

Children's homes – Interim inspection

Inspection date	02/02/2017
Unique reference number	SC065730
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered manager	Samantha Watts
Inspector	Ros Chapman

Inspection date	02/02/2017
Previous inspection judgement	Good
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection This home was judged good at the full inspection. At this interim inspection, Ofsted judge that it has sustained effectiveness. Children and young people continue to have a positive experience during their short breaks at this home. Their needs are well met by committed and caring staff who know them well. A social worker commented: 'Staff manage my young person well. The routines are brilliant.' One parent said: 'It's a brilliant place. Staff are very dedicated.' Children and young people have progression targets, agreed with parents, that are monitored regularly and at their six-monthly reviews. This ensures that although most of their time is spent with their families, they benefit from the short break. They also go out with staff to access the community, for example, to the cinema, football, bowling and the youth club. This is an area that the manager wants to develop further. The 'music man' and a student drama therapist come to the home to provide 'in-house' entertainment, to enhance the facilities that are available, such as soft play, sensory rooms, and well-equipped outdoor play areas. Transitions into and out of the home are very well planned. Before a new child or young person accesses the service, there is good communication with the parents, including home visits, to gather as much information as possible about the child's or young person's likes, dislikes, routines and needs. The child/young person then has a number of tea visits before they stay overnight. This reassures both the parents and the children/young people. One parent, whose child is about to access the service said: 'I have no worries or hesitations. I can't praise them enough.' The mix of the groups is also well considered to ensure that children and young people are with their friends, or as similar a peer group as possible, and that those with complex nursing needs can have these met safely. Adult services become involved at an appropriate stage and work cooperatively with parents and this home to ensure a smooth transition to a post-18 provision. Children and young people are cared for safely. The home provides good physical security and high staffing ratios. No child or young person goes missing or is at risk of sexual exploitation. If a child or young person is on a child protection plan, staff work well in partnership with the field social worker to contribute to the package of care and support. They attend core group meetings, understand their roles and responsibilities, and pass any concerns on quickly. The manager has improved safeguarding practice by providing training for both residential and nursing staff to	

ensure that everyone works consistently and is clear about their responsibilities. She has improved the reporting form and body maps to make it easier to see what action has been taken, when and by whom. The fieldwork team manager said: 'They alert the social worker very early.' The manager is also taking part in a European project on 'the identification and prevention of abuse of children with learning disabilities in institutions'. This demonstrates a positive approach to learning and improving practice in this area.

Partnership working is strong. The home is co-located with children's social workers, the community support team, occupational therapists and other health professionals. This ensures that communication is good and there is ready access to advice and guidance. There is a good working relationship between the fieldwork team manager and the home's manager. The service is joint funded, so nursing staff are part of the home's staff complement and work closely with the social care staff. The manager is also improving parental involvement and consultation, and is currently working in conjunction with a local school to see how its resources could be used to provide support to families at vulnerable times.

The manager has a variety of ways to monitor the practice in the home to ensure that there is a good standard of care. There are senior managers' meetings, managers' meetings, unit meetings and whole-team meetings. All aspects of care provision are discussed and reflected upon. She also reads review minutes, supervision notes and supervises the deputy managers. She has a good oversight of the home and clear plans to progress the service, particularly in relation to reinstating the children's council.

There have been recent improvements in some aspects of service provision, but as these have not yet had time to embed, their effectiveness cannot be fully assessed. For example, staffing numbers had been depleted in the last few months, resulting in the increased use of agency staff. There has been a recruitment drive in response to this, and a number of new staff are now working or about to start working at the home. The positive impact of this on the rest of the staff team has not yet been established. Similarly, there has been progress in the joint working practices between health and social care professionals in the home. There are plans to make further improvements in this area, to enhance consistency of practice.

Two requirements were made at the last inspection. These have been fully addressed. Comprehensive assessments on the use of 'safe beds' have now been completed, and once these have been signed by parents, they will be incorporated into the education, health and care plans. There is now a clear understanding among senior managers that this service cannot be used for emergency placements, and the statement of purpose has been amended to clarify this. Since the last inspection, all placements have been appropriate. This ensures that staff have a good understanding of the child's or young person's needs prior to the short break, and that other people's planned short breaks are not disrupted.

Information about this children's home

This is a local authority children's home that provides short breaks for up to 10 children and young people who have sensory impairment, learning disabilities and/or physical disabilities. The trust that provides the nursing care is registered with the Care Quality Commission and subject to separate inspection.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
11/10/2016	Full	Good
19/01/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
27/08/2015	Full	Good
27/03/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

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 that 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 focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

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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