

SC064182

Registered provider: Lodge Group Care UK Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately run children's home provides care and accommodation for up to six children who have learning disabilities. The service provides one place for a short break and five long-term placements. At the time of the inspection, an 18-year-old was living at the home, awaiting transition to an adult care provision.

Inspection dates: 15 to 16 October 2018

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: 8 May 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
08/05/2017	Full	Good
23/11/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
05/07/2016	Full	Good
27/01/2016	Interim	Sustained 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 enjoyment and achievement standard is that children take part in and benefit from a variety of activities that meet their needs and develop and reflect their creative, cultural, intellectual, physical and social interests and skills. (2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— (a) that staff help each child to— (i) develop the child's interests and hobbies; (ii) participate in activities that the child enjoys and which meet and expand the child's interests and preferences; and (iii) make a positive contribution to the home and the wider community; and (b) that each child has access to a range of activities that enable the child to pursue the child's interests and hobbies. (Regulation 9(1)(2)(a)(b)) In particular, that the home's sensory room and quiet room is developed further and contains appropriate equipment and furnishings.	01/02/2019
Fitness of workers The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. (3) The requirements are that— (d) full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (3) Two written references from the person's most recent employer, if any. (Regulation 32(3)(d) Schedule 2(3))	01/02/2019
Statement of purpose (3) The registered person must— (a) keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it. (Regulation 16(3)(a)) In particular, ensure that information about the staff team is accurate.	01/02/2019

Employment of staff	01/02/2019
(4) The registered person must ensure that all employees— (b) receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33(4)(b))	

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff can access appropriate facilities and resources to support their training needs and should understand the key role they play in the training and development of staff in the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.11) In particular, that each staff member has a personal development plan. The provider ensures that there are appropriate financial and pay arrangements in place that support staff's attendance at face-to-face training.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

This home offers placements to children with learning disabilities. Children receive care that meets their specific needs. Staff devise relevant placement plans that are in accordance with local authority care plans. This is to ensure that placement objectives are understood and that identified needs are well met. Children make steady progress from their original starting points.

Children enjoy good relationships with the staff team. A parent said, 'I cried every day when he first came. But he has settled. He loves it here and he treats it like home. Staff are amazing. He's so happy and safe.' Staff complete pictorial life story books with children for them to keep as a reminder of their experiences and achievements while at the home.

Staff work creatively with children to ascertain their wishes and feelings. Staff are skilled in using alternative methods of communication to understand children's likes, dislikes and preferences. For example, the home has recently introduced the use of 'Talking Mats'. This is a series of pictorial cues that prompt children to indicate whether or not they like or enjoy what is presented before them. Staff use this method to offer children a range of choices, such as meals, staff allocated to work with them and leisure activities.

Complaint information is available in formats that children are familiar with. However, complaints are rare.

Children live healthy lifestyles. They register with primary healthcare services and attend appointments. Staff provide nutritious food options and children regularly participate in physical exercise. Children have access to specialist services when required, such as occupational therapists and speech and language specialists.

Staff receive training in first aid and the administration of medication. Staff also receive

specialist training to meet the specific health needs of children, such as the management of epilepsy.

Regular school attendance results in better learning outcomes for children. Close partnership work with educational professionals ensures that children's general developmental needs are understood and catered for. Targets are set in accordance with development goals identified by schools. For example, support plans highlight work with children to improve their practical daily living skills, their management of personal care tasks and road safety.

Children have opportunities to participate in trips, planned activities and play (including sensory play). The home has access to recreational activities and one member of staff takes the lead for coordinating leisure activities. The home's sensory room requires further development so that children can enjoy creative sensory play. The home's 'quiet/chill out' room also requires updating.

Children have excellent contact with family members and friends. Family members regularly visit the home and staff make them feel welcome. One child has daily visits from his parents and brothers. The mother of this child said, 'I visit every day and can ring at any time. Staff take my concerns seriously and they let me know what they're doing with my child. Communication is excellent.'

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

Children feel safe at the home and with the staff team. Children are protected from harm, abuse, accidents and bullying. A mother of a child said, 'He is very safe here. I know when he's not feeling safe and is frightened. I can tell by his body language. He's free here. He doesn't feel afraid of the other children.'

The staff team are familiar with the home's comprehensive child protection procedures, and safeguarding features strongly in staff training and induction. Staff vigilance and supervision of children is robust and all children receive one-to-one support. This helps to keep children safe. Children do not go missing from the home and no child is involved in child sexual exploitation or criminal exploitation. No allegations have been made since the last inspection.

Up-to-date risk assessments identify known and anticipated risks for individual children. Risk assessments detail strategies that help to reduce risks. For example, staff are currently working with a child to improve his road safety skills and sense of 'stranger danger'. Another child is allocated a night staff team member who sits outside his bedroom door every night. This ensures a very rapid response in the event of him suffering an epileptic seizure.

Staff encourage children to adhere to boundaries that help to keep them safe. Staff's management of children's sometimes challenging behaviour is measured and appropriate. Restraint records are clear, detailed and in accordance with the regulations. In each case, staff used restraint techniques to prevent harm to children and others. Behaviour management plans support staff's practice in reducing challenging behaviour. Staff make effective use of praise, rewards and incentives to promote positive behaviour.

Staff recruitment and vetting practices are adequate. However, not all staff files contain two written references.

Staff maintain good communication with other professionals and each child has an independent advocate. Staff regularly liaise with children's social workers, specialist healthcare professionals and the fire authority.

The home's premises are physically safe and appropriately secure. Staff routinely conduct health and safety checks and there are good fire precautions in place.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The leadership and management of the home is strong. The registered manager has appropriate experience, skills and qualifications to manage the home. This individual is currently on maternity leave. A senior member of the organisation is presently managing the home in her absence. Interim management arrangements are sound. The home employs sufficient numbers of staff to meet children's needs.

The home's monitoring systems are robust. Managers undertake weekly and monthly monitoring exercises. These explore most aspects of the home's functioning and offer some insight into the quality of the service. Monthly independent monitoring visits help to highlight the home's strengths and weaknesses. Monitoring reports identify action points which help to improve the service.

The statement of purpose is a detailed document which outlines the aims and objectives of the home. However, the document requires revision, particularly in relation to information about staff. Children have access to good information about the home. Information in the children's guide is available in written words and symbols.

Managers provide good support to the staff team. A member of the team said, 'I am well supported. I'm able to have an open discussion with my manager, who sees my qualities and the areas I have to work on. I feel appreciated.' The induction of new staff is effective, and staff receive annual appraisals. However, staff supervision requires improvement. Supervision is not always regular and not all staff have personal development plans. These practices do not support the effective development of staff.

Staff training opportunities are adequate. Managers are moving away from online training to more face-to-face group training. Recent staff training includes child protection, autism awareness and positive behaviour support. The provider must ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place to encourage staff's attendance at face-to-face training.

Managers and staff share good working relationships with other professionals. This ensures that all parties are aware of placement issues and developments. Managers appropriately challenge action taken by other professionals if this is thought not to be in the best interest of children. This has recently been illustrated in staff's contribution to the transition plans of a young person living at the home to adult care provision. The registered provider is financially viable and there is a business plan in place that outlines areas for the home's development.

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: SC064182

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Lodge Group Care UK Limited

Registered provider address: 87 High Street, Heathfield, East Sussex TN21 8JA

Responsible individual: Jeffrey Darnell

Registered manager: Alina Opris

Inspector

Sandra Jacobs-Walls, social care inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: <http://www.gov.uk/ofsted>

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