

SC046276

Registered provider: Devon County Council

Interim inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This secure children's home is managed by a local authority. The Department for Education approves it to restrict children's liberty. The children's home can accommodate up to 12 children aged between 10 and 19 years and accommodated under Section 25 of the Children Act 1989. Admission of any child under 13 years of age requires the approval of the Secretary of State.

The commissioning of health services in this home is the statutory responsibility of NHS England under the Health and Social Care Act 2012. Education is provided on site in dedicated facilities.

The manager registered with Ofsted in June 2016.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

We visited this home on 12 October 2020 to carry out an assurance visit. On 29 May 2021 we undertook a monitoring visit. These reports are published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection date: 29 June 2021

Date of last inspection: 3 March 2020

Judgement at last inspection: sustained effectiveness

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 good at the last full inspection.
At the interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has sustained effectiveness.

Four children were living at the home at the time of the inspection. The manager is currently unable to admit further children due to staff shortages and the complex needs of the children currently at the home. Staff shortages are due to a number of staff being on long-term sick leave, annual leave and staff vacancies. The staff, and managers when required, are covering shortfalls in the rota. This ensures that the children receive care and guidance from a consistent and stable staff team.

The staff and managers are acutely aware of the highly complex individual needs of the children and their trauma from childhood experiences. Each child's plan, risk assessments and health-informed response from staff demonstrates the complexities of their needs. Observations, interactions and assessments are clearly detailed to identify further input and resources required to support the children.

The children's communal living environment is welcoming and calm. Their artwork and positive re-enforcement messages are displayed on walls. Children personalise their bedrooms in line with their individual risk assessments. The staff are imaginative in providing resources that are of minimal risk to achieve this homely feel throughout.

The children engage well with the staff and the on-site education and health professionals. The occupational therapist provides resources accessible to the staff and children. These resources support the children to self-regulate when anxious or frustrated. Therapy dogs attend twice a week to spend time with the children, who find this activity helpful. These resources and high staffing ratios, of one staff member to each child, have led to a decrease in children's self-harming and other incidents, and an improvement in their sleep regime.

There have been some significant incidents of damage to the home, assaults on staff and challenges in managing some children's behaviour. Despite this, the manager and staff work hard to maintain children's placements where possible. The staff are aware of effective strategies that are beneficial for the children most of the time. However, on some occasions, despite the implementation of these strategies and the staff relationships, the children's trauma and need can be too overpowering for the child. The manager ensures that placing authorities are kept up to date with information and the assessments made regarding the children's placements.

The children continue to make good progress. One child has 100% school attendance. The children's diet is healthier, as the food provided is varied, healthy and appetising. Children's personal hygiene improves and their basic health needs

are met. Children assessed as low risk in the community go out with the staff on bike rides, walks and work experiences. The children have been actively involved in raising money for charities. All these activities improve children's self-esteem and provide new interests.

The manager has met the four requirements made at the monitoring visit in May 2021. The use of physical intervention is appropriate and proportionate. The staff use positive relationships and knowledge of each child's behaviours and preferences in order to de-escalate situations and support them through crises. Staff are skilful and sensitive in their approach. The quality assurance process following a physical intervention now ensures that the accuracy of reports is checked and compared with closed circuit television footage. Significant incidents are shared with Ofsted in a timely manner and provide an initial overview of the incident. The manager then liaises with Ofsted to provide any further information required.

The one recommendation is met. Following the use of ligature cutters, these cutters are now checked, and records demonstrate this process and when blades are replaced. This ensures that these items are in good condition for when they may be required.

Two recommendations have been made as a result of this inspection. Some records require further quality assurance and oversight. For example, on one occasion, following a physical intervention, the record regarding medical intervention offered differed from the staff and the child's account. However, no concerns relating to safety or security were identified. Also, some parts of the outside areas of the home are in need of minor refurbishment. This is to ensure that these areas do not deteriorate.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
03/03/2020	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
08/10/2019	Full	Good
05/03/2019	Full	Good
30/10/2018	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the external areas of the home are well maintained, and areas of wear and tear are addressed. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.7)
- The registered person should ensure that children's records are clear, and any omissions are identified and corrected. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

Information about this inspection

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.

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people, 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 standard'.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC046276

Provision sub-type: Secure Unit

Registered provider address: Devon County Council, County Hall, Topsham Road, Exeter, Devon EX2 4QD

Responsible individual: Julie Mephram

Registered manager: Darren Beattie

Inspectors

Natalie Burton, Social Care Inspector
Paul Taylor, Social Care Inspector

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