

# 1243962

Registered provider:

Interim inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This home provides short-break placements for children who have severe learning disabilities and associated complex health needs. The service provides overnight short-break care for up to six children at a time.

The home is operated by a Combined Health Care NHS Trust. The manager was registered with Ofsted in November 2017. She has recently completed a level 5 diploma in leadership and management for residential childcare and is awaiting her certificate.

**Inspection date:** 28 February 2019

**Judgement at last inspection:** requires improvement to be good

**Date of last inspection:** 15 May 2018

**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

This home was judged requires improvement to be good at the last full inspection. At the interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has improved effectiveness.

At the last inspection in May 2018, eight requirements and four recommendations were raised. At this inspection, the inspector found that six requirements and four recommendations have been met. One requirement remains within the timescale for completion. For the remaining requirement, work is in progress.

Improvements in the use of communication aids are helping children and young people to understand their care better, and to express their views and opinions about their short-stay experiences. Most staff are now trained in Makaton and staff routinely use

signing, pictures and communication boards to communicate with children and young people in their preferred style. The children's guide has been updated with pictures to help children and young people to better understand what they can expect during their short break.

There have been significant improvements to the home environment. Sofas and blinds have been replaced. New bedroom doors and brightly coloured wardrobes help to make children's and young people's bedrooms more inviting. The garden area has had a major refit and now offers an attractive and accessible space for children and young people to enjoy the outdoors.

Staff work well with parents and carers. Relationships with teachers have improved and staff now make regular visits to schools attended by children and young people. Links are now stronger with the learning disability nurse and the occupational therapy team. This increased partnership approach means that children and young people are supported to make progress during their short breaks.

An increase in staffing, additional play resources and greater attention to planning mean that children and young people now have greater opportunities to take part in activities within the home and in the local community. This has helped to broaden children's and young people's experiences and helps them to develop confidence and skills. For example, a visit to a farm has helped one young person to increase his vocalisation.

The registered manager has acted to ensure that children's and young people's records now hold key information from the placing authority. This helps to ensure that children's and young people's short-break plans are well informed. The addition of pictures into children's and young people's plans means that they are now child-friendly and more accessible.

The registered manager has developed her workforce plan. This has enabled her to secure training for her staff. Consequently, staff have received additional training in sensory awareness and autism spectrum disorder. This increased knowledge has had a positive impact on their practice. One member of staff told the inspector, 'Autism training helps me to think about why children might be behaving in a particular way.' Staff have also received training to increase their understanding of children's and young people's vulnerabilities to child sexual exploitation and they have received guidance on keeping children and young people safe online, especially when accessing social media sites. This additional training has helped staff to be increasingly aware and alert to the risks that children and young people can face, especially given their vulnerabilities.

The registered manager has made some improvement to the vetting of new staff. This includes ensuring that all staff are registered with the Disclosure and Barring Update Service. However, the level of scrutiny carried out on recruitment files has not picked up that one member of staff has a gap in their employment history. Also, the manager has not secured verification of the reasons why staff's previous employment ended for staff who have previously worked with children and/or vulnerable adults. This reduces the level of scrutiny needed to ensure that safe recruitment is effective.

Nine members of staff who do not hold a level 3 diploma or an equivalent qualification are now working towards achieving the level 3 diploma in residential childcare.

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement            |
|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| 15/05/2018      | Full            | Requires improvement to be good |

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

### Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet 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 may only employ an individual to work at the children's home if full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (3)(d))   | 03/05/2019 |
| The registered person must ensure that any individual who works in the home in a care role has achieved the appropriate qualification by the relevant date. The relevant date is, in the case of an individual who starts working in a care role in a home after 1st April 2014, the date which falls 2 years after the date on which the individual started working in a care role in a home; or in the case of an individual who was working in a care role in a home on 1st April 2014, 1st April 2016. (Regulation 32 (5)(a)(b)) | 29/11/2019 |

## 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.

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.

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:** 1243962

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider address:** North Staffordshire Combined Health Care and NHS Trust, Lawton House, Bellringer Road, Stoke-on-Trent ST4 8HH

**Responsible individual:** Alastair Forrester

**Registered manager:** Tracey Flanagan

## Inspector

Alison Cooper, social care inspector

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