

SC060743

Registered provider: Break

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home provides care for up to four children who have experienced neglect, abuse or trauma along with family and placement breakdowns. It is owned by a registered charity. Four children are currently placed at the home.

The registered manager left the home in March 2024. An acting manager has been in place since March 2024. They are yet to register with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 July 2024

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	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 12 September 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12/09/2023	Full	Good
27/09/2022	Full	Good
29/06/2021	Full	Good
17/09/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Four children were living at the home at the time of this inspection. All four children are settled at the home and have been living together since October 2022. Three children were seen and spoken to as part of this inspection. One child was away from the home on a planned activity holiday.

Children have very good relationships with staff. Managers and staff know children well and are attuned to their needs and interests. Children say they are happy here and that staff are 'cool'. Staff have difficult conversations with children, in particular around online safety. Staff make use of their quality relationships to help keep children safe.

When there are disagreements between children at the home, staff respond quickly and with compassion. Staff tell children they love and care about them and talk to them about how they can repair relationships when things have gone wrong. Conversations with children about relationships have helped them to develop new friendships in and out of school and to develop confidence in maintaining these.

Staff are attuned to the individual interests of children. One child has been supported to have the opportunity to access faith-based activities in line with their wishes. This has included celebrating Eid in the home and speaking with local organisations to offer the child a suitable space to practise their faith with peers. Children say they enjoy spending time with staff and taking part in activities which include kung fu, photography, chess, piano lessons and climbing Snowdon.

The home prioritises providing new and exciting experiences for children. Ideas for local events of interest, such as wrestling shows and banger racing, are visible on the blackboard in the corridor. During the inspection, one child was travelling from Finland to Estonia on an adventure activity boat with staff and other children. This provides children with positive interaction with their local and wider communities and gives them opportunities to develop interests and succeed.

Children make good progress in school from their individual starting points. Three children attend school and their attendance is excellent. One child's schoolteacher has described their progress over the last year as 'phenomenal' and has attributed this to the close working of the home and the school. One child, who is out of education, has been supported by staff to look for work and has taken part in work experience, which they enjoyed. Children are proud of their educational and training achievements and are rewarded by staff for their efforts.

Children share their views with staff regularly through 'forums'. The staff prepare a monthly newsletter which celebrates children's achievements and provides personalised feedback to children's requests.

Changes to the staff team this year have been difficult for children. Managers and staff recognise this and where possible, endings have been planned and discussed with children. Staff sensitively acknowledge children's loss and how important these relationships have been in their recent lives. The previous registered manager has sent a card which is displayed in a child's bedroom.

The home is large, spacious and brightly decorated. Photos of children are framed and feature on the walls of the lounge. There is a large, well-maintained garden area.

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

Staff address known risks and vulnerabilities for each child. Staff thoughtfully consider concerns about online safety. Agreements are made with children that clearly explain why staff are worried about them and they involve the children in plans to keep them safe. When there has been a serious incident, children speak to staff about their worries and share important information. This has informed safeguarding arrangements and monitoring.

Staff ensure individual risk assessments are up to date. This helps staff to share information effectively with professionals and the police and helps them to keep children safer.

The manager has organised specialist help for one child in relation to substance misuse. The staff openly discuss their worries about this with the child. Staff have encouraged the child to speak to this professional. The child has said they want, and like, this support.

Staff support children with developing independence skills. One child is approaching adulthood and staff are attuned to their worries about moving on. Staff provide nurture and reassurance. Personalised targets are set with children to support them to develop independence skills that are important to them.

Staff take action when children go missing from care. They follow them and provide the safety they need, taking into account their age and stage of development. When children return, staff warmly welcome them home and offer time to talk about why they left. However, the manager was unclear about return home interviews arranged by the local authority, and there are no records of these taking place. This means the home cannot consider information provided at these interviews to help inform care planning.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

The registered manager left the home in March 2024. The deputy manager has been acting as the manager since this time. Ofsted has not yet received a complete application from the acting manager. This does not help Ofsted to understand the manager's suitability for the role.

Staff receive the home's mandatory training when they start. A staff member said the training is 'insightful' and helped them to learn about trauma and safeguarding. Staff training is up to date. However, staff have not received specific training in a timely way on known risks to children who live at this home, despite the manager identifying this as a staff development need. This does not help staff to have the experience and knowledge to better care for children and help to keep them safe.

The majority of staff working at the home have their level 3 qualification or are working towards it. However, one member of staff has not achieved a relevant qualification in the required timescale. The manager had already identified this issue and created a plan with the staff member to support them to complete it.

Six staff, including the registered manager, have left the home since the last inspection. Staff said at times these changes have caused anxiety for them and children have previously felt worried about more staff leaving. Two new staff have joined the home since the last inspection. This has helped to provide more stability for children recently. The new manager wrote to all the children to let them know about these changes. This helped children to better understand the changes happening in their home.

The statement of purpose and children's guide have not been updated to reflect changes in staff who work at the home. This does not help children moving in or commissioners to understand the home.

Feedback from professionals is mixed. Most professionals spoke positively about children's progress and how staff support children's best interests. However, some said improvements could be made in staff communication and organisation. The manager is aware of this and is working with staff to improve this.

Despite changes to staff since the last inspection, staff consistently said the new manager has been supportive. One staff member said: 'She is warm, caring and nurturing with me.'

Staff receive regular supervision. The manager ensures that staff receive supervision that explores topics relevant to them and the children.

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, The 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 recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The requirements are that— the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform; 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. (Regulation 32 (1) (3)(b) (4)(a)(b) (5)(a)(b))	31 October 2024
The registered person must— keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the	1 August 2024

revised statement within 28 days of the revision. (Regulation 16 (3)(a)(b))	
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Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff have access to training to support children's needs and the presenting risks, in particular specific substance misuse and online safety training. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.11)
- The registered person should ensure that when a child returns to the home after being missing from care, the responsible local authority provides an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. Homes should take account of information provided by such interviews when assessing risks and putting arrangements in place to protect each child. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.30)

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: SC060743

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Break

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

Responsible individual: Scott Olivey

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Rebecca Hannell, Social Care Inspector
Natalie Day, Social Care Inspector

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