

SC033152

Registered provider: North Lincolnshire Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The local authority maintained children's home provides short breaks for children and young people who have physical and learning disabilities.

Inspection dates: 12 to 13 October 2017

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 26 January 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: Outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection:

None

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is outstanding because:

- Children and young people benefit from exceptional care and support that fully addresses their diverse needs.
- Partnership work with parents and other agencies is of a high quality and makes children's and young people's short breaks very successful.
- Children and young people have excellent experiences, some of which would not be possible without the home.
- The care and physical environment is bespoke and empowers children and young people to feel safe and secure.
- Safeguarding arrangements are robust and comprehensive. Parents are confident that their children are in safe hands.
- Leadership and management are inspirational. All staff are dedicated to the aims and values of the service.
- The quality of teamwork is very high. Staff are trained well, highly competent and advocate strongly for all children and young people.
- The voice of children and young people is really strong, even when there are difficulties communicating verbally.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
26/01/2017	Full	Outstanding
19/07/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
14/03/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
26/01/2016	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

This is a home that very strongly puts children, young people and their families at the heart of what it does. Planning is meticulous, not only with admissions but also in staff training and providing a safe, nurturing and fun environment.

Staff gradually introduce children and young people to the setting at their own pace. The high level of attention to making short breaks successful helps children and young people settle in and enjoy overnight stays quicker than expected.

Staff have an exceptionally strong skill set in communicating with children and young people. Staff are adept at using a variety of strategies, and there is comprehensive evidence that the voice of children and young people is pivotal. Children and young people develop their communication skills and know that staff respond positively to their wishes and feelings. Even those children and young people who struggle to communicate experience very positive responses from staff. A stakeholder commented, 'There are high levels of non-instructed advocacy.'

All children and young people make very good progress with their social skills, behaviour and independence. Specific goals are worked towards, and staff regularly run independence programmes. This has an exceptional impact on children and young people's development and gives them a strong sense of achievement. Parents are extremely satisfied, and feedback about the children's home and their experiences include comments such as, 'It is second to none', 'They take all his needs into consideration', 'Staff help with strategies at home', 'They can do no more to make her happy', 'He has developed skills and independence he would not get at home'.

Children and young people enjoy a homely, well-equipped environment. There are plenty of toys and games, a sensory room and large garden. Children and young people have a lot of fun during their short breaks. The manager ensures that children and young people have the aids and adaptations that they need. Staff personalise bedrooms for each short break to help children and young people feel comfortable.

Parents remain responsible for their children's health and education. The staff have well-developed relationships with these agencies, ensuring that there is a strong, integrated approach to education, health and care. In-house care plans and objectives are agreed with parents and tailored to children and young people's needs. Links with health professionals are particularly strong, and this has supported children and young people who have complex health needs to benefit from having short breaks.

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

Children and young people feel safe and trust the staff. Staff are skilled in giving children and young people stable and uniform expectations and routines. The high levels of

support and sensitivity to individual needs help children and young people feel emotionally secure and happy. Parents said they are confident that their children are in safe hands and would definitely recommend the service to others.

Staff manage risks very effectively. All children and young people have highly personalised risk assessments. Staff review these regularly in preparation for each short break. All pertinent information is taken account of, and this includes preparing the physical environment, bedrooms, communal areas, and toys and games before children and young people arrive. Risks are fully taken into account in matching children and young people who have short breaks together. This gives them a consistent and predictable environment which they can share together safely.

Staffing levels are high and the manager will increase them further if needed, to keep all children and young people free from harm. This allows for close observation and supervision of children and young people. Staff monitor their behaviour, mood, and know their whereabouts at all times.

Staff are trained, with regular refreshers and clinical guidance, to support children and young people with any challenging behaviour. There is a comprehensive approach taking into account children's and young people's communication needs, disabilities, levels of attachment and developmental delay. Consequently, incidents are rare and staff only physically intervene as a last resort to keep people safe. This is done with minimal levels of intervention and there is robust management oversight, ensuring that practice is appropriate.

All safeguarding concerns about a child or young person's welfare are promptly shared with parents and other agencies. The manager has improved the process for tracking concerns, which is contributing to the robust protection of children and young people.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The registered manager has a long and successful history of managing the home, which she has done for 10 years. She is amply qualified and experienced. She develops her knowledge and skills by working closely with other agencies to give children and young people the best care possible. Senior staff are competent to deputise in her absence, and the whole staff team is very organised and cohesive. All the staff have an excellent understanding of the aims of the home, and they all contribute to making it a success for the benefit of children and young people. Teamwork is very strong, supportive and inclusive. Consequently, morale and job satisfaction is high, which makes for a very positive experience for children and young people.

Regular supervision, support and training are enhanced with advice and guidance from specialist nurses and clinicians. This ensures that children and young people who have very complex health needs and disabilities receive exceptional care and support. The manager and staff are always ready to reflect on what they do, and to learn from each other and partner agencies. Equally, the contributions that staff make to multi-agency

meetings about children and young people's experiences and progress are invaluable to care planning and decision making. Children and young people really are at the heart of the service.

Staff turnover is low, which gives children and young people stability as well as helping maintain strong collaboration with parents and other agencies. This includes appropriate and competent challenge when advocating for children and young people. Families, and health and social care professionals all spoke highly of the home. Their feedback about the staff included comments such as, 'Staff are professional and informative at meetings', 'They are always welcoming', 'They really understand the children and young people', 'They always follow recommendations and input own ideas', 'They are very good to work with'.

Care plans and record keeping are comprehensive, accurate and extensive. They reflect the diverse needs of children and young people allowing the reader to understand their individuality. Care programmes and risk management strategies are detailed and clearly recorded. This contributes to the exemplary, consistent staff practice.

There is excellent monitoring of the standards of care by the manager and by an external independent visitor. These processes include regular consultation with parents and stakeholders, and take good account of the views and needs of children and young people. The manager is committed to improving the service in any way and uses her six-monthly service reviews to good effect. She responds promptly to any recommendations made by the independent visitor.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and 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.

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: SC033152

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: North Lincolnshire Council, Pittwood House, Ashby Road, Scunthorpe, North Lincolnshire DN16 1AB

Responsible individual: Darren Chaplin

Registered manager: Lesley McKenzie

Inspector

Simon Morley, social care inspector

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