

SC389781

Registered provider: The Qalb Short Break Services Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

A limited company owns and runs this short-break service. The home provides residential short breaks, day care and after-school club services. The organisation has a service level agreement with the London Borough of Tower Hamlets.

The home can provide breaks for up to eight children at any time. The statement of purpose states that it provides a service for children with disabilities and/or special educational needs, including autism spectrum disorder.

The home and manager registered with Ofsted in 2009.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

Inspection dates: 2 and 3 December 2021

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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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	outstanding
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The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 5 March 2020

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
05/03/2020	Full	Outstanding
07/02/2019	Full	Outstanding
26/07/2017	Full	Outstanding
15/02/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children receive their short breaks in a life-enriching and aspirational home. A parent described the service as 'absolutely amazing'. The comprehensive care planning enables children to achieve their clear individual targets.

It is commendable that a former user of the short-break service is currently due to start volunteering at the home. This young adult told the inspector that they 'want to give back to the service'. They explained how the service gave them self-worth, confidence, and the opportunity to socialise and gain independence skills.

Staff actively identify and successfully prioritise children's health and well-being needs. Children benefit from a qualified nurse being on the staff team, alongside support from a community-based nurse. Staff skilfully care for children with complex health needs, which include gastrostomy feeding, epilepsy and diabetes.

Staff liaise with an extensive range of professionals to provide highly consistent good-quality care. There are examples of meticulous liaison with dieticians, schools, psychologists and general practitioners. A headteacher described the partnership arrangements as 'open and collaborative'.

Day care was provided during the COVID-19 restrictions and related school closures. During this time, staff significantly supported children with their home schooling. Staff also read with children, creating pictorial books of popular stories.

Children enjoy a significant number of trips out in the local community and throughout the London and Essex area. They enjoy new experiences, such as cable car rides, and visit an extensive range of parks, farms and places of interest. Within the home they can relax in the sensory room and use the soft play area and the trampoline.

All children are developing their independent living skills. They learn to take responsibility for varying aspects of their personal care, meal preparation and household chores. Staff creatively use a wide range of communication aids to help children express their wishes, choices and feelings.

Children learn to appreciate other cultures and faiths through the celebration of an extensive range of events, including the Chinese New Year, Eid, Christmas, Diwali, St Patrick's Day and Halloween. Children regularly create display boards to reflect current events, the seasons and festivals.

At the time of the inspection, the home was seasonally decorated for Christmas.

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

Leaders and managers have continually adapted the service to ensure that children are safe during the COVID-19 pandemic. The home is deep cleaned three times a week and all staff are double vaccinated. The purposeful partnerships with public health and the local authority have also protected children.

There is a current child protection allegation under investigation. Professionals praise the management of this allegation. Leaders and managers have used this allegation as an example to provide further safeguarding training and reflection in team meetings and staff supervision sessions.

A professional stated the home provides a 'safe environment for children'. The home provides a stable and familiar place for children. Since starting their short breaks, children's behaviour, social skills and their emotional well-being has improved.

Staff are highly responsive to children's complex needs. Positive interventions enable staff to swiftly de-escalate potential incidents. Staff do not restrain or sanction children.

The comprehensive risk management system helps to protect children. Risk assessments address the changing variants of COVID-19 and individual and environmental risks effectively. Robust recruitment practices also help to safeguard children.

Children have their breaks in a home which is suitably adapted to meet their needs. Equipment such as hoists and specific training ensures that children's care needs are safely met. A lift is also available, which enables all children to access the whole building.

Extensive health and safety certificates confirm the safety of the premises. Staff undertake regular health and safety checks.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

Children benefit from a consistently high-quality service, which a parent described as 'brilliant'. A professional highlighted that, 'The team has coped admirably during the COVID-19 pandemic and has continued to offer a valuable prescribed service to children.'

Leaders and managers provide emotional and practical support to families, which is complemented by a regular newsletter. Parents praise the support offered to them, especially in relation to their mental health. A parent highlighted how 'valuable' the service was and said they 'would struggle' without it.

Highly effective leaders and managers ensure that the home is continually improving. Constructive monthly reports from an independent person contribute towards the comprehensive quality assurance system. There is meticulous

monitoring, which includes evaluating each shift, regular surveys, monthly discussions with the local authority and review of the quality of care.

Local authority managers praise the home for providing a 'bespoke provision' which is 'adapted well to the needs of the community'. Another local authority representative stated the home has 'exceeded expectations' and was 'running an excellent service for the borough'. Children from surrounding boroughs are also able to access the short-break service.

The very experienced registered manager is a qualified social worker, who has a relevant management qualification. The registered manager brings a great passion to his role and is focused on providing positive experiences for the children. Strong deputy and senior support staff arrangements strengthen the management structure.

Children receive care from a highly resilient, committed, experienced, competent and consistent staff team. Despite suffering bereavements and tragic events, the staff team has provided a service for children throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. A further strength of the staff team is their diverse linguistic skills, which enable them to communicate with parents in their first language.

Staff highlight that they are 'valued, respected and well supported'. Staff benefit from a wide range of training, which includes the required vocational training. They have regular supervision sessions, team meetings and annual appraisals. New staff benefit from significant support from their mentors.

Leaders and managers have addressed the requirement and recommendation from the last inspection effectively. Staff proactively work to assist children's transition into adult services. Children also benefit from the clear record-keeping.

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: SC389781

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: The Qalb Short Break Services Ltd

Registered provider address: 35 Beaufort Court, Admirals Way, South Quay
Waterside, London E14 9XL

Responsible individual: Yasmin Choudhry

Registered manager: Mohammed Rahman

Inspector

Sharon Payne, Social Care Inspector

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