

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	19/12/2016
Unique reference number	SC034900
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered manager	Joanne Wright
Inspector	Tracy Murty

Inspection date	19/12/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Improved effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Outstanding
The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceeds the standards of good. The actions of the home contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help, protection and care.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Outstanding
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Outstanding

SC034900

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is outstanding because:

- The care and support young people receive in this short break setting is exceptional. It provides young people and their families with very high quality experiences and support. Parents and carers refer to this setting as a 'lifeline' and state that it provides their children with life-enhancing experiences, which they would not be able to access elsewhere.
- Planning for new admissions to this service is excellent. Staff and managers take considerable time and effort to ensure that young people and their families feel secure and confident about accessing the service. Feedback from parents, carers and professionals is consistently positive about how well new admissions are dealt with. This leads to very successful and positive experiences for young people and their families.
- The health needs of all young people receive full and detailed attention during their short break stays. A dedicated nurse is located within the home, providing training and support to staff on a daily basis. This ensures that young people have holistic health care support from suitably trained and competent staff at all times.
- Education is seen as a priority by staff and managers. They proactively support young people to engage in education and attend all relevant meetings. They ensure that education targets are incorporated into their own plans. This provides consistency for young people and enables them to make progress in both settings.
- A key strength of this setting relates to the extensive joint working undertaken with local community services and resources. Managers and staff have forged exceptionally close working relationships over time. This has resulted in young people being fully integrated into the local and wider community, which really enhances their life experiences and improves their confidence and sense of belonging.
- Research informs all areas of practice within this setting. There is a commendable commitment by managers to ensuring that staff receive high quality training and development opportunities. Learning is used to inform the care and support provided to young people and there is clear evidence of how this has improved their quality of life.
- The range of social activities provided to young people is exceptional and reflects the staff team's total commitment to ensuring that all young people have stimulating and fun experiences.

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home is registered to provide short breaks for up to eleven children and young people at any one time. It is owned and run by the local authority. The home provides short breaks for children and young people with learning disabilities and physical disabilities.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
27/01/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
23/09/2015	Full	Outstanding
27/03/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
15/09/2014	Full	Good

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
<p>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</p>	<p>Outstanding</p>
<p>Young people love coming for their short break stays. Parents, carers and professionals consistently praise the staff team and managers for their total commitment to ensuring that young people have a highly positive experience. Feedback from parents includes: 'They are our second family and we could not imagine life without this home now for our child.' For some families, making the decision for their child to attend short breaks is not easy. All of those parents spoken with during this inspection spoke of the life-changing impact of their children coming to this home. Young people really look forward to coming, they form friendships and are very well-cared for.</p> <p>A key strength of this home is in the extensive range of social activities and opportunities it provides for young people. These include taking young people for their first trip to the seaside, regular holidays and involvement in art projects at local galleries. Young people have been supported to undertake work experience in a hotel this year. They have taken part in several fund-raising events for local and national charitable organisations. They have been consulted with in relation to national issues relating to children and young people with disabilities. Their engagement with the local community is extensive and is testament to how well managers and staff work to provide an outstanding service for young people.</p> <p>Young people's health needs are extremely well met and there is excellent joint working with health colleagues. A nurse is located in the home, providing training and support to the staff team on health-related issues. This provides young people with high quality care and support in relation to their holistic health needs. Staff present as highly competent and skilled in relation to meeting the healthcare needs of all young people. Parents and carers report total confidence in how medication is administered and stored. There is excellent management oversight and tracking of all staff training needs, leading to a staff team who have the skills, competence and confidence to meet young peoples' complex health needs at all times.</p> <p>Staff set high expectations for young people and act as exceptionally strong advocates for them. They set targets for each young person, linking these with any relevant education targets. They celebrate all achievements made by young people. Several young people have been nominated recently for a 'Big It Up' award locally. They attended a presentation ceremony with their parents. Photographs of this event reflect the huge pride felt by young people at receiving their awards. A parent also commented on the nomination letter, completed by a staff member for her son. She said that it reduced her to tears, as it was so positive about him. In her words: 'It showed that he really matters to the staff team and is valued.'</p>	

Young people continue to attend their own schools during their short break stays. There is extremely close partnership working between both settings. A Head Teacher for one local school praised the staff team and managers for their excellent communication and support of young people. Staff attend education review meetings, present detailed reports and have daily contact to ensure that information is shared between both settings. Staff visit schools on a regular basis, to gather and share information about young people. This assists with planning for the care needs of young people and ensures a consistent approach. Such attention to detail was praised by one placing social worker, who said that the staff team fully consider the emotional and behavioural needs of young people.

Parents and carers also receive excellent support from the staff team. Staff show real insight into the need to support parents and carers outside of the short break setting. Outreach work is provided, with home visits being made to advise and discuss such areas as sleep patterns and behaviour. Parents and carers really value this additional support. As one parent stated: 'The staff are amazing. They go above and beyond their roles to ensure that not only is our child well supported and making progress during their short break stay, but that we get help to continue their progress when they come home to us.'

Some commendable work has been done to support young people making the transition from this service to adult accommodation and day care services since the last inspection. Transition planning has been hugely detailed for relevant young people, undertaken over a long period of time with all involved agencies. Social story books have been compiled with some young people, to prepare them for the move. Some young people also regularly attend social events with a local adult day care provision. This provides them with opportunities to make friends, socialise and to familiarise themselves with new staff for when they move to adult day care. The staff team display total commitment to not only ensuring that young people have a positive short break experience, but that they plan for their future needs.

Young people learn and develop new skills during their time at this home. One young person recently worked with the home's maintenance person on work experience. Others have been involved in work experience placements at a hotel. Young people have been involved in the interview processes for new staff at the home. They have also been fully consulted with about redecoration plans. They have a strong and powerful voice in this home.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Outstanding

All parents, carers and agencies spoken with during this inspection stated how safe young people are during their stays. There is a strong culture of ensuring the safety and well-being of young people at all times. This is achieved by excellent training and development of staff, robust risk assessments, and strong multi-agency working. Staff receive regular safeguarding training, with a specific focus on children with disabilities. They display a detailed awareness of the vulnerabilities of disabled children. High staffing levels provide vigilant monitoring and supervision of young people, both within the home and when taking part in external activities and holidays.

Risk assessments for each young person reflect their current and changing needs. Each young person has a key worker, who has responsibility for ensuring that assessments and plans are regularly reviewed and updated. Daily staff handover meetings fully consider the needs of each young person coming in for a short break stay. Staff discuss every aspect of the young person's care needs and how these will be met. Such attention to detail reduces the risk of harm to young people. There is a strong learning culture evident within the home. Staff and managers take prompt action following any significant incidents and learn from them. They constantly strive to improve the safety and welfare of young people and fully consult with involved agencies to ensure safety is paramount at all times.

There is a positive approach to behaviour management evident within the staff team. This is partly attributable to the excellent training provided to staff. Intensive interaction training has been provided that has clearly informed how they consider young peoples' behaviours. Staff consider how any concerning or potentially risky behaviours displayed by a young person reflect their attempts to communicate their feelings in a non-verbal manner. Staff then adapt their responses to young people to better respond to their presenting behaviours. Over time, this has led to a noticeable reduction in concerning behaviours and enabled young people to self-regulate their behaviour.

The use of physical intervention is minimal and only used when all other de-escalation techniques have not been successful. Records of restraints reflect the competence of the staff involved and also reflect the views of young people. The use of sanctions is also minimal within this home. When used, sanctions tend to relate to concerns about a young person's presenting behaviour and have included brief periods away from their peers. This assists young people to regulate any concerning or dangerous behaviours. Sanctions are reasonable and proportionate.

Staff and managers work closely and proactively with relevant agencies to consider the safety of young people. Officers from the local police force visited the home earlier this year to meet with young people. Young people were able to meet police officers, spend time sitting in the police van and learning about the role of the police. Such experiences will further support young people to gain an insight into how to manage their own safety over time.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Outstanding
<p>The manager is registered with Ofsted and is suitably qualified and experienced. An additional manager is in the process of making an application to Ofsted to become registered. He has worked at this home for many years. Assistant managers support the two home managers and provide excellent management and oversight to the staff team. Managers and staff present as highly competent, skilled and passionate about their roles in improving the experiences and outcomes for young people receiving a short break. One member of staff came in to meet with the inspector during this inspection on a non-working day. They wanted to share information about the work they do with young people and clearly love their role and the difference they make to young people’s lives. All staff display a similar passion and commitment.</p> <p>Several staff have worked in the home for many years. They feel highly supported by managers and the responsible individual. They report feeling extremely valued and that they have a positive say in how the home is run. They receive regular and highly detailed supervision and annual appraisals of their work. One member of staff praised the quality of supervision, stating that it challenged them and set them clear targets throughout the year. Individual targets set for staff link in with the home’s improvement plan. This enables staff to feel fully included in how the home is run and operated.</p> <p>Managers have a clear and commendable learning ethos. Regular team meetings and development days are used to discuss research, which is then used to inform practice. One of the home’s managers is currently studying for a Master’s Degree in Autism and is using this to inform developments within the home by undertaking detailed analysis of practice. One of the assistant managers has set up a system of sharing relevant research and development information with staff on a regular basis. There have been several occasions where outside speakers have been invited to give presentations on disability and Asperger’s Syndrome. Several parents of young people have also been invited to attend these events with the staff team. Such innovative practices are worthy of wider dissemination and reflect the total commitment of managers to continually improving outcomes and progress for young people.</p> <p>Some young people and parents have also been involved in the selection and recruitment of new staff for the home. Young people have been supported to devise questions for candidates, and one parent recently sat on an interview panel. The home’s improvement plan also includes clear sections for the involvement and engagement of young people and parents/carers. The inclusion and active</p>	

involvement of both groups is seen as a priority by managers and reflects the learning culture and ethos of this home.

Management monitoring and oversight of all aspects of how the home is run is excellent. Managers produce a summary of young peoples' outcomes and progress every three months. This provides detailed information about work done and achievements made. This year, the home has launched a website. This provides information on the staff team and has inspection reports for parents, young people and others to access. It has been very well received, with one parent stating how they use it with their child on a regular basis to look at staff details and to learn about the services provided. Again, this reflects a management team who continually strive to make improvements and to fully engage young people and their families. It also reflects the very open and transparent approach this service has to the work it does. Managers welcome feedback and demonstrate a total commitment to making improvements. One of the managers commented: 'We constantly try and think of ways to improve what we do, we want the very best for our young people and their families.'

All agencies and professionals spoken with during this inspection had only positive things to say about the care, support and services provided. None could think of anything that the home could do to improve and all commented on the total commitment and dedication of staff and managers. As one social worker commented: 'I work with a lot of similar settings and this one is at the top of my list for quality, commitment and dedication. What they do is amazing and means so much to the young people and their families. It is a lifeline for them.'

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 looked after children 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 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 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 who 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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