

SC034900

Registered provider: Nottingham City Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is registered to provide short breaks for up to 11 children and young people, at any one time, who have learning disabilities and/or physical disabilities. It is owned and run by the local authority.

This home is managed by two registered managers who are qualified and experienced.

Due to COVID-19, at request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

Inspection dates: 1 and 2 March 2022

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: 5 February 2020

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
05/02/2020	Full	Outstanding
12/12/2018	Full	Outstanding
21/11/2017	Full	Outstanding
28/03/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children have positive experiences during their stays, and they have fun. Staff are skilled in using the resources of the home and wider community to provide these positive experiences. Children have opportunities that may have not been possible for them without the short-breaks service.

Staff fully understood the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on children and families. The staff response through this period is an example of best practice. Leaders worked creatively with the placing authority to offer a different service. The service offer was adapted to meet changing needs over the two years. This included community support, outreach support, parents' support groups and online support. This has provided continuity of care and has kept children in touch with staff. This continuity has provided a lifeline to some families during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Staff utilise support from the specialist on-site outreach team. The specialist team shares knowledge, skills and experience that contribute to the support provided to children and families. Staff know and understand the children's needs well, and their work contributes to a reduction in risk.

The team understands the benefits of multi-disciplinary working. There are close working relationships with professionals to support children with their health, education, behaviours and life experiences. This holistic approach ensures that care plans reflect children's specific needs. Children receive support from the right people at a time when they most need it.

Staff understand children's individual healthcare needs. Staff receive regular, up-to-date training, and they work closely with health colleagues. Consequently, staff are trained and equipped to meet the health needs of each and every child who attends the service.

Children's views are listened to in relation to all aspects of their time spent at the home. Children are creatively involved with the recruitment of new staff. Although there has only been a small number of complaints from children and families, they are taken seriously. Managers reflect and learn from these and respond to the child or family member.

Staff understand the importance of careful transition planning. They use their skills and experience to support families with future transitions. Parents appreciate the expert knowledge and experience of the team. A parent said: 'Leaving the short-breaks service was heartbreaking to think about. The home has been the best part of my child's experience since attending short breaks.' Feedback from another parent was: 'The staff love my child like he is their own child. They are just amazing people and deserve all my thanks.'

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

This is a proactive, learning service. Staff have been supported to focus on developing the service with emphasis on exceptional safeguarding practice. Staff have carried out research on the added vulnerabilities of disabled children. This learning has been shared across the staff team. Actions have arisen from this work that have improved the safeguarding knowledge and practice within the home. The service intends to widen this learning out to other services within the local authority.

Risk assessments and residential action plans are thorough. They include all known behaviours for each child and detail the best way to respond. These assessments and plans are used as live, working documents and are discussed in each handover. As a result, staff are continually aware of risks and how to keep children safe. These care plans are exemplary and worthy of wider dissemination.

Significant events are well managed. There are detailed records of all incidents and the actions taken. Staff are trained and skilled in de-escalation, meaning that physical interventions are rarely used. Managers review and reflect on all incidents. This learning and reflection are then discussed in supervisions and team meetings. Consequently, staff continue to learn how to work with each child.

Recruitment processes are robust and designed to ensure that children are kept safe. Written references are always followed up with verbal verification, and more information is gained if needed. This ensures that the suitable people are recruited to work at the home.

Staff work in partnership with other professionals to keep children safe. This includes across all areas of health, education and social care. A social worker said: 'It is one of the best resources for families. It's amazing. It's a trusted and secure environment. I have no safeguarding concerns.'

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

Managers and assistant managers are inspirational, confident and ambitious for children. They create a culture of high aspiration and positivity, and have high expectations of staff. Leaders and managers have learned from the COVID-19 pandemic. They have identified areas of practice that are beneficial to keep in place moving forwards.

Communication and information sharing are excellent. Managers ensure that staff handover meetings cover all aspects of children's care. This includes discussing individual care plans at each meeting to ensure that they are well understood. This enables staff to be well prepared to work with the children using the service that day. Any new or significant information is shared. Staff are passionate about offering children very positive experiences and providing a variety of enjoyable opportunities.

Staff training is extensive for this home. Managers are continually looking to upskill the workforce. This is a challenge with such a large staff team; however, this is achieved. The expertise and skills of managers are utilised across other services within the local authority, and they lead training on mental health and safeguarding.

Staff receive regular and supportive supervisions. These sessions inform six-monthly appraisals. Staff are supported with reflective practice individually and as a group. All staff are involved as a team in reflecting on what has worked well and what changes can be made to improve the experiences and outcomes for children.

Managers and staff creatively evidence outcomes, extensive opportunities and experiences for children in newsletter-style documents. Despite the COVID-19 restrictions, children have clearly enjoyed and benefited from their experiences at the home. Children are supported to have sleepovers at the home. This is an opportunity that they may not experience elsewhere. Staff understand the importance of breaking down barriers for disabled children. This enables children to access opportunities that are enjoyable at the same time as enhancing all areas of their development.

Information about this 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 standards'.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC034900

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Nottingham City Council

Registered provider address: Nottingham City Council, Loxley House, Station Street, Nottingham NG2 3NG

Responsible individual: Kay Sutt

Registered manager: Joanne Wright
Ella Lawrence-Cowling

Inspectors

Bev Allison, Social Care Inspector
Shaun Caplis, Social Care Inspector

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