for records to be kept up to date, as some risk assessments considered during this inspection had not been reviewed or updated	

for a considerable period of time. When significant incidents occur, risk assessments need to be updated and amended to reflect any changes needed in the care and support provided. There have been no adverse impacts on children and young people as a result of this shortfall.

The use of physical restraint in this home is minimal and reflects the skills and competence of the staff team in using de-escalation techniques. Children's and young people's complex needs and behavioural issues are well known by staff. Staffing levels reflect the need for close support and supervision of children and young people during their stays. The home environment is very safe and secure, offering further protection and safety.

The home is visited each month by an independent advocate. This person is employed to meet with children and young people to consider any issues or needs they may have relating to the care they receive. The home is also visited each month by an independent visitor, who considers the care and support provided to children and young people and produces a report with recommendations on any improvements identified. Children and young people, therefore, have an opportunity to meet with and share any concerns or issues they may have with professionals who are independent of the staff team.

The selection and recruitment of staff is robust and prevents unsuitable persons from having the opportunity to harm vulnerable children and young people. Visitors to the home are checked and monitored very closely by the staff team. They demonstrate real diligence in ensuring that all visitors' identification is checked, and supervise them during their time in the home.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
The registered manager has been in post for several years and has the skills and experience needed to perform the role. She is supported by an equally committed and competent deputy manager. The staff team presents as cohesive and happy in their roles. This is reflected by a statement from one member of staff: 'As a new employee who has previously worked in both private care and other posts for the local authority, I feel proud to be part of the team at this home.' Staff, parents and stakeholders report a strong sense of children and young people being central to the care and support provided in this home. There is a real culture and ethos of learning and developing services. Managers present as keen to learn from any feedback or shortfalls identified through their own and external	

monitoring of the services provided. Management monitoring reports have recently been changed to enable staff members to contribute and provide evidence of the achievements of children and young people. This enables staff to make a valuable contribution to the running of the home and also demonstrates the commitment of managers to their full inclusion. An independent advocate visits the home each month to meet with children and young people. The advocate has not provided the registered manager with any feedback from her visits to date. This would further enable the manager to consider any specific areas of concern raised and to be able to take any necessary action.

The home has a detailed development plan in place. This reflects the short- and longer-term aims for the home and services provided. It reflects planned and actual changes made to key documentation, policies and procedures and consultation and engagement with parents and carers. There is a plan to launch a parent engagement plan at a forthcoming fun day at the home. This reflects the commitment of managers to ensuring that parents and carers have a meaningful voice in how the home is run.

Staff consider the achievements of children and young people during each stay, reflecting the relevant regulations and quality standards. They record their findings, which are then considered by the registered manager and included in her management monitoring reports. Through such practices, staff gain in skills and competence in relation to their roles and in how they can evidence the experiences and improved outcomes for children and young people accessing their service.

Staff receive regular supervision of a good quality. Staff are encouraged to record their thanks and comments about colleagues' performance in the staff room. Such feedback is then used to inform supervisions and annual appraisals. Staff value this and feel it improves staff morale and a sense of being valued by their peers. The registered manager has delegated the supervision of some staff to the deputy manager and some senior care staff. Supervision records for those staff not supervised by the registered manager are held securely in locked cabinets by the deputy manager and senior care staff. The registered manager does not have access to these supervision and appraisal records. This prevents the registered manager from having management oversight of the quality and content of supervision of all staff and reduces her ability to consider any areas of concern or need for all staff.

Staff have access to a wide range of training and development opportunities. Training reflects the diverse range of skills that staff require for their roles and has included Makaton, autism awareness, first aid and sexual exploitation. Staff have not completed training on radicalisation, which would assist them in the identification of and response to such issues. There is also a need for staff to receive refresher training in safeguarding children with disabilities. This training has been provided in the past, but has not been refreshed for existing staff or provided for new staff for several years. This would further enhance their skills and

competence in ensuring that children and young people are protected from harm at all times.

Managers work closely and positively with a wide range of stakeholders. Feedback from stakeholders includes such comments as: 'Care is provided to a high standard. There is a good multi-agency approach with children and parents being at the centre of all decision-making.'

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of children looked after is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place. However, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, 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 who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service 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'.

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