

## Children's homes inspection – Full

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| <b>Inspection date</b>             | <b>23/09/2016</b>   |
| <b>Unique reference number</b>     | <b>1183826</b>  |
| <b>Type of inspection</b>          | <b>Full</b>   |
| <b>Provision subtype</b>           | <b>Children's home</b>  |
| <b>Registered provider</b>         | <b>Sunderland Care And Support Limited</b>                                    |
| <b>Registered provider address</b> | <b>Civic Centre, Burdon Road,<br/>Sunderland, Tyne &amp; Wear SR2<br/>7DN</b> |

|                               |                      |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Responsible individual</b> | <b>Philip Foster</b> |
| <b>Registered manager</b>     | <b>Lisa Powton</b>   |
| <b>Inspector</b>              | <b>Debbie White</b>  |

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|---|-----------------------------|
| <b>Inspection date</b>  | <b>23/09/2016</b>           |
| <b>Previous inspection judgement</b>  | <b>N/A</b>                  |
| <b>Enforcement action since last inspection</b>   | <b>None</b>                 |
| <b>This inspection</b>  |                             |
| <b>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</b> | <b>Good</b>                 |
| The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.            |                             |
| <b>How well children and young people are helped and protected</b>                              | <b>Good</b>                 |
| <b>The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers</b>                                     | <b>Requires improvement</b> |

**1183826**

## **Summary of findings**

### **The children's home provision is good because:**

- Children and young people have made progress as a result of their short breaks. They enjoy attending the home and have forged new friendships. Activities are very good.
- Staff speak highly of the children and young people. This creates and develops positive bonds and nurturing relationships. Family support is good, and parents feel included in their child's care.
- Admissions to the home are meticulously planned. Staff have a good knowledge of children's and young people's needs and wishes. Written care planning is very good.
- Children and young people are consulted in line with their age and understanding, and their views and wishes are taken seriously.
- Children and young people are safe, and behaviour is managed positively.
- Children and young people stay in high-quality accommodation that meets their needs. They have full access to the aids and specialist equipment that they need. Partnership working, particularly with healthcare professionals, is good.
- Leaders and managers have made a good start in this newly registered home. They are positively developing the service and they effectively monitor outcomes and areas to improve.
- There are shortfalls in staffing. Most of the current staff team members have transferred from adult services and do not have experience working in a children's home or a level 3 qualification in children and young people. Additionally, not all significant events have been notified to Ofsted.

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

### Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that must be taken so that the registered person/s meet/s 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. They must fulfil the requirements that all individuals have the appropriate experience, qualifications and skills for the work they are to perform. (Regulation 32(1) and (3)(b))          | 31/12/2016 |
| The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if a child protection enquiry involving a child (i) is instigated: or (ii) concludes: or there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40(4)(d) and (e)) | 16/10/2016 |

### Recommendations

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

- Ensure that any staff member in a supervisory role, such as a shift leader, has substantial relevant experience of working in a children's home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.21)

## **Full report**

### **Information about this children's home**

This children's home provides short-breaks care and accommodation for eight children and young people who have a learning and physical disability. The home is operated by a private provider.

### **Recent inspection history**

This is the provider's first inspection since registration.

## Inspection judgements

|   | Judgement grade    |
|---|--------------------|
| <p><b>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</b></p>  | <p><b>Good</b></p> |
| <p>This is the first full inspection since the home registered in April 2016. The home is still in an early stage of development. Consequently, the number of children and young people accessing the home is relatively low. The home currently averages six overnight stays per month, with five children and young people on roll.</p> <p>Children and young people are beginning to develop positive relationships with staff. Parents say that their children love to attend and happily leave their parents to spend time with the staff, other children and young people. Friendships are starting to flourish, which is a very good outcome for a lot of children and young people who otherwise feel socially isolated.</p> <p>A carer said, '[Name] loves it here. There is lots to do and she has made a lovely friendship with another girl. It's really good for [Name] and for us to see her so happy.'</p> <p>Good, individualised care is a strength. A thorough assessment of all children and young people ensures that staff can meet their needs, which are sometimes complex. Written care plans are child focused and highly personalised. Regular reviews and updates ensure that the plans, particularly the healthcare plans, are current and relevant.</p> <p>A carer said, 'The facilities are fantastic, and the security is very good. We know [Name] is safe. Staff are very aware and very thorough. The care is first class. They asked about everything before [Name] came. We wouldn't trust anyone else to look after her. We feel 100% sure she will be well looked after.'</p> <p>Children and young people are consulted about what they would like to achieve, and their views and wishes are very much taken into account. This empowers and respects them. Activities are varied and encourage children and young people to seek new experiences that enrich their well-being.</p> <p>A healthcare professional said, 'I work with one of the children, and she told staff she wanted her target to be how to use the toilet on her own. Staff contacted me for help and advice. This is very good, listening to children. We have worked together to support the child.'</p> <p>A parent said, 'The staff are always friendly and courteous and [Name] really enjoys it. He's not a great smiler but when he goes into the home, he smiles. This is a big message for him. They give [Name] lots of activities and experiences. He doesn't speak, but they talk to him, and ask him things. They are learning about his demeanour, and learning to understand him. They give me a booklet of all that</p> |                    |

[Name] has done. It's marvellous.'

Robustly planned admissions ensure that children and young people make a smooth transition. For most children and young people having short breaks, care is the first time they have stayed away from their home and parents. This is a big step. The registered manager and proposed key worker visit the family home so that children and young people get to know them in familiar surroundings. Following this, staff work with the children and young people in their home to ensure that parents are satisfied that they can look after their children.

A series of gradual introductory visits to the children's home helps children and young people adjust to their new surroundings. This leads to overnight stays and, when the family as a whole feel comfortable, longer-term short-breaks arrangements commence. This level of introduction and support increases the probability that children and young people will settle into the home.

A parent said, 'There was a very thorough induction. We were visited at home so they could see what we do, and then we visited the home. There was a very robust assessment. This helped with a smooth transition. They follow the same routine as home. This helps [Name] sleep. She has never been away from home before. I have never left her anywhere, but I trust them. I'm very impressed. She is doing really well, and I know she is safe and well looked after.'

|   |                 |
|---|-----------------|
|   | Judgement grade |
| <b>How well children and young people are helped and protected</b>  | <b>Good</b>     |
| <p>Children and young people are safe. Staff take safety seriously and understand the potential risks associated with children and young people who have complex needs. Written risk assessments are thorough and regularly reviewed. This promotes children's and young people's welfare.</p> <p>A local safeguarding officer said, 'I have no concerns about the home or the safety of the children.'</p> <p>Staff have received child protection training and attended additional workshops to improve their practice. There have been no children or young people missing and none is at risk from exploitation. There is information available for children and young people about how to complain, and for parents, who often advocate for their children.</p> <p>A parent said, 'I feel very comfortable here, and I can talk to the staff about</p> |                 |

anything. I would talk to them if I wasn't happy. I would never worry about talking to them. They are very focused on my child. I can't praise it enough.'

Behaviour is managed positively with support and guidance. There have been no restraints, and sanctions are not used. The home's ethos is to encourage good behaviour with rewards and praise. This nurtures children and young people.

Children and young people attend their short breaks in a purpose-built, high-quality home. They have the equipment and aids they need, and staff are trained in safe moving and handling. The home is spacious and very nicely furnished and decorated throughout. Individual bedrooms have ensuite facilities, which promote children's and young people's privacy and dignity.

Regular environmental and health and safety checks protect children and young people, staff and visitors from known hazards. Regular checks and annual servicing of all utilities, and all visitors being checked and vetted keeps children and young people safe. All new staff undergo a thorough recruitment process that includes safety checks. This ensures that children and young people are cared for by suitable adults.

|   |                             |
|---|-----------------------------|
|   | Judgement grade             |
| <b>The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers</b>   | <b>Requires improvement</b> |
| <p>The registered manager has been in post since March 2016. Prior to this, she was a registered manager in another shorts-breaks children's home. She has the appropriate skills, experience and qualifications to undertake her role and is a strong manager.</p> <p>The registered manager has a very good knowledge of the children and young people and their needs. She is actively involved in looking at new referrals and she carries out all the initial assessments. This ensures that she is satisfied that children and young people are appropriately placed and the home is operating within the statement of purpose.</p> <p>The registered manager fully advocates a multi-disciplinary approach to caring for children and young people. Prior to any new admissions, she meets with the parents, visits the children's and young people's schools and meets with all the linked healthcare professionals, including the children's and young people's paediatric consultant. This inter-agency working provides children and young</p> |                             |



people with a holistic care plan that is robust and consistent with other important agencies involved in the children's and young people's care.

The paediatric consultant said, 'I have been involved with the charity who set up the home for some time. Since the home was taken over, we have had very good engagement. I have monthly meetings with the manager and staff to discuss the children. Things have definitely improved with the new provider. They want to improve outcomes for children. The home also links with the community nurses. They communicate regularly, and the nurses provide training. I have very good communication with the home. They have my mobile number if they are concerned about any of the children.'

A visiting professional said, 'The staff are good and knowledgeable. I was asked to do an assessment of the home. It is an excellent resource. I have never met such a lovely group of staff. I go into lots of establishments and this is the best staff team I have ever met.'

Leaders and managers are regularly monitoring the home and they actively oversee staff development and day-to-day childcare practice. As this is a new service, there have been additional staff workshops to promote team building and consistency. The registered manager audits the service and outcomes for children and she is aware of the home's strengths and weaknesses.

A good example of the registered manager addressing a weakness was her response to a drug administration error, involving a child who was given the wrong dose of a medication. The registered manager carried out a full and thorough investigation into what happened and why. The staff member involved admitted her mistake straight away, which shows that the home operates an open and honest culture. Local safeguarding agencies were involved and they expressed that they were happy with how the matter was dealt with and the measures put in place to reduce the risk of further errors. This shows that the registered manager took the incident very seriously and learned valuable lessons to improve the safe administration of medication.

While the registered persons took all reasonable measures to address the medication error, they failed to keep Ofsted fully updated. The registered manager forwarded a notification following the initial error. However, a failure to send an additional notification to advise of the involvement of local safeguarding agencies and subsequent strategy meetings is a significant shortfall. Failing to keep Ofsted fully informed of significant events has the potential to compromise children's and young people's welfare.

Feedback regarding the staff team is positive. Parents and the professionals consulted during this inspection were highly complimentary.

Parents commented, 'I have no worries leaving [Name] here. I know she is safe. She is forming good relationships and she is comfortable. She beams when we come here. I know there is always someone there to look after her. The staff bend over backwards to help and support us. I can't think of anything wrong. It's a

brilliant place.'

Another parent commented, 'It's outstanding in my eyes. I never wanted respite and part of me hoped [Name] wouldn't like it, but he loves it. The staff are very thorough and I am comfortable leaving him there. I would highly recommend it to anyone. I am a pushy mam, and my son's needs are my priority. I totally, totally, totally trust the staff. This is the best place ever.'

There are, however, some staffing concerns arising from this inspection. Most of the staff employed transferred to the children's home from adult care homes that are also operated by this provider. While the staff have many useful transferrable skills, particularly in delivering healthcare, they have not previously worked with children and young people. Nor have they yet completed a level 3 qualification in children and young people. This has not overtly impacted on the children and young people currently accessing the service, but failure to recruit suitably experienced and trained staff increases the likelihood of childcare practice being compromised.

## What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of children looked after is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place. However, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or that result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

## **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 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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