

SC450701

Registered provider: Lavender Group Homes

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned by a private provider and is registered to provide a specialist service for up to six children and young people aged six to 17 years, irrespective of gender.

The manager is registered with Ofsted and is suitably qualified and experienced.

Inspection dates: 28 to 29 January 2020

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

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 28 November 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
28/11/2018	Full	Outstanding
12/02/2018	Full	Good
22/03/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
08/11/2016	Full	Outstanding

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
<p>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child. (Regulation 12 (2)(a)(i))</p>	31/03/2020
<p>The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that—</p> <p>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(2)(c))</p>	01/05/2020
<p>The registered person must ensure that all employees—</p> <p>receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience; and</p> <p>have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33 (4)(b)(c))</p>	01/05/2020

<p>The registered person must ensure that—</p> <p>within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes—</p> <p>details of the child’s behaviour leading to the use of the measure;</p> <p>a description of the measure and its duration;</p> <p>details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(ii)(iv)(v))</p>	<p>31/03/2020</p>
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Recommendations

- A high proportion of children in children’s homes have special educational needs (SEN) (a research study found 38% to have a statement of special educational needs) and staff need to understand the specialist support children may need to be able to engage positively and achieve in education. Staff must be aware of whether a child has an EHC plan and the information in it. An EHC plan details the education, health and social care support that is to be provided to a child or young person who has special educational needs or a disability. For further information see the SEND Code of Practice:0 to 25 years.
(‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 26, paragraph 5.4)
- Supervision of staff practice should ensure that individual adults in the home are engaged in the safeguarding culture of the home so they understand what they would need to do if they found other staff misusing or abusing their position to the detriment of the safety of the child.
(‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 43, paragraph 9.14)
- No more than half the staff on duty at any one time, by day or night at the home should be from an external agency.
(‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 54, paragraph 10.17)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children are making good progress at the home. They are cared for by adults whose practice is completely child centred and with whom they build secure and trusted relationships. Staff know the children well and have a good understanding of their individual needs. Staff use a range of communication aids to support the children to good effect. Children are consulted with about their care and have a voice in the home.

The home is well organised, and thorough shift planning means that children have predictable routines. Staff work closely with parents and professionals to ensure that everyone is using the same approaches. This means children receive consistent care which helps them to feel secure at home and school. Communication is good, and parents and professionals receive weekly updates on children's progress and experiences.

All of the children attend education. They are achieving and have good attendance. One child is at college and does voluntary work in a local charity shop. This has given the child the opportunity to develop their independence and improve their social skills in preparation for moving on from the home. However, not all education, health and care plans have been reviewed and not all children have current personal education plans.

Children have access to a wide range of social, educational and recreational activities in the home and community. Children have opportunities to try new experiences which develop social skills, hobbies and interests. All the children regularly attend youth clubs in the local area. This helps them to develop a sense of permanence and belonging in the home and local area. One parent said their child got lots of experiences which 'help him grow as a person'. These experiences are captured within memory books that provide a pictorial record of the child's time at the home.

Children are supported to develop their independence, irrespective of their individual needs. Children are encouraged to participate in and contribute to the routines in the home. They are helped to complete chores and they are given choices in areas such as menu planning and decoration of the home.

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

The physical environment is safe and secure and protects children from harm. Additional measures are in place to ensure that children are kept safe in the home and the community. These measures reflect the complex needs of the children in the home. Children have predictable routines with clear structure and boundaries. This helps children to feel safe in the home.

The number of incidents and the use of physical intervention are low. When used, physical intervention is appropriate to protect the child, and others, from harm. However, incident records do not always contain enough detail. Reports do not always give a clear

description of events or the intervention used. This means that it is sometimes difficult to review and monitor incident reports.

Missing-from-care episodes for one child have completely stopped. This was a well-established pattern of behaviour prior to moving into the home. Effective care planning, risk assessment and positive relationships with adults at the home have significantly contributed to this reduction in incidents. Staff in the home have supported the child to look at other ways of expressing their emotions while keeping themselves safe.

Children receive help and support to manage their behaviour and feelings. Staff are responsive to children's communication, both verbal and non-verbal. Children are able to talk to the adults caring for them about their concerns and worries. For some children, this has led to a significant decrease in incidents in the home.

All children have a variety of risk assessments in place. These support staff to understand the risks for each child and how these are managed. However, risk assessments do not always link to children's care plans and do not always reflect current concerns. There are risk assessments in place that do not reflect the current needs of the children. There is insufficient management oversight of risk assessments.

Staff have all received basic child protection and safeguarding training. However, this training has not been refreshed regularly. This has left some staff with gaps in their knowledge around policies and procedures. Not all staff have received training in wider safeguarding issues such as exploitation of children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager has high expectations for what children can achieve and puts the children's needs at the centre of all decisions. This inspires a culture in the home where children are treated as individuals and staff have aspirations for them. Staff work well together as a team and are supportive of each other and the home. There is a sense of pride from the manager in what the children and staff achieve.

Staff, including the manager, do not always receive regular formal supervision or annual appraisal. This means that staff, and the manager, do not have structured opportunity to discuss children's experiences, needs and plans or to receive feedback on their performance. Staff and the manager do not have professional development targets set for them. Staff do say they feel supported and listened to by their manager, who has an open-door policy in place. However, team meetings do not take place regularly. This further reduces the opportunities for staff to discuss the children and practice within the home.

Current staffing shortages are having an impact in the home. Agency staff are covering the vacancies. Wherever possible, the same agency staff are used to provide consistency to the children. On occasions, there is only one permanent member of staff on shift, with agency and bank staff being used to cover the shortfalls. This means that shift planning is difficult, as not all staff are trained in areas such as administering medication or

physical intervention. This has the potential to affect the safety and care of children in the home.

The manager recognises the strengths and weaknesses in the home. Parents and professionals gave positive feedback on the home and the care that the children receive. Clear and detailed plans identify the progress that children are making. The manager is a strong advocate for the children and has escalated concerns to ensure that children receive the services they are entitled to.

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: SC450701

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: Lavender Group Homes, Office 7 and 9, 10 The Headlands, Kettering, Northamptonshire NN15 7HP

Responsible individual: Dawn Aplin

Registered manager: Jack Woods

Inspector

Sarah Orriss, Social Care Inspector

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