

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: 22 and 23 February 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: 17 January 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
17/01/2022	Full	Good
30/07/2019	Full	Good
02/01/2019	Full	Good
25/09/2017	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The short-breaks home is split into two distinct areas. These areas are equipped to meet the specific needs of the children accessing the service. One area is well adapted to ensure the safe moving and handling of children. The home is well maintained and feels homely. Shared living spaces are warm and inviting. Children's bedrooms can be altered to meet their preferences during their stay. This enables children to feel settled and comfortable at the home.

Staff spend time getting to know children before their first stay. This includes spending time with them at their family home and at school. Introductions to the service are done at a pace that both the child and their families feel comfortable with. Careful matching is then undertaken so that children can access the service alongside peers with similar interests or abilities. Staff carefully observe groups together to ensure that all children are getting the most from their time spent at the home. Consequently, children form friendships at the home, and these are nurtured by the staff.

Parents and professionals speak consistently highly of the service. Staff understand the needs of the children well and develop trusting relationships with their families. Communication between staff and families is prioritised and parents are informed about their child's stay. This offers reassurance to families, especially those who may be anxious about the time away from their child. One parent said that the service had been 'a lifeline and kept our family together'.

Children at the home access activities that they may not otherwise be able to. The home prioritises the children's enjoyment and ensures that their stays are fun-filled and relaxing. There has recently been a book corner developed. Staff are creative with the way that stories can be enjoyed by disabled children using toys or sensory objects. Children's views on the care that they receive is important to the staff. Attempts are made to ensure that children have a voice, even when they are non-verbal, through symbols and objects of reference. One child has recently shown an interest in space and so staff are now planning to develop this interest.

Care plans are written by staff who know the children well, and they therefore reflect the child's health needs as well as their personalities. Plans are informed by other professionals working with the child. Staff ensure that there is consistency of approach between home and school, and this sometimes involves working on specific independence targets together. Good relationships with school staff enable smooth transitions between the two settings. This helps children to feel safe and supported when they arrive at the home. Staff do not always ensure that plans remain up to date and are reflective of the current needs of the children being cared for.

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

The short-breaks service offered to children is flexible. This has, on occasion, involved offering stays to children when their families are in crisis. Staff at the home prioritise the children's welfare, and work in a committed and adaptable way. Professionals said that this has prevented family breakdown and offered valuable support to the whole family when most needed.

Children are cared for by a consistent staff team who understand them well. A high staff ratio allows for staff to support individual children should they not wish to mix with the wider group. The home is a secure space that keeps children safe while they mobilise around the areas. Children do not access the community on their own, and therefore children do not go missing from care. However, staff do not make assumptions about safety. All children have missing-from-care protocols, which are understood by staff.

Staff have a good understanding of how to safeguard disabled children. Staff handovers before children arrive for their stays are thorough. This ensures that any changes in a child's needs are well understood and prepared for. This time is also used to share ideas and plan activities. As a result, children are quickly engaged in activities when they come to the home.

When serious incidents have occurred, these have been responded to swiftly and the correct follow-up action taken. Staff have ensured that there is a multi-agency approach and have kept families well informed of incidents. The manager has not always been proactive in notifying Ofsted of incidents of significance.

The surveillance of children in their bedrooms at night is used with consent from parents, usually for children who are prone to having seizures. The manager must ensure that there is a written policy in place describing how this supports the safeguarding and well-being of children. All children have a risk assessment in place. This identifies known and potential risks to children. These assessments would benefit from greater detail and clarity of the action needed to mitigate known risk-taking behaviours.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Staff and managers care deeply for the children who access the service. They are committed to children having an enjoyable stay with them and helping them to reach their potential. Staff enjoy working at the home and feel able to contribute to service development. Staff feel well supported and listened to by managers.

Staff are well trained. There is comprehensive mandatory training delivered to all staff, which is kept up to date. Where more-specific or bespoke training is required, this is quickly developed and delivered by the managers. There is an established system to ensure that staff remain competent in undertaking health-based tasks.

Therefore, children are cared for by staff who are confident to meet their complex needs.

There are regular supervision meetings between managers and staff members. Staff well-being is prioritised and, therefore, there is not a high turnover of staff within the home. Separate opportunities are offered to staff to discuss children. This ensures that care planning is effective and that staff have the space to reflect on the way that they support children.

Managers have effective ways in which to monitor and audit children's progress at the home. They can identify areas for improvement and have clear plans in place to develop the service offered. The manager has developed strong working relationships with other agencies. This ensures that she is involved in decision-making about children who are offered a short break and that this is needs-led.

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 registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— a child is involved in or subject to, or is suspected of being involved in or subject to, sexual exploitation; an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious; there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there; a child protection enquiry involving a child— is instigated; or concludes (in which case, the notification must include the outcome of the child protection enquiry); or there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(a)(b)(c)(d)(i)(ii)(e)) This specifically refers to incidents that should have been sent as a notification to Ofsted.	6 March 2023
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that each child's relevant plans are followed.	6 March 2023

(Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c))

This particularly refers to ensuring that all the children have a plan that staff can work to, to ensure that children are helped and protected, and their welfare is promoted at all times.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping, and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. Staff should record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third-party information. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. This particularly relates to the recording of risk assessments. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)
- The registered person should ensure that when CCTV or other monitoring equipment is used, that there is a written policy describing how this will support the safeguarding and well-being of those living and working in the home in accordance with regulation 24. Homes must gain consent to any monitoring or surveillance by the placing authority in writing at the time of placement. The use of CCTV is regulated by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 and the Surveillance Camera Code of Conduct (Home Office 2013). ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 16, paragraph 3.16)

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: Derby City Council, Treasurers Department, Council House, Corporation Street, DERBY DE1 2FE

Responsible individual: Andrew Kaiser

Registered manager: Samantha Watts

Inspector

Louise Copping, Social Care Inspector

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