

Children's homes – Interim inspection

Inspection date	16/02/2017
Unique reference number	SC389781
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	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	Christine Kennet

Inspection date	16/02/2017
Previous inspection judgement	Outstanding
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection This home was judged outstanding at the full inspection. At this interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has sustained effectiveness. The home continues to provide outstanding services to some of the most vulnerable children within its local community. This is helping children to remain living at home with their families and giving family members a break, which allows them to continue caring and is preventing family breakdown. Carefully planned transitions support children to receive short breaks in a specialist resource close to their homes and within their community. The registered manager and staff organise and plan admissions very carefully and at a pace that suits individual children's needs. For example, home and school visits allow children to get to know staff prior to visiting the home and help staff to understand their needs. Children have the opportunity to visit with their parents, and then slowly build up attendance through day visits and overnights stays. This means that when they come for a weekend or holiday break they are already familiar with the staff, the other children and the setting. Children build trusting relationships and staff rarely encounter difficulties with settling them into the home. Children are offered a continued service throughout their childhood. When they approach 18 years, the registered manager and staff work closely with placing authorities to plan a good transition into adult services. A gradual decrease in stays, often beyond the age of 18, ensures that young adults have alternative adult provision prior to services ending. Children's case records are kept up to date by their key workers and promote very positive care. Regular updates from general practitioners about children's health needs ensure that all staff are aware of changes to medication or procedures such as gastrostomy feeding. As this is a short break service, there is no requirement for the provider to have educational reports and placing authority information on file. Despite this, the service exceeds regulation and holds relevant placing authority assessments, statements of special educational needs, education and healthcare plans and any reviews of such plans. This information allows staff to understand children's background needs and provide the best care possible. Minor shortfalls were identified in one care plan regarding one attendance record;	

however, there was no impact for the immediate care of children. Otherwise, record keeping is excellent.

Children make good progress and have the opportunity to experience new activities when they come for short breaks in this home; for example, developing independence skills such as showering and dressing, putting clothes in the washing machine, listening and improving their communication skills. The home employs a cook who provides healthy and nutritious meals. The majority of children attending the service are from the Bangladeshi community and the home ensures that a halal diet is provided to meet their dietary needs. The menu includes other traditional dishes such as pasta as well as rice and curry.

Children are helped to stay calm and their behaviour is managed in a positive way, for example by using a visual calming zone where they can relax and be distracted with staff support. One young person said, 'X [staff member] keeps me calm; if I feel angry I think about X and it helps me to keep calm. Even at school I hear X's voice in my head and it keeps me calm.' A high ratio of staff to children helps keep children well supervised and organised throughout their stay at the home. This prevents incidents from occurring and allows staff to de-escalate potential problems quickly, thus keeping children safe and well cared for.

Leaders and managers continue to manage excellent services. Staff work well as a team and say that they feel supported. One staff member said: 'I'm really happy working here; I have very supportive colleagues.' Staff records show consistent supervision, regular and targeted training and thorough appraisal of their progress and development. The registered manager has a robust approach to recruitment, which is attracting a high calibre of staff. Hard work is rewarded through the offer of continued development. For example, one staff member is currently attending level 5 in leadership and management, despite not being in a senior role.

An independent person visits the home once a month and writes a report, which takes into account the views of professionals and parents. Due to the nature of children's disabilities, their views are not always obvious in reports. Seeking their views requires the independent visitor to build relationships and observe them more, as they cannot always communicate verbally. These reports do not currently include a rigorous and impartial assessment of the home's arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the children.

There have been no significant incidents, no notifications, complaints or restraints since the last inspection. The high level of organisation and staffing prevents incidents and ensures that children remain safeguarded.

Leaders and managers work consistently well with other safeguarding partners. This includes the nurse responsible for children looked after, who regularly visits the home and supports staff with training and advice for complex medical needs. This is a well-organised and forward thinking service, working well in the community, with the host authority and another neighbouring borough. The

company is striving to improve the fulfilment children's needs in the local community via outreach services and a proposed fostering service. The registered manager attends the local authority joint short breaks strategy meetings to think continuously about how to improve the service.

The leaders and managers have responded to the recommendations made at the previous inspection by updating medical information on files and updating the safeguarding policy to reflect the risk of self-harm and prevention of radicalisation.

Information about this children's home

This service is owned and managed by a limited company. The home is registered to provide short breaks services for up to eight children who have a learning or physical disability or who have a visual impairment.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
23/08/2016	Full	Outstanding
03/03/2016	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
25/09/2015	Full	Outstanding
19/03/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness

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

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further, the service should take account of the following recommendations:

- Ensure that any individual appointed to carry out visits to the home as an independent person must make a rigorous and impartial assessment of the home's arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the children in the home's care. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.5)
- Ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective, and clear recording. In relation to the updating of care plans and attendance record sheets. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference that adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This inspection focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

This 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 Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'.

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