

SC361789

Registered provider: Cornwall Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is registered to provide short breaks for up to five children with disabilities and associated complex needs. The home is owned by a local authority. It is situated near a school for children with additional needs.

There is an acting manager in post. The manager has submitted their application to be registered with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 March 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: 15 February 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
15/02/2022	Full	Good
03/01/2020	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
03/09/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good
19/03/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The home is spacious and well maintained. Pictures of children enjoying activities with staff add warmth to the environment.

Despite significant challenges with staff retention and recruitment, children continue to enjoy short breaks, which are carefully planned to meet their needs.

Staff know children well and take every opportunity to promote their enjoyment during their stays. Staff were seen limiting children's time on technology in favour of craft and water play, which was greatly enjoyed by the children.

Care planning is detailed and child-centred. Clear targets are set for children and reviewed on a regular basis. However, plans are lacking support for healthy eating for some children.

Due to changes in the service, children have experienced a reduction in their short breaks. In recent months these stays have been increased. However, at times, stays are cancelled due to the wider needs of the service.

Key-worker sessions are not of a consistently good standard. The manager is aware of this and has a plan to improve these for children.

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

Child protection concerns are well managed and action taken is timely, including the reporting of both significant and subtle changes in children's behaviour. This provides an important narrative for children who are non-verbal. However, it is not always clear when safeguarding matters have been concluded.

Management investigations are thorough and considered conclusions are drawn. This learning is shared with staff, which helps in practice development.

One child was able to leave the home without staff supervision. The appropriate action was taken to reduce the risk of a repeat incident.

A medication error was well managed. No significant harm was caused to the child. Opportunities for learning were identified and taken.

On three occasions, staff have used physical interventions. Good management oversight and reflection on practice are evident. However, there is a lack of narrative regarding children's needs, wishes and feelings after these incidents.

On one occasion, staff were not informed of how to manage an older child's challenging behaviour. Safeguards are now in place to ensure detailed information is obtained prior to children's stays.

Staff maintain clear and consistent boundaries for children. This helps children to calm when anxious or frustrated.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The acting manager has good oversight of the home. She has applied to become registered. The manager uses monitoring systems well. This is helping her to identify any areas for development and to continue to positively develop the home.

There are ongoing organisational changes which are causing anxiety for the staff team. The acting manager is creating opportunities to gain feedback from the team to help identify and allay any concerns they may have.

The recruitment and retention of staff also remains a challenge. Senior leaders are actively trying to recruit to the home and the wider service.

Safer recruitment practice is followed. However, at times, handwritten records are hard to read, which may cause problems.

Supervision takes place on a regular basis and staff receive annual appraisals. Training is also closely monitored.

A new induction process has been introduced. This is helping to ensure that new staff have the skills and knowledge needed to meet the needs of children. Newly recruited staff are also allocated a named mentor.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should build a strong safeguarding culture in the home where children are listened to, respected and involved in both the development of the home and decisions about the home. Reporting of concerns must be clearly recorded and concluded. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 43, paragraph 9.8)
- The registered person should ensure that each child's day-to-day health and well-being needs are met. Staff should work to make the children's home an environment that supports children's physical, mental and emotional health. In particular, children should be helped to eat a varied and nutritious diet. This should include providing a consistently good standard of support for every child. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 33, paragraph 7.3)
- The registered person should ensure that any child who has been restrained is given the opportunity to express their feelings about their experience of restraint as soon as practicable, ideally within 24 hours of the restraint incident, taking the age of the child and the circumstances of the restraint into account. For children with additional communication needs, every effort should be made to help them express their feelings. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 50, paragraph 9.60)
- The registered person should ensure that records kept electronically (regulation 38) can be easily accessed by anyone with a legitimate need to view them and, if required, be reproduced in a legible form. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 14.2)

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: SC361789

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Cornwall Council

Registered provider address: Accounts Payable, PO Box 727, Truro TR1 9GP

Responsible individual: Sharron Adams

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Polly Soper, Social Care Inspector

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