

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, learning disabilities and physical disabilities.

A registered manager is in post.

Inspection dates: 24 and 25 February 2026

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: 28 January 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
28/01/2025	Full	Good
12/12/2023	Full	Good
22/02/2023	Full	Good
17/01/2022	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The short-breaks service is well equipped and maintained to meet the complex needs of children. Staff work hard to ensure that spaces feel fun and inviting for children. Children have access to a large allotment at the home, where they can grow their own fruits and vegetables. Accessible toys and equipment in the gardens mean that children can have fun outside of the home.

Children are benefiting from having a core group of staff. Several staff members have worked at the home for several years. This is offering good continuity of care for children and their families. Managers work hard to ensure that rotas are adjusted so that the same staff settle children to bed at night and support them upon waking in the morning. This is a child-centred and homely approach to the care of all children.

Both parents and involved professionals speak positively about the impact of the service. Parents know that their children look forward to their stays and that they are cared for by staff that understand their needs well. Staff are in tune with children's emotions and how they can best be supported to be calm and relaxed. Recent challenges in staffing levels have meant that some children have had their stays cancelled. These, however, are quickly rescheduled for families. Managers work in a flexible way and offer emergency stays when this is required.

Children have good opportunities to have fun and experience new things during their stays. The manager has been creative to ensure that activities are varied and focused on the children's interests. Children have had the opportunity to be part of theatre productions and have enjoyed spending time with two therapy dogs who regularly visit the home.

Children's identity needs are well understood and explored in care plans. Each plan is individualised and offers a sense of who children are. This ensures that staff have a good understanding of how they can best support children to enjoy their stays.

The manager is passionate about ensuring that the voices of children and stakeholders are both heard and acted on. She has worked creatively with relevant professionals to understand how this can be best achieved for all children accessing the service. Some parents have raised that there could be better communication particularly between home, school and the short-breaks service. The manager is aware of this and has plans in place to strengthen practice in this area.

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

Children's care plans and risk assessments are thorough. They support staff to understand how to care for children effectively and steps needed to help children to feel calm and relaxed. Plans include important, nuanced information, which ensures that staff

know how best to interact and reassure children. Staff are confident to utilise these strategies during incidents and prevent escalations of behaviours that challenge.

Physical interventions do not occur regularly. When these do occur, they are low level and utilised when children are immediately at risk of harm. Staff are supported to reflect on events and identify both areas of personal development and how they can improve collaborative working, particularly with school and specialist transportation. Holds have been a particular area of focus for the deputy manager. She is consistently auditing their effectiveness to see how these could be further reduced in the home moving forward.

There have been no formal complaints or allegations during this period. Where children's parents or carers have raised concerns, particularly regarding cancelled stays, the manager works hard to find a resolution that parents or carers are happy with. Staff maintain good working relationships with the people important to children. This supports an open dialogue and quick resolution to concerns raised.

Several children who access the service have complex health needs that require medication. There are clear administrative processes that are well understood by staff. Where there have been medication errors, these have been effectively addressed, with action taken and lessons learned identified. Children have not been harmed because of these errors.

When children have epilepsy, an appropriate care plan created by a medical professional is kept on file. Some documents viewed were difficult to locate and mixed with other historic records. This has the potential to confuse staff or for the correct documentation to not be easily accessed when required.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is led by a dynamic and committed management team. Staff are unified in their vision to develop children's experiences when they have stays at the home. Consequently, decisive action has been taken to make the service available to children every day of the week. Children will shortly benefit from the more flexible time that the weekends afford for social activities.

There is a good system of oversight in place for staff training and ensuring staff have the relevant learning to meet the specific needs of children. Two members of staff have now qualified as trainers in the preferred physical intervention method. This ensures that staff can quickly access this training and for appropriate senior oversight and reflection when holds are utilised.

Staff enjoy coming to work and feel supported by the management team. They find team meetings useful and will try to attend on their non-working days. Staff have good knowledge of children and use their time effectively at the start of their shift to get the home ready for the children who are coming to stay.

Most staff working at the home are qualified in the required diploma. Delays in staff being enrolled have been addressed swiftly by the manager and all staff are now accessing this learning in some capacity. Clear systems are in place to ensure appropriate progress in staff qualifications. Despite this, several members of staff fall outside of the required regulatory timescale.

The regulation 44 reports have been received regularly by Ofsted. These are well commented on by the manager and responsible individual, and these offer insightful reflections. The content of the reports has varied in quality and does not always include a clear safeguarding statement from the visitor. The reports do not yet support managers to fully understand how practice could be improved.

Staff receive supervision, but these are sometimes brief and reflection on practice is not always documented as being completed. Supervision responsibility is shared between senior staff members. There is not, however, a system of effective oversight from the manager to assure her of consistency in the supervisory approach with all staff.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that all staff in a care role, including external agency or bank staff, must have the qualification in regulation 32(4) within the relevant timescale listed in regulation 32(5). The registered person may extend the time period if the member of staff hasn't worked in the role for a prolonged period, such as sick leave or maternity leave, or if it is not reasonable to expect the member of staff to complete in this timescale due to the nature of the hours they work. The registered person must clearly outline and document the rationale for a staff member being granted an extension and identified a target date for completion. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.12)
- The registered person should ensure they have systems in place so that all staff, including the manager, receive supervision of their practice from an appropriately qualified and experienced professional, which allows them to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2)
- The registered person 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. They should ensure that the information sought is reflective of the service they are providing. The manager should endeavour to ensure that these are received and reviewed in a timely manner. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph 10.24)
- The registered person should ensure that staff have the relevant skills and knowledge to be able to: respond to the health needs of children; administer basic first aid and minor illness treatment; help children to manage long-term conditions and where necessary meet specific individual health needs arising from a disability, chronic condition or other complex needs. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 34, paragraph 7.12)

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: Derby City Council

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

Responsible individual: Andrew Kaiser

Registered manager: Nicola Richardson

Inspectors

Louise Copping, Social Care Inspector

Kayleigh Spinks, Social Care Inspector

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