

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.

The manager has been in post since July. She has submitted her application to register with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 29 and 30 November 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: 20 March 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/03/2023	Full	Good
15/02/2022	Full	Good
03/01/2020	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
03/09/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The home is welcoming and spacious. There are photos of children enjoying activities on display in the hallways and lounge areas. The soft-play room was not readily accessible to children as items were being stored there. In bathrooms, personal care items are stored discreetly to provide privacy. Bedrooms are sparsely decorated, and some mattresses lack support.

Not all children are receiving their assessed number of short breaks. Many children are only staying at the home for 50% of their assessed need. There is a plan to increase children's stays once staffing has been increased.

Carers know the children well and understand their individual needs. Despite reduced stays, children's achievements are recognised and celebrated. Care planning documents are clear and regularly updated. This helps carers to understand children's evolving needs.

Children are supported to enjoy varied activities, such as crafts and celebrating special events. They also enjoyed outdoor activities in the summer months, such as surfing and day trips to local attractions. However, children are also often enabled to have screen time, whether this is watching television or having time on a tablet computer. This does not provide them with varied experiences for fun and stimulation.

One child was staying at the home during the inspection. She was given a choice of 'freezer food' for dinner, which did not provide a nutritious option. Carers were aware of the child's preferences, but they had not been planned for.

Some children have to travel a significant distance to enjoy their short breaks. This journey is not a positive experience for all children. Carers are not looking creatively at how to make these journeys more enjoyable.

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

Overall, safeguarding practice is of a good standard. Any concerns are well managed and appropriate actions are taken. On one occasion, carers spoke with parents about a concern prior to the allocated social worker. This is not the correct safeguarding procedure. This was identified by the manager and learning was undertaken.

Carers liaise with professionals and parents regarding the children's particular needs. Carers are curious about children's needs and what might lead to incidents in the home.

Incidents are managed and recorded well. Physical interventions have been used minimally and appropriately. During the inspection, one child was observed to have positive, close relationships with carers. Safeguarding referrals have been made appropriately and followed up quickly. Risk assessments are carefully considered and updated routinely.

There has been one medication error, where medication was not stored correctly. There was no impact on the children. This was thoroughly investigated and the learning was shared across the team.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The current manager has been in post since July 2023. She has submitted her application to register with Ofsted.

Recruitment remains challenging. Leaders and managers are actively trying to recruit. Two members of staff are awaiting checks to start. Safer recruitment practices are in place, and carers describe a better 'sense of team' and feel supported by leaders and managers.

At times, the language used in records is institutional. This does not provide an important child-centred narrative for children and families.

When incidents have occurred, managers have thoroughly investigated and reported on the situation. On one occasion, actions were clearly highlighted, and the learning was shared with the team more widely.

Carers receive supervision regularly, and recent training on critical incidents is being embedded across the team. Team meetings provide a good balance of practical issues and discussion on children's needs. More opportunities could be made for reflecting on practice and learning.

Carers make effective relationships with parents and/or carers prior to the children's planned stays to ensure that this goes smoothly.

Carers speak positively of the new culture within the staff team. There has been a period of significant change at the home and within the wider service. Senior leaders are supporting the team to manage this change well.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that children are provided with nutritious meals that are suitable for each child's needs. Where appropriate, children should be involved in choosing and preparing meals, and opportunities to sit together and eat should be promoted. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.8)
- For children's homes to be nurturing and supportive environments that meet the needs of their children, they will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. Children's homes must comply with relevant health and safety legislations (alarms, food hygiene etc.); however, in doing so, homes should seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than 'institutional' impression. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- Children should be supported to access important written information about their lives. Records should be written in a child-appropriate way so that children can access this information at any point. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.5)

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: SC361789

Provision sub-type: Children's home

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

Responsible individual: Sharron Adams

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector's

Nickie Doney, Social Care Inspector

Polly Soper, Social Care Inspector

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