

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC389781
Inspector	Jackie Graves
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	The Qalb Short Break Services Ltd
Registered person address	35 Beaufort Court Admirals Way South Quay Waterside London E14 9XL
Responsible individual	Yasmin Choudhry
Registered manager	Mohammed Faizur Rahman
Date of last inspection	19/03/2014

Inspection date	09/01/2015
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Previous inspection	good progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	good
Outcomes for children and young people	outstanding
Quality of care	outstanding
Keeping children and young people safe	good
Leadership and management	good

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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The home continues to provide an exceptional quality of care to children and their families. In a survey a child says: 'Excellent service. I like the staff.' A staff member describes a strength of this home: 'Strong bonds with children - they know the staff really care.' Children enjoy home-cooked family-style meals. Their good health is supported.

Children continue to make excellent progress during their stay. They learn to do more things for themselves. They take part in a range of activities both in the home and in the local and wider area. A commissioning officer says that: 'Young people are given a chance to access the community, thereby supporting inclusion and integration and helping young people with confidence building.'

Safety is strong. Staff are well trained in child protection and discuss this frequently in the home. Behaviour is managed appropriately. No children have gone missing from the home or from staff on outside excursions. The staff recruitment system is mostly robust.

Leadership and management are strong. Effective oversight of the service helps its development. The home benefits from a very experienced Registered Manager. Staff work effectively in partnership with professionals and parents in children's best

interests.

There are shortfalls in evidencing that gaps in employment are explored and that staff are physically and mentally fit for the work. The home's Statement of Purpose does not contain all required information. The manager's monitoring is not in line with amended regulation. However, these shortfalls do not currently impact on children's care or welfare.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This service is owned and managed by a limited company. The home provides short breaks for up to eight children at any time.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
19/03/2014	Interim	good progress
07/11/2013	Full	outstanding
09/01/2013	Interim	good progress
07/08/2012	Full	outstanding

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

Statutory Requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
4 (2001)	include the experience of staff working in the children's home in the Statement of Purpose (Regulation 4 (1) Schedule 1 (22))	28/02/2015
26 (2001)	ensure that in respect of persons seeking to work at a children's home there is a satisfactory written explanation of any gaps in employment and proof they are physically and mentally fit for the purposes of the work they are to perform (Regulation 26 (3) (c) (d) Schedule 2))	28/02/2015
34 (2001)	ensure that registered person's system for monitoring the matters set out in Schedule 6 reflect the amended regulation. (Regulation 34 (1) (a))	28/02/2015

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **outstanding**

Children very much look forward to their short break and get very excited about attending. They are comfortable and at ease in the building and with staff. They feel secure in the home's routines, for example, in choosing their room soon after arriving and then having a drink and a snack. Parents are reassured because their children really enjoy their break away from home.

Children make very good progress in meeting their individual targets. Some experience better sleep patterns. Communication skills, such as using more signs or spoken words, improve, so children are better able to express themselves. A commissioning officer says the home's commitment to listening to the young people and delivering services according to their choice and needs has been most impressive, with 'improvements from before evident'.

Children's good health is promoted. Some children with very complex health needs can access the service and experience continuity of their health care. This is because staff provide a 'seamless' service to ensure children's good health is maintained. Some activities specifically encourage children to take physical exercise to promote good health, for example, going swimming, jumping on the trampoline or using the local urban gym.

Children benefit from a wide range of experiences based on their own preferences. For example, they attend the cinema, go out for meals and visits to the seaside, zoos, museums and parks. In the home, children enjoy using computers and the sensory room.

Children make significant progress in learning to do things for themselves. They help the staff at mealtimes, for example, by taking their plates to the sink, scraping and washing them. Some can now brush their teeth or mostly dress themselves. In a survey a parent says, 'My son is looked after very well by the staff and is encouraged to learn new life skills e.g. brushing his teeth, making a drink etc.' Another parent writes: 'My son has learned new skills since he has been going to (the home). These skills will help him when living independently as he gets older.'

Children have opportunities to take part in celebrations and festivals of a few cultures and religions, for example, Christmas and Eid. Those who are religious are supported to attend places of worship, for example, visiting the mosque during each stay. Cultural preferences, for example, regarding the gender of staff providing personal care, are respected. Children enjoy celebrating their birthdays with staff and other children. When they leave the service, there are celebrations of their time in the home. This ensures they can reflect on their time in the home and move on

positively.

Quality of care

outstanding

The home maintains an outstanding quality of care. The building is very clean and well maintained. A commissioning officer says the home 'have consistently demonstrated their ability to deliver short breaks to a high standard, which includes creating a safe, clean and caring welcoming environment and delivering in an open and fair manner'. There is excellent attention to making sure the building is safe, for example, with risk assessments and checks of the building and equipment. The Registered Manager has conducted an assessment of the local area so that any potential risks are known and can be minimised.

Children benefit from very close, affectionate relationships with staff. They are skilled at engaging with children and helping them enjoy their short stay. A staff member describes what is best about the home as the, 'Strong bonds with children - they know the staff really care.' Staff know children's communication preferences and make sure they can express themselves about all aspects of their stay. Staff attend suitable training to develop their communication skills, for example, in signing.

Children enjoy family-style meals, shared with staff as far as possible. They are provided with home-cooked, good quality meals, including lots of fruit and vegetables, which reflect their individual dietary and religious requirements. Good manners and behaviour at the table are encouraged and meal times are pleasant occasions.

Arrangements for dealing with medication are meticulous. As a result, no errors have occurred for a significant period of time. Trained staff store medicines appropriately, keep detailed records and carefully witness the administration of drugs to children. This helps to ensure medication is managed efficiently and mistakes are avoided.

The staff team vary in experience. It is positive that new staff receive a very good introduction to the home. They find the established team 'very approachable' and willing to share their expertise to benefit the children. One says they find the home 'a lovely place to work'. Both male and female staff are employed so children and their families have choice about who provides personal care. The team is fairly diverse and staff bring lots of skills, for example, other languages in addition to English. A commissioner says: 'It is evident that staff members respect the needs of individuals, including being sensitive to children and young peoples' cultural and religious needs.'

Keeping children and young people safe good

A comprehensive admission process helps children feel secure during their stay. Staff take time to get to know children before they are admitted for an overnight stay. They gather information from families and professionals and observe children in school so they can carefully plan for an overnight stay. Children's confidence in staying away from their families is built slowly, for example, through increasingly long visits after school.

Safety is promoted. In surveys, parents 'agree' or 'strongly agree' that their children are kept safe. A member of staff says there is a 'safe culture here'. Staff demonstrate a good understanding of children's vulnerabilities and any potential risks to their safety. It is significant that no children have gone missing from the home or from staff when on outings.

Arrangements for protecting children are strong. Staff are trained in child protection and are confident about how to refer any allegations or concerns. For example, they complete body maps if they notice any bruise or mark on a child and share this information with the appropriate people. Safeguarding guidelines and child protection matters are discussed regularly in team meetings and individual supervision sessions so that staff awareness is maintained.

Behaviour management is appropriate. Positive behaviour management reduces incidents of challenging behaviour, for example, asking a child to rest quietly in the sensory room so they might calm down. Restraint is not used in the home, although staff are trained to use this as a last resort to keep children safe. Typically, staff defuse challenging behaviour, for example, by diverting children's attention. A staff member says they manage challenging behaviour by 'guiding a child verbally or by body language'.

The home's complaints process is sound. There are low numbers of complaints, with only one made since the last inspection following an incident in the home. As a result, steps were taken to ensure that the policy about children's use of the kitchen is enforced so that the environment is safe at all times.

The home's recruitment process is mostly robust. For example, checks with the Disclosure and Barring Service are undertaken and two references obtained and verified. Some checks are over and above what is required, for example, observing potential staff with children and ascertaining children's views about their suitability. However, on one staff recruitment file, gaps in employment are not recorded, so it is not entirely possible to account for some periods of time. Also, although applicants are asked to declare any serious illness in the previous two years, steps to ascertain their physical and mental fitness for the work are not taken.

Leadership and management

good

The home benefits from being led by a very experienced manager who has worked in the home since 2009. He is a qualified social worker who holds an appropriate management qualification. He maintains and furthers his skills and knowledge, for example, by working towards achieving a level 5 qualification. People find the manager to be approachable and child-focused. A member of staff says they 'like the management's style - like being listened-to'. Another describes him as 'a very supportive manager who is always present in the home other than training and meetings. He listens to not only staff but also children, parents and carers.'

There is effective partnership working with parents, schools and professionals. Staff communicate effectively with school staff, social workers and families so all are working in children's best interests. A parent says: 'The reviews are important so I can talk to staff about my son's progress, etc., ' and, "Staff always listen to me if I have any concerns. They always tell me if my child is unwell.' A commissioning officer says: 'We have a strong partnership with Discovery Home, which is essential for generating referrals and for the delivery of a safe and effective service.'

Training equips staff with the skills they need. Extensive training in both basic and more specialist areas helps staff meet children's wide-ranging needs, for example, in gastrostomy feeding and epilepsy. This ensures that children with more complex needs can access the service. A commissioning officer says: 'Staff members undertake regular and relevant training to ensure a high level of competence amongst all staff.'

The home is effectively monitored. The Registered Manager checks what goes on, as does an independent visitor. Their checks take into account observations of children using the service as well as parents, placing authorities and staff views. This ensures that good use is made of a range of monitoring activities to develop and improve the service. However, reports by the Registered Manager are not in line with amended regulation.

The Statement of Purpose contains most of the required information. However, information about emergency placements is confusing and implies the home could also be a home for young adults, although this is not what is intended. Also, people are not told about staff experience, so are not fully informed about who is looking after the children.

The Registered Manager has met the two recommendations made at the last inspection. This indicates the home's capacity to improve. Children regularly participate in activities to develop their independence skills. The manager has devised questionnaires to ascertain how activities improve independence skills and evaluates this information every six months. These checks ensure children continue to progress. Also, arrangements are made to monitor children's placement plans and review any changes.

The manager has written a development plan for the service. The staff team does not fully reflect the diversity of those children using the service; however, the manager acknowledges that this is a development point and plans to try to address this when advertising staff vacancies and recruiting staff in future.

What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Good	A service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements.
Adequate	A service that only meets minimum requirements.
Inadequate	A service that does not meet minimum requirements.

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service and to consider how well it complies with the relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the framework of inspection for children's homes.