

Children's homes – Interim inspection

Inspection date	22/03/2017
Unique reference number	SC036804
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Gateshead Council
Registered provider address	Civic Centre, Regent Street, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear NE8 1HH
Responsible individual	Elaine Devaney
Registered manager	Laura McNeill
Inspector	Michael Dack

Inspection date	22/03/2017
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	
<p>This home was judged outstanding at the last full inspection. At this interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has improved effectiveness.</p> <p>The registered manager and staff are highly committed to ensuring that all children who come for short breaks are provided with a level of care that is enhanced by the preparation that takes place before their arrival. The children who regularly attend are matched accordingly with familiar faces, so that friendships are developed. New admissions to the home are meticulously planned, allowing children and their parents to feel supported and reassured at their own pace. One young person came for a tea visit, on which his birthday was celebrated with a party at the home. This enabled the young person to enjoy all aspects of the home, including the beautiful well-equipped garden and especially the trampoline. The spacious and well-maintained building and grounds ensured that the young person, when a little overwhelmed, was able with staff support to find a quiet area. The environment and staff's attention to detail provide children with an experience that is tailored to their individual needs. Their needs and wishes are respected and staff are supportive and responsive to every aspect of their stays.</p> <p>Monitoring systems in the staff office have been reviewed, re-organised and colour-coded to improve upon accessibility. Risk assessment documentation is more robust, due to improvements made since the last inspection. All improvements have the sole purpose of ensuring that information is easily accessible and understood, avoiding, if possible, duplication. This enables staff to have information quickly and therefore they are able to spend more time with the children, ensuring that their short break is always the best it can be. A member of staff said:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">We are always well organised and prepare before children come in. If prepared, you therefore work better with them. A courtesy call is made the night before a child comes for their visit. When a child comes in they are your sole focus.</p> <p>Quality care is provided through preparation and good communication.</p> <p>Consultation processes with professionals, parents/carers and the children are robust. This process is very much enhanced by the level of communication which</p>	

can be observed on an individual basis through the one-to-one work with children. In addition, meetings take place enabling children to make choices about meals and activities. There is also a formal forum, facilitated independently of the staff at the home. A local authority participation officer minutes the meeting, which is attended by a group of the children who access the short breaks. This forum agenda is supported by a questionnaire that is completed in the children's meeting. Children are empowered by the staff, which enables them to be valued and respected.

The bedrooms are colour-coded and again meticulously prepared for the individual child arriving. Menus are planned in accordance with the group coming in and their likes and dislikes, which are also recorded in their 'All about me' booklets. These are completed prior to their first stopover and reviewed with their key-worker thereafter. The cook said:

I have a food questionnaire to determine exactly what they like and in addition we have theme nights. I think the 'Spanish' night is the favourite. I always consider the children coming in and their tastes. We also provide taster sessions for the children which they ask about enthusiastically.

Choice is respected and encouragement with respect to healthy eating and introducing new tastes is apparent. Many of the children who access the service have specific dietary needs and are influenced by tastes and textures of foods associated with their individual needs.

A social worker responsible for a number of children who access the home was able to state:

The staff remain consistent; it is an excellent resource. Children are always treated as individuals. They are shown lots of respect and they are exceptionally well cared for and happy; absolutely fantastic.

Children develop their independence centred on their self-care skills and their freedom of choice is promoted through various formal and informal forums. The children's self-esteem and confidence develop throughout their time at the home. Relationships are maintained and memories are created. The registered manager and staff plan events throughout the festive seasons and invitations are sent to all current and previous children and their families. An Easter party is next on the agenda. Photographs from the Christmas event showed the full involvement of staff, children, families and most importantly the happy and excited faces of the children who are past and present visitors to the home. This inclusivity enhances and develops positive memories and a sense of belonging and well-being.

There were no requirements or recommendations made at this inspection.

Information about this children's home

The home provides short breaks for up to five children or young people who have physical disabilities and/or learning disabilities. It is operated by a local authority.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
29/11/2016	Full	Outstanding
29/03/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
29/09/2015	Full	Outstanding
11/12/2014	Interim	Improved effectiveness

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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