

SC060034

Registered provider: Break

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

A registered charity owns this home, which provides short breaks for up to six children at any one time. The children who use the service have learning disabilities and may also have associated physical disabilities.

The manager registered with Ofsted in July 2020.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

Inspection dates: 20 to 21 July 2021

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 11 February 2020

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
11/02/2020	Full	Good
12/12/2018	Full	Good
12/02/2018	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
24/05/2017	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children and their families highly value their flexible, child-centred short breaks. The relationships between staff and children are strong and established. Children make good progress. One parent said, 'The service helps us tremendously as a family. [Child's name] is so busy and learning new skills; they love it.'

Children's transitions to short breaks are managed effectively and are sensitive to their individual needs. The manager ensures that the children are well matched with each other and with the staff's skills and experience. Effective group dynamic assessments are made. As a result, children benefit from warm introductions and settle quickly into established routines.

Children make good progress with their independence, communication and self-care skills. Staff help the children to develop these skills through using graduated levels of prompting. Individualised approaches are tailored to children's developmental stages and regularly reviewed so that children make progress that is significant for them.

Children enjoy an extended range of meaningful activities, despite the restrictions arising from COVID-19. A recent boating excursion and trips to the zoo, fair and theme park help to widen children's social experiences. These opportunities extend children's interests and hobbies and give them opportunities that they have not had previously.

Staff support children with their education and health needs. Effective communication and links with the school staff and health agencies have ensured that children make consistent progress towards their education and health goals.

The accommodation is spacious and well equipped to meet children's recreational and leisure interests. Creatively themed bedrooms reflect children's interests and imagination. Individual spaces meet children's sensory needs. However, the garden has not been maintained to a good standard and some play equipment is worn and defective, detracting from what is otherwise a nurturing environment.

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

Staff provide familiar and consistent routines that help children to feel secure. Parents have trust in the staff and are confident that the staff advocate for their child's best interests and well-being. A parent who was very apprehensive about their child having short breaks described how the staff had given her and her child the confidence to try the home. The child is now flourishing during their short breaks.

Staff understand their safeguarding responsibilities. They receive training in safeguarding disabled children and are aware of the children's additional vulnerabilities. When potential issues of concern arise, the manager works collaboratively with other safeguarding professionals to promote the children's safety. Professionals said that the staff are good at balancing rights and individual needs.

The implementation of proactive behaviour management strategies successfully reduces situations that can increase children's anxiety. Staff have a good awareness of potential triggers. The staff's approach helps to calm incidents and build the children's tolerance to change. As a result, incidents are significantly minimised and no physical interventions have been necessary since the last inspection.

Staff follow clear medication administration processes. The manager provides comprehensive and effective oversight of auditing procedures. Since the last inspection, there has only been one medication error. When the error occurred, it was dealt with effectively, reducing the risk of recurrence.

Most risk assessments for children are detailed and individualised. However, this is not consistent. One assessment was not suitably updated when emerging concerns were identified for a child. Furthermore, other assessments do not consider children's health risks sufficiently. This reduces the staff's capacity to implement consistent risk-reduction strategies.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is suitably experienced and working towards a relevant level 5 qualification. The management team and the staff team are dynamic and child focused. Managers and staff demonstrate strong commitment to providing good-quality care.

The manager sets high standards for himself and the staff. The staff meet regularly as a team and prioritise the needs of the children. Open discussions about staff practice support a professional culture in which challenge is accepted.

The staff and management teams have sustained positive relationships with parents and professionals, who provided consistently good feedback about the strength of communication and care. Parents and professionals see the progress of children and recognise the impact and the difference that the home has made.

Since the last inspection, the quality of managerial monitoring and oversight has improved. Internal quality-of-care reviews are of a good standard. The manager has implemented an effective system for regular auditing and monitoring of practice. As a result, opportunities for continuous improvement are captured and acted on effectively.

The staff benefit from child-focused, challenging and constructive supervisions. Regularly used agency staff now receive reflective supervisions. However, some staff

members do not receive an appraisal within the required timescales. The appraisals for other staff are of poor quality. This limits the staff's opportunity to identify further development areas and suitably reflect on their annual work objectives.

External monitoring could be improved. On occasions, the independent person does not provide adequate information on behavioural incidents or potential safeguarding concerns. This undermines the overall quality and assurances that are intended by these visits.

Although managers have responded effectively to internal safeguarding concerns, they have failed to notify Ofsted about these. As a result, Ofsted's capacity to monitor safeguarding arrangements has been reduced.

A large proportion of staff have the required level 3 qualification. However, one staff member who should have achieved this has yet to do so. The manager has devised a plan to ensure that the staff member achieves this swiftly.

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 protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)) Specifically, ensure that risk assessments are updated in line with emerging incidents and known health needs for children.	6 August 2021
For the purposes of paragraph (3)(b), an individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification if, by the relevant date, the individual has attained— the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (England) ("the Level 3 Diploma"); or a qualification which the registered person considers to be equivalent to the Level 3 Diploma. The relevant date is— in the case of an individual who starts working in a care role in a home after 1st April 2014, the date which falls 2 years after the date on which the individual started working in a care role in a home; or in the case of an individual who was working in a care role in a home on 1st April 2014, 1st April 2016.	30 September 2021

The registered person may defer the relevant date if the individual— does not work, or has not worked, in a care role in a home for a prolonged period; or works, or has worked, in a care role in a home on a part-time basis. (Regulation 32 (4)(a)(b) (5)(a)(b) (6)(a)(b))	
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— there is any [other] incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(e))	6 August 2021
The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month. The independent person must produce a report about a visit ("the independent person's report") which sets out, in particular, the independent person's opinion as to whether— children are effectively safeguarded; and the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being. (Regulation 44 (1) (4)(a)(b)) In particular, ensure that safeguarding and well-being statements are supported by clear and specific information.	6 August 2021

Recommendations

- The registered person should provide a nurturing, homely environment. In particular, ensure that the garden is maintained to a good standard. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that all staff have their performance and fitness to carry out their role formally appraised at least once annually. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.5)

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: SC060034

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Break

Registered provider address: Schofield House, 1 Spar Road, Norwich, Norfolk
NR6 6BX

Responsible individual: Rachel Leslie

Registered manager: Peter Willson

Inspector

Mark Anderton, Social Care Inspector

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