

SC036804

Registered provider: Gateshead Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home provides short breaks for up to six children and young people who may have physical disabilities and/or learning disabilities. It is operated by a local authority. The manager has been registered with Ofsted since 2017.

Inspection dates: 3 to 4 December 2019

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **outstanding**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **outstanding**

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: 4 December 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
04/12/2018	Full	Outstanding
30/01/2018	Full	Outstanding
22/03/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
29/11/2016	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children and young people receive excellent, individualised care that meets their complex needs. They are welcomed on their arrival for their stay with warmth. Staff are nurturing and highly attentive to individual needs throughout the stay. Relationships between children, young people and staff were observed to be excellent.

Information is shared between home, school and the service prior to each stay. This ensures continuity of care practice from home or school to the short-break service. As a result, children and young people settle quickly and enjoy their stay.

Well-planned routines, boundaries and the identification of particular staff to work with individual children and young people help them to enjoy their stay. This helps to reduce any anxiety that may occur. Their confidence, resilience and emotional well-being are promoted throughout their stay.

Children and young people develop independence skills, often linked to personal care where able. This ensures that they are provided with opportunities to learn new skills and develop a sense of well-being. Children and young people's achievements and recognition for positive behaviour are rewarded with treats and certificates. This improves their self-esteem and helps them to feel valued.

Christmas celebrations were well on their way and highly visible during this inspection visit. There were inventive ways of involving children in creative activities, for example decorating home-baked cakes in the form of Christmas trees and snowmen. The staff have designed homemade advent calendars with each day linked to a Christmas activity. As a result, children are engaged in creative, fun festivities which promote their well-being.

Social workers and families spoke highly of their relationships with the manager and staff and the positive experience for their children.

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

The staff plan the short breaks with meticulous care. The high level of proactive communication with parents, carers and professionals, prior, during and after short-break stays contributes to children and young people feeling safe and secure.

The staff have a wealth of knowledge essential to the provision of high-quality care to children and young people with complex needs. Risk assessments and behaviour support plans identify vulnerabilities and strategies to support children and young people. They are reviewed in accordance with regular care planning and new information. Positive working relationships with families, health and education professionals help to protect children and young people from harm.

Children and young people do not go missing from the home, they do not experience bullying, and the use of physical intervention is only as a last resort. High staffing levels and close, supportive supervision help children and young people to explore their environment safely. They enjoy play and social time with their friends free from environmental risks.

Risk is managed extremely well in the community, through close supervision and careful planning. This enables children and young people to enjoy time with friends and staff on activities. Staff are vigilant, ensuring that children and young people enjoy new experiences and regular excursions without restrictions and potential harm.

The staff are well trained in safeguarding procedures and are skilled in the management of health issues of children and young people with complex needs. The home has an effective system in place to ensure the safe handling of and administering of medication. Any dietary issues are discussed with parents/carers and specialist health professionals. This enables steps to be taken to safely manage any individual need and reassure parents and carers that their child or young person's safe care and well-being are met.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The manager is passionate about meeting the needs of children and young people placed. She embraces change, seeing it as an opportunity to sustain the highest quality of care for children and young people. Her dedication and focus are embraced by her two experienced deputy managers.

The service has undergone some restructuring. Staff have been supported in managing this change effectively, with minimum disruption to service provision. This means that children and young people have received a consistently high-quality service throughout.

A deputy manager implemented a new handover sheet that details each staff member's roles and responsibilities throughout the shift and during the night. This planning is significant in ensuring that children and young people who have disruptive sleep patterns are monitored and supported through continuity of care. Information that is shared between the staff on each shift supports continuous evaluation of stays and planning. This helps children and young people to make progress during their time accessing regular short-break stays.

The manager is supportive of her staff, children and young people and their parents and carers. The communication between all parties is excellent. Discussions inform the meticulous planning process. Prior to children and young people accessing short-break stays, phone calls take place with parents and carers. These relationships support children and young people to have positive experiences during their short-break stays. Parents and carers commented very positively about the management and staff during the inspection visit.

The development of staff champions ensures that staff and management collectively source information and research areas of practice in relation to children and young

people's complex disorders. Monthly team meetings and regular supervisions are used effectively to share information, learn and reflect on practice, ensuring a consistent approach to the care provided. The manager invites professionals from other disciplines to deliver training, raise staff knowledge and skill level. Topics and training noted on inspection were blended diets, and communication methods for children and young people with an impairment. The combined strength of internal reflective practice and external training ensures positive outcomes for children and young people in their health and well-being.

The manager effectively monitors the quality of the service. She engages with several local authorities at a senior leadership level in marketing the service. This has enabled more children and their families to be able to access an excellent home for short breaks. The bedrooms were going through refurbishment during the inspection. Additionally, new play equipment has been purchased. These improvements were carried out based on the views of children and young people. The young people's forum offers opportunities for children and young people to express their views. This is chaired by a young person who accesses short-break stays. The development and participation of children and young people are central to promoting their care and developing a sense of ownership and belonging.

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: SC036804

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Council, Civic Centre, Regent Street, Gateshead, Durham NE8 1HH

Responsible individual: Elaine Devaney

Registered manager: Laura McNeill

Inspector

Michael Dack, social care inspector

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