

SC065730

Registered provider: Derby City Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This local authority children's home provides short breaks for up to 10 children with sensory impairment and/or learning disabilities and/or physical disabilities.

The registered manager is qualified and experienced.

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 December 2023

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: 22 February 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
22/02/2023	Full	Good
17/01/2022	Full	Good
30/07/2019	Full	Good
02/01/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

This home provides residential short breaks care for children with a range of learning disabilities and provides a structured, safe environment, which is adapted to meet children's needs. The home is organised into two groups and staff have had the relevant training to meet the needs of children across both groups.

Children are admitted for short breaks following a carefully planned process. Staff visit families at home to capture essential information about their child and to share information about the service. Staff also visit children's schools to find out about children's needs and behaviours.

Families and children visit the home before an overnight break. Social workers share up-to-date plans to inform the home's placement plan. As a result, children are familiar with the home and all essential information is gathered to ensure staff can meet each child's needs and know their routines and preferences. Staff have developed child and parent friendly information about the home that is shared prior to stays.

The managers carefully consider matching children's needs for each stay, to promote friendships, to consider children's abilities and tolerances. This supports children to experience positive stays with opportunities for shared activities.

There are detailed records about each child's health needs including information about the impact to children's behaviour with some specific health conditions. Children's moods and well-being are assessed at every visit. Staff seek advice from health professionals and specialist services to inform children's plans and the quality of care provided to children. This includes attending children's planning meetings. As a result, staff are familiar with children's needs and emerging needs during their stays.

Children experience structured routines during their breaks at this service. Families and carers are encouraged to support children to bring familiar items. In this way children are supported to settle, and this helps children to make the most of their stays.

Staff interaction is nurturing and caring towards children. Children use a range of communication methods. Staff demonstrate skills and knowledge in communicating well with children. This supports staff to identify children's views and wishes. Staff encourage participation in children's chosen activities.

Children have detailed plans that include achievable outcome targets in line with Education and Health Care Plans and care plans. Some children are making progress in developing independence in self-care skills, progress in communicating views and wishes and in spending time with peers.

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

Staff and managers are fully aware of the additional vulnerabilities of the children staying in this service. Staff receive training in safeguarding disabled children giving them the skills and knowledge they require. Each child has detailed assessments and plans that cover risk and vulnerability, and behaviour management. There may be risks associated with managing complex health conditions such as epilepsy and or needs such as children feeling anxious. Assessments are regularly reviewed and updated. They are added to as new information becomes known.

There are high levels of staff monitoring due to children's individual needs. As a result, there are no missing episodes and very few physical restraints and significant incidents. However, the police are aware of the home and the vulnerability of the children and will respond appropriately to any missing incident.

Staff are trained in the use of de-escalation, and the use of physical restraint. Interventions are low level and are only used as a last resort to prevent children harming themselves, another child, or a member of staff. Interventions are carefully recorded and are reviewed by the managers. This includes reflection and learning.

If children display behaviour that can be harmful to staff and to other children, each child's plans include advice for staff in managing such behaviours. Staff take precautions such as wearing headscarves to protect from hair pulling. Shifts are carefully planned to ensure children are kept safe.

Staff maintain thorough daily logs that are shared with social workers and families, as appropriate. These inform assessment of safeguarding needs as well as the quality of children's experiences in the home. Staff know that good information sharing for each child is essential to a safe stay, particularly for children with a range of communication methods.

Staff are continuously assessing and monitoring risks and behaviours. Staff are alert and sensitive to changes in children's presentations and behaviours that may indicate a concern.

There has been strengthening of fire safety measures including evacuation plans. All staff receive a range of fire safety training.

A staff trainer expressed very positive views about the commitment of managers and staff to training and development. She said 'this is a home where the culture is to reduce and prevent restrictive practises. This is why there is a low level of incidents.'

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

There is a very experienced registered manager and senior management team. The team is part of an integrated disabled children's service. Staff in the service share skills, experience, and knowledge.

The manager is aspirational for the staff and the children. Managers invest in staff skills providing training and development opportunities and are good at identifying and supporting talent within the team. There has been limited staff changes since the previous inspection, so children are benefiting from care with a stable staff group, that know their needs and histories.

However there have been some challenges. There has been some staff sickness, managers follow attendance procedures. There has also been a small number of staff vacancies. There are always safe staffing levels for the number and needs of the children staying in the home.

Developments since the previous inspection include embedding a range of communication skills for staff to enhance children's experiences in the home. The development of 'all about me' recording tool helps to capture the child's voice and child's experiences. So that staff and carers and parents know children's views.

The manager has reported serious incidents appropriately to Ofsted and relevant agencies. Children's records do include individual risk assessments and relevant consents regarding the use of any electronic surveillance and monitoring.

There is excellent information sharing with partners that informs continuous assessment of children's needs. A foster carer referred to effective partnership working that supported a child to benefit from positive experiences in this home that is familiar to them, at a time when they were experiencing change in their care placements.

There are systems in place to monitor the quality-of-care that children experience. This includes independent visitor reports. These require strengthening with more evidence about feedback from families and consultation with stakeholders. The reports would also benefit from more quantitative information to support some of the qualitative statements that are made.

Several staff are undertaking the relevant mandatory care qualification. Of those, a small number are making slow progress and one member of staff has not met the prescribed dates for qualification. There are now improved, more robust tracking processes in place to monitor and support staff progress.

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
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 (4)(a)(b)(5)(a)(b))	21 February 2024

Recommendations

- The registered manager should actively seek independent scrutiny of the home and make best use of information from independent and internal monitoring (including under regulations 44 and 45) to ensure continuous improvement. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph 10.24)

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: SC065730

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: The Council house, Corporation Street, Derby, DE1 2FS

Responsible individual: Andrew Kaiser

Registered manager: Samantha Watts

Inspector

Cathey Moriarty, Social Care Inspector

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