

SC066651

Registered provider: Sheffield City Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This short-break service is owned and managed by a local authority. It provides care for up to six children who have learning disabilities and/or physical disabilities.

The manager registered with Ofsted in June 2019.

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 July 2024

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: 26 June 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
26/06/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
06/02/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
26/01/2022	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
26/10/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The short-breaks aspect of the home reopened in November 2023 and provides overnight short breaks to children. The home has been refurbished and has a fresh and welcoming feel. Children's bedrooms are individually themed. Personal items belonging to children are kept at the home and are used to decorate their rooms when they stay.

Children who are new to short breaks have a well-planned introduction that meets their needs. The manager and staff gather information from parents, carers, social workers, and schools and use this to make plans that are helpful to children. Children's plans are reviewed regularly and are adapted if children are not settling as expected. One child's carer described how an alternative plan helped to settle their child, who is now happy to stay at the home.

A wide range of toys and play equipment is available to children, which supports their enjoyment and helps them to develop new skills. This includes adapted bikes, a ball pool and a multi-sensory room that provides children with a space in which they can relax. Reduced staff numbers mean that the types of activities on offer to children outside of the home are more limited than usual. However, children continue to visit local parks and shops. The manager has worked with a local community group to understand what is on offer locally that will enhance children's experiences.

Children have developed trust in the staff. Staff ensure that children have predictable routines and boundaries. Children experience nurture and emotional warmth from staff who are dedicated to ensuring they are happy and well cared for. In addition, staff are attuned to children's individual communication methods, and they ensure that children are understood and that their views, wishes, and feelings are acted on.

Children are making progress. Several children have improved communication skills, allowing them to share their wishes and feelings. One social worker said that their child's communication had 'come on leaps and bounds.' Another child's progress with their personal care means they have been able to use the toilet. Their carer was thrilled and said, 'This is brilliant.' Children's progress, no matter how small, is celebrated through verbal praise and encouragement.

Parents and carers hold the service in high regard. Several of the parents and carers spoken to described how they trust the staff to care for their children and keep them safe. The manager and staff are described as approachable, and parents feel included and heard. One parent said about the staff, 'I can relax; I totally trust them.'

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

Staff ensure that they use their knowledge of individual children to inform how they respond to children in distress. They understand children's preferred methods of

communication and what they are trying to say through their behaviour. Staff know what strategies work to calm and reassure individual children. For example, the introduction of simple scripts that all staff use when the child is distressed has helped them to feel safer. All staff are trained in the home's model of physical intervention. The need for staff to hold children to keep them safe is reducing.

No children have been missing from the home. A high level of supervision in the home provides a safe and secure environment. All children have a missing-from-home protocol. However, these do not always contain important information, including the parents' or foster carers' contact details.

Staff are trained in the safe storage and administration of medication. Medication is usually managed well by staff who are competent. There has been one medication error when a child was not given their medication as expected. Staff advised the child's parent when they became aware later that same day but did not seek appropriate medical advice. The manager reviewed the incident; however, failure to seek professional medical advice was not addressed. This does not help to reduce the chance of this practice being repeated.

Staff understand the current risks for children. These are reflected in children's individual risk assessments, which contain sufficient detail about what the risks are and how these should be managed. However, when assessments are reviewed, there is a significant delay in them receiving management oversight as required by the provider. One assessment has waited for management oversight for six weeks and remains in draft form. This means children's records do not always contain the most up-to-date information.

The recruitment of new staff is safely managed. A rigorous selection process ensures that staff have the right skills and qualities to meet the needs of the children they will be caring for. All staff have all the necessary checks in place.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager has been in post for five years and provides staff with stability. The deputy manager's post is currently vacant. Attempts to recruit a new deputy manager and additional staff are ongoing. This has led to the manager working a few shifts to ensure children are cared for by people they know. The children have an excellent relationship with the manager, as do the staff.

The manager is a strong advocate for children. When one child needed repeated sedation to undergo a medical procedure, the manager challenged this as it was causing the child distress. The manager worked with others, including medical professionals, to find an alternative solution for the child. This included upskilling staff to reduce the need for the child to go to hospital.

Staff work well as a team. They communicate openly and share information with each other well. Shift handovers keep staff informed about the children's needs. Team

meetings include discussion of key information about children's needs and staff practice. Meetings are regular and well attended.

The most recent report of the review of the quality of care provided in the home was positive. The report was well written, analytical and child-focused. The manager is excited about the services provided to children and knows and understands the children well.

Children's records are detailed and show their experiences of staying at the home. Language used to describe children is thoughtful and non-blaming.

The manager is still working towards completing the appropriate qualification. However, the relevant date for its completion has long passed, so the requirement has been reissued. Senior leaders have ensured that the manager has protected time to complete this.

Staff receive supervision at least once every six weeks. The quality of staff supervision is inconsistent. Supervision sessions do not always fully consider children's needs or help staff to reflect on their own practice. Furthermore, staff appraisals have not taken place within the last year. The unreliability of the electronic system for storing staff's supervision records meant that some records were unavailable at the time of the inspection. The manager reported that they had not had access to the records for seven days.

An independent person visits the home every month to provide independent scrutiny of the home and how it functions. However, the independent person visits have been at times when the children are not present, for example during school hours. The visits do not offer sufficient rigour because children are not seen, and their voice is not captured.

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, The 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 (1)(b)(i), a person has the appropriate experience and qualification if the person has— by the relevant date, attained— the Level 5 Diploma in Leadership and Management for Residential Childcare (England) ("the Level 5 Diploma"); or a qualification which the registered provider considers to be equivalent to the Level 5 Diploma. The relevant date is— in the case of a person who starts managing a home after 1st April 2014, the date which falls 3 years after the date on which that person started managing a home; or in the case of a person who was managing a home on 1st April 2014, 1st April 2017. The registered provider may defer the relevant date if the person— does not manage, or has not managed, a home for a prolonged period; or manages, or has managed, a home on a part-time basis. (Regulation 28 (2)(c)(i)(ii))	30 October 2024

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that all staff have their performance appraised on an annual basis. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards,' page 61, paragraph 13.5)

- The registered person should ensure that the system in place to hold staff supervision records are accessible. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards,' page 61, paragraph 14.2)
- The registered person should ensure that the independent person makes a rigorous assessment of the home's arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. They should ensure that visits by the independent person take place when children are present in the home and that children's views, wishes and feelings are sought. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards,' page 65, paragraph 15.5)

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: SC066651

Provision sub-type: Children's home.

Registered provider: Sheffield City Council

Registered provider address: Town Hall, Pinstone Street, Sheffield S1 2HH

Responsible individual: Sally Williams

Registered manager: Julie Wiseman

Inspector

Rachel Walker, Social Care Inspector

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