

## Children's homes – Interim inspection

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>24/03/2017</b>
<b>Unique reference number</b>	<b>SC059203</b>
<b>Type of inspection</b>	<b>Interim</b>
<b>Provision subtype</b>	<b>Children's home</b>
<b>Registered person</b>	<b>Northumberland County Council</b>
<b>Registered person address</b>	<b>County Hall, Morpeth, Northumberland NE61 2EF</b>
<b>Responsible individual</b>	<b>John Young</b>
<b>Registered manager</b>	<b>Susan Ghulam</b>
<b>Inspector</b>	<b>Michael Dack</b>

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>24/03/2017</b>
<b>Previous inspection judgement</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>Enforcement action since last inspection</b>	<b>None</b>
<b>This inspection</b>	
<b>The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection</b>	
<p>This home was judged <b>outstanding</b> at the full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judges that it has <b>improved effectiveness</b>.</p> <p>The registered manager and staff have ensured that the delivery of service has continued to move forward. All care plans are enhanced by the use of Communicate In Print, a desktop publishing program that brings a range of benefits for the children in the home by providing a visual aid to communication. 'My achievements', a visual representation of each child's short break, which is put together with a member of staff, provides parents and carers with an opportunity to share the positive experiences their child has had during their weekend stay. This promotes children's confidence and well-being, and strengthens relationships with adults and care-givers. Children are empowered at all times to make choices and decisions in their plans and preparations for their weekend stay. A member of staff said: 'The children love to read them to you and it encourages them to make their own choices and to understand their plans and what they enjoy.'</p> <p>The parents and carers information leaflet has been updated in consultation with the staff team. It now incorporates safeguarding processes, ensuring that information the parents receive is relevant and up to date. The safeguarding section was added so that parents were made more aware of the home's policy in the case of unexplained bruises or marks. This helps to maintain the trusting relationship that exists between staff, parents and carers, while ensuring that the safeguarding of children is paramount. This is a positive example of ensuring that transparency is evident in all communication and consultation with parents. Trust is at the forefront of relationships, and of the care that is being provided for the children who are accessing short breaks. The registered manager has met with the training department to establish further safeguarding training for the staff team, which is delivered by a paediatric consultant. This is a further example of good leadership, ensuring that knowledge and skills are constantly being reviewed and improved on. Children are provided with a safe environment that is supported and provided through a skilled and competent staff team.</p> <p>In March 2017 the service was presented with a 'Healthy Homes Award'. It is thought that this is the only such award given to a residential childcare setting, reflecting its high standards. The inspector reviewed the supplementary information pertaining to the award, which reported on the positive quality of</p>	

evidence that was provided by the service. A number of parents were very complimentary during conversations with the inspector about the short breaks, and described how happy their children are while attending. One parent said: 'I am very happy with the service.' Another parent said: 'Absolute godsend. The service is fantastic. They do lots of independent skills work with my daughter.' A third parent said: 'Fabulous. He has not been coming long. I was not aware how good it would be and I wish he had been coming much earlier. He loves it. As a parent it is really good that there is somewhere like this for him to come.'

The children arrived while the inspector was at the home, and they were all very excited and happy. They enthusiastically went off with the staff to put their bags in their rooms and prepare for the children's meeting. The staff are very child-focused. They are very attentive to the needs of the children, and this was observed in the preparation for the weekend, carried out meticulously in consultation with the children. Activities and menus for the weekend are discussed and agreed on prior to the weekly Friday trip to the supermarket. The children are empowered to be involved in purchasing food, and in associated aspects of preparation, utilising these experiences as part of their independence development.

As part of the children's meeting, a picture board is compiled which provides a visual cue to all aspects of their stay. This includes details of which staff will be on duty, what activities are taking place and menus during their short break. This develops confidence and decision-making with regard to children's specific choices, ensuring that their self-esteem and well-being is promoted at all times. The positivity and smiles of the children were infectious while they were going through this planning stage of their weekend. The registered manager, in addition to providing thorough planning of the weekend breaks, advocates strongly for the children in respect of their health and educational needs. Recently, children with issues relating to food intake and dental requirements have benefited from the ability to engage and work in partnership with parents and health professionals. At the last inspection, the registered manager was making every attempt to provide a young adult who has learning disabilities with a paid role at the home. This person was successful in their application and now, with support from staff, works at the home. This displays practice in equality that can provide aspirations for other young people, who attend for short breaks, in their quest for employment later in life.

There were no requirements or recommendations made at the previous inspection, and none are made at this inspection.

## Information about this children's home

The home is run by a local authority and is registered for the short-break care and accommodation of up to six children or young people who have learning disabilities.

## Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/11/2016	Full	Outstanding
24/03/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
09/10/2015	Full	Outstanding
27/03/2015	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 who 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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