

SC400901

Registered provider: Break

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home, which is run by a registered charity, provides care for up to four disabled children.

The registered manager left in October 2021. A new manager is in post and is in the process of applying to register with Ofsted.

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: 11 and 12 January 2022

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: 9 September 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
09/09/2019	Full	Good
05/11/2018	Full	Good
09/05/2017	Full	Good
16/03/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children make good progress because of the support and care that the knowledgeable staff and managers provide. For example, the number of incidents for one child has significantly reduced over the past 18 months. This is despite the challenges and uncertainties relating to COVID-19 and the resulting disruption to the child's routines.

Children attend school and make progress. The staff and managers worked exceptionally well with the local school to enable a child to settle, providing transport and additional staffing when the school struggled. The school fully acknowledges that, without this support, the child's education placement would have broken down.

The staff develop strong relationships with the children, their families and professionals. Feedback is excellent. A social worker spoke of the difference that the staff and managers have made for one child. The social worker said, 'His world has just opened up since he has been at the home.' Another social worker said, 'The staff really do look after the children as if they are their own.'

The staff and managers celebrate children's achievements. There are lovely examples of praise adorning the walls. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the children have enjoyed a range of positive experiences. This includes trips out to theme parks and participating in local activities and holidays.

One child has moved into the home since the last inspection. This child's move was managed extremely well. A key worker was allocated, and she visited the child weekly at his residential special school, taking a different member of the home's staff with her on each occasion. This enabled the key worker to get to know the child and for the child to meet some of the staff. One child has moved out of the home since the last inspection. His family and staff at his new home spoke with great positivity about the quality of the move and the support that the staff and manager provided.

The children benefit from a pleasant and relatively homely environment. Children's rooms are tailored to their individual needs and preferences. However, managers have not ensured that placing authorities have provided written consent for the use of monitoring devices.

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

Children are relaxed and comfortable with the staff. The children's behaviour indicates that they feel safe and secure at the home.

Managers and staff support children to develop their understanding of friendships. Staff help children to develop their relationships with their peers at the home. As a result, children tend to get on well with one another and incidents are few. No children have gone missing from the home. Staffing levels make this an unlikely occurrence.

Children's behaviour improves because of the support and care that staff provide. Staff use the good relationships that they have with children, their knowledge of the children and their understanding of de-escalation techniques to help children manage their behaviour well. Consequently, physical interventions are rarely necessary.

Managers ensure that children's risk assessments are kept up to date. Risk assessments offer staff guidance on how to reduce risks and manage incidents. Staff understand and follow these. However, the manager has failed to risk assess arrangements for a staff member to sleep at the home. As a result, it is unclear if potential risks have been considered and mitigated.

Managers refer concerns to safeguarding leads in the local authority. However, on one occasion, safeguarding records had not been updated promptly. As a result, some professionals were not made aware of new information quickly enough. On another occasion, managers did not identify that some actions that had been agreed following an internal investigation were not completed. However, no harm to children resulted from this.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Managers have responded well to the challenges presented by COVID-19. For example, when children had to isolate, staff and managers worked extended hours for prolonged periods to ensure that children felt safe and secure. As a result, the staff and managers significantly reduced the distress felt by children whose routines and structures were severely disrupted.

Managers have a strong knowledge of the children. They understand the children's needs and are mindful of the children's plans.

The management team understands the children's family backgrounds and relationships. Families report good contact and communication from the staff and managers. The staff and managers work hard to build relationships with families. For example, they worked with the parent of one child to enable her to accompany her child on a holiday, supported by the staff. This resulted in a highly positive experience for the parent and child that would not have been possible without the creative, inclusive practice of the staff and managers. The parent said, 'Being able to have a holiday with my child was like a dream come true. We would never have been able to do that with him without the staff. To have had a weekend away with him is amazing.'

Managers are not afraid to challenge professionals on behalf of the children. This has resulted in children receiving appropriate medical and educational support. Those external professionals who have experienced these challenges emphasised the constructive and effective approach of the managers.

Managers monitor the quality of the home weekly. They have acted on weaknesses in the quality of external monitoring and taken steps to improve this.

The staff feel well supported. They are positive about the management arrangements. However, unlike permanent staff, agency staff who have worked a significant number of shifts do not receive any formal supervision from the management team. The home's policies and the statement of purpose do not offer any guidance for managers in this respect. In addition, although managers complete additional safer recruitment interviews with prospective agency staff, they have not consistently ensured that the necessary safe recruitment checks have taken place. Consequently, the safeguards intended by these processes are not always in place.

The staff have access to a range of training courses. Managers monitor the training needs and take-up. Consequently, most staff have accessed important training courses, including safeguarding disabled children. However, two members of staff have not achieved a relevant level 3 qualification within the required time frame.

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
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The registered person may only— employ an individual to work at the children's home; or if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home, if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). The requirements are that— the individual is of integrity and good character; the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform; the individual is mentally and physically fit for the purposes of the work that the individual is to perform; and full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3)(a)(b)(c)(d)) In particular, ensure that agency staff have had the required checks.	13 January 2022
For the purposes of paragraph (3)(b), an individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification if, by the relevant date, the individual has attained— the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (England) (the Level 3 Diploma"); or	12 May 2022

a qualification which the registered person considers to be equivalent to the Level 3 Diploma. The relevant date is— in the case of an individual who starts working in a care role in a home after 1 April 2014, the date which falls 2 years after the date on which the individual started working in a care role in a home; or in the case of an individual who was working in a care role in a home on 1 April 2014, 1 April 2016. The registered person may defer the relevant date if the individual— does not work, or has not worked, in a care role in a home for a prolonged period; or works, or has worked, in a care role in a home on a part time basis. (Regulation 32 (4)(a)(b) (5)(a)(b) (6)(a)(b))	
The registered person must prepare and implement a policy which— is intended to safeguard children accommodated in the children's home from abuse or neglect; and sets out the procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse or neglect. (Regulation 34 (1)(a)(b)) In particular, ensure that actions identified as a result of safeguarding concerns are addressed and that information is shared with the relevant professionals.	13 January 2022

Recommendations

- The registered person should obtain written consent from the placing authority in respect of the use of any monitoring or surveillance. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 16, paragraph 3.16)
- The registered person should ensure that the use of agency staff is carefully monitored and reviewed. Agency staff should receive appropriate supervision and oversight to ensure that children receive continuity of care. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.16)

- The registered person should maintain good employment practice. In particular, managers should adequately risk assess and regularly review arrangements for a staff member to sleep at the home in between their shifts. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)

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: SC400901

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Break

Registered provider address: Break, Schofield House, 1 Spar Road, Norwich, Norfolk NR6 6BX

Responsible individual: Daniel Lummis

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Ashley Hinson, Social Care Inspector

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