

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-breaks service. The home provides residential short breaks, day care and after-school club services for children with learning and physical disabilities. The organisation has a service level agreement with the London Borough of Tower Hamlets.

The home can provide short 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 January 2009. The manager is suitably qualified.

Inspection dates: 25 and 26 January 2023

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	inadequate
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The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: 2 December 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
02/12/2021	Full	Outstanding
05/03/2020	Full	Outstanding
07/02/2019	Full	Outstanding
26/07/2017	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

Weaknesses in leadership and management undermine some children's outcomes and experiences. The registered manager does not ensure that children's short-break care is regularly reviewed. Furthermore, ineffective challenge of placing authorities has resulted in staff not having access to all relevant documents, such as children's updated education, health and care plans.

Effective communication with health professionals ensures that the staff have sufficient knowledge and understanding of the children's health and medical needs. However, the staff's ability to administer medication safely is compromised by the unsuitable location of the medication cabinet.

Children have positive relationships with staff. Warm, playful interactions were observed between children and staff during the inspection. Staff are knowledgeable about the children's individual interests. They have the necessary skills to communicate with children and use various communication methods, including non-verbal ones.

Children have access to a wide range of activities in the home, such as the well-equipped sensory room, baking with staff and playing games. Some parents said that they would like more community-based activities when their children visit the home. Leaders and managers acknowledge this and have plans to develop this.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

Although safeguarding concerns are infrequent, not all serious incidents are managed appropriately. For example, social workers and the local authority designated officer had not been informed of allegations made against staff. This prevented a swift and thorough investigation into the allegations.

Some behaviour management techniques used by staff are restrictive and do not promote children's dignity. Furthermore, the use of measures of discipline and control is not recorded as required. This undermines leaders' and managers' oversight and scrutiny of the behaviour management techniques used in the home.

Shortfalls were found in the recording of serious incidents. For example, the records sampled did not provide a clear chronology of the action taken by staff following the incident. Additionally, children's case records are not always locked away securely in the home.

Risk assessments are detailed and identify known risks well. However, not all assessments adequately address potential risk or reflect changes in the children's

needs. For example, there is no assessment of potential risk when young adults stay at the home with children.

Staff understand when children are not happy and respond swiftly. As a result, the children feel listened to, which improves their welfare and safety.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

The home is led by an experienced and suitably qualified registered manager. However, he does not demonstrate an adequate understanding of current legislation and statutory guidance relevant to children's residential care.

The manager does not ensure that all serious incidents and allegations made against staff are notified to Ofsted as required. Shortfalls in communication with the home's regulator prevent external scrutiny of serious incidents involving children.

Not all areas of the home are well maintained. There was broken bedroom furniture and some areas of the home looked worn and in need of repainting. Some areas of the home look institutional rather than homely, for example, the children's bedroom windows are secured with chains and padlocks to restrict the opening of the window.

Leaders and managers do not ensure that the use of CCTV monitoring in the home is proportionate and regularly reviewed to assess if it is necessary. The use of surveillance in the home undermines children's privacy.

The team consists of permanent staff, sessional workers, students and volunteers who all receive regular supervision. Management oversight of staff training and development is strong and children receive sensitive care from a stable, skilled and experienced staff team.

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards'. The registered person(s) must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff— seek to involve each child's placing authority effectively in the child's care, in accordance with the child's relevant plans; if the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority's or a relevant person's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 5(a)(c)) This relates to ensuring that staff question and challenge practice that does not promote children's dignity. Additionally, ensure that all relevant documents from the placing authority are obtained and children's short-break arrangements are regularly reviewed.	13 March 2023
The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— understand and apply the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff— understand and apply the home's statement of purpose; protect and promote each child's welfare;	13 March 2023

treat each child with dignity and respect; make decisions about the day-to-day arrangements for each child, in accordance with the child's relevant plans, which give the child an appropriate degree of freedom and choice. ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(i)(ii)(iii)(ix)(c)(i)) This relates to ensuring that all measures of control used in the home promote children's dignity and freedom as much as possible. Also, to ensuring that broken furniture is repaired or replaced swiftly.	
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; help each child to understand how to keep safe; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies; that the effectiveness of the home's child protection policies is monitored regularly. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(v)(vi)(vii)(e))	13 March 2023

This relates to ensuring that all serious incidents are reported to the relevant agencies, and records of all incidents are sufficiently detailed. All potential risks should be thoroughly assessed and planned for.	
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose; understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(f)) This relates to ensuring the manager has an adequate understanding of all relevant legislation and statutory guidance relevant to children's residential care and complies with it consistently.	13 March 2023
The registered person must make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the children's home. (Regulation 23 (1)) This relates to the medication cabinet being placed in a suitable location.	13 March 2023
The registered person may only use devices for the monitoring or surveillance of children if— the monitoring or surveillance is for the purpose of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the child concerned, or other children;	13 March 2023

so far as reasonably practicable in the light of the child's age and understanding, the child is informed in advance of the intention to do the monitoring or surveillance; and the monitoring or surveillance is no more intrusive than necessary, having regard to the child's need for privacy. (Regulation 24 (1)(a)(c)(d)) This relates to ensuring that the use of monitoring or surveillance equipment in the home is continuously assessed and used only when necessary to safeguard children.	
The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which— Include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child. Case records must be kept— securely in the children's home during the period when the child to whom the case records relate is accommodated there; and in a secure place after the child has ceased to be accommodated in the home. (Regulation 36 (1)(a) (2)(c)(d)) This relates to ensuring children's case records are securely stored in the home at all times.	13 March 2023
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there; there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(c)(e))	13 March 2023

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that all incidents of control, discipline and restraint are appropriately recorded and subject to systems of regular scrutiny to ensure that their use is fair and proportionate. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.36)

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

Inspectors

Melvin Davies, Social Care Inspector
Marina Tully, Social Care Inspector

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