

SC033152

Registered provider: North Lincolnshire Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This local authority service provides care and support during short breaks for up to five children who may have a learning disability and children with a physical disability.

Since the last inspection, there has been a variation to the conditions of registration for one child to live permanently at the home.

The manager registered with Ofsted in July 2021.

On the day of the inspection, one child lived at the home on a shared care arrangement, and two children accessed the short-break service.

Inspection dates: 15 and 16 November 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: 11 October 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
11/10/2021	Full	Outstanding
03/12/2019	Full	Outstanding
17/04/2018	Full	Good
10/10/2017	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children receive exceptionally high-quality care based on their individual needs from a staff team that has expertise in supporting children with disabilities. The staff are nurturing in their approach and are committed to making sure that children feel settled and secure during their stay. They know each child well and are attuned to their needs.

The ethos of this home is based on family values and empowering children and families. Staff work creatively with families and, when needed, they provide outreach support. This helps parents to learn how to mirror the routines that are in place for the children during their visit. Parents are very much a part of their children's stay at the home. This provides parents with reassurance and confidence in the care afforded to their children.

Staff are extremely knowledgeable about children's complex physical health needs and work closely with parents and health professionals to ensure that children continue to receive appropriate support during their stay. Children's emotional well-being is also fully understood by staff. The care children receive in this home is underpinned by theory-informed practice. Staff have regular access to specialist mental health professionals, who in turn help them to develop an understanding of each child. As a result, staff are exceptionally skilled at identifying when children are feeling distressed and, when needed, staff take quick and effective action to reduce children's emerging anxieties.

Staff strive to understand children's views and ensure that children are consulted with about the things that matter most to them. They know each child well and are extremely intuitive and attuned to their needs. Staff make good use of aids to assist communication that are child-friendly and visual. Examples of this include picture communication books that are used to help children to express their feelings, what they would like to eat or what activities they would like to do. These methods help children to communicate their views and have a purposeful say over what is important to them.

The home environment is warm and welcoming. Staff ensure that bedrooms are personalised for children during their visit. One child was involved in choosing the decoration of their bedroom when they moved into the home. This provided the child with a sense of familiarity, which helped to settle them from the moment they arrived.

There is a strong emphasis on providing children with a wide range of activities that help them to thrive socially. Children have plenty of opportunities to try new experiences and explore the world that they live in. Community activities include

trips out, and going bowling. In addition, children enjoy spending time with each other and playing with their toys, listening to music and doing arts and crafts. These activities help children to develop positive peer relationships and experience opportunities similar to those of their peers.

Children are helped to improve their independence skills. The focus is placed on helping children to progress through setting small but measurable targets. There is clear evidence that children's all-round independence skills have increased. The experiences they are provided with while staying at the home have significantly enhanced their social, emotional and physical development.

Staff are extremely proud of the progress that the children are making. Children's achievements are celebrated and rewarded. For example, a photo of the child is displayed in the home when they are awarded 'star of the week'. There is a clear aspirational culture in the home, and this gives children a sense of pride in all that they do.

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

Before coming to stay at the home, the manager carefully assesses the compatibility of children to live together. Staff make every effort to support children to have stays alongside peers that they know well. This helps to ensure that children are surrounded by familiar people and a consistent staff team during their stays.

Each child has a completed risk assessment and care plan that clearly record their assessed risks and vulnerabilities. The risks associated with children with learning needs and disabilities are individualised and well documented in the child's records. Steps for staff to follow are clear and easily understood. Staff identify, manage and respond to the risks to children exceptionally well.

Staff are clear about how to access the right support for individual children. They work proactively with other agencies, such as child and adolescent mental health services, school, specialist health professionals and the social workers. This collaborative approach means that the children are better protected.

The impact on behaviour pertaining to each child's level of learning need or disability is managed well by an experienced staff team. When restraint is used, staff help children to understand why the measure was necessary. Records of these discussions highlight that staff are extremely successful in helping to ease children's frustrations and/or anxieties. Consequently, the atmosphere remains relaxed and settled.

Regular health and safety and fire safety checks help to protect children, staff and visitors to the home. Close monitoring, maintenance and servicing of specialist equipment also make the home a safer place to be. New staff are appropriately

vetted and checked. This ensures that as much as possible is done to make sure that children are not exposed to unsuitable adults.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The manager of the home has aspirations for the service provided to children and families. They are committed to a child-centred approach and to the empowerment of disabled children and their families. The manager demonstrates real care and ambition, is fully invested in the home and wants children to succeed. The manager's enthusiasm and commitment have helped to inspire staff and shape the overall ethos of the service.

During the inspection, managers discussed the authority's leaders and managers involvement in the current national safeguarding review. The focus is on learning from shortfalls and dissemination of best practice. This creates a culture of continuous learning and development for managers and staff, which means that children receive a high standard of care.

Leaders and managers drive change to ensure the development of the service offered to children and families in the home and in the wider community for all disabled children. Through consultation with leaders and managers, a local entertainment venue has improved accessibility for disabled children and introduced a sensory room. This commitment to advocate for change has had a widespread impact on the lives of all disabled children living in the local area.

The manager has excellent oversight of the home. She uses the whole staff team to ensure that care plans and risk assessments are updated systematically and reflect the changing care needs of each individual child. This inclusive approach means that staff develop the skills and knowledge to confidently deliver high standards of care to the children.

The manager ensures a multi-agency approach for each child. Professionals and families hold the manager and staff in high regard. One professional said, 'The service that is provided for children is outstanding. The work that they have done with the child is absolutely right for them. 'It is exemplary.'

The manager sets clear expectations for her staff. Staff receive regular supervision, which is reflective and provides an opportunity to discuss each child's needs. Staff appraisals happen every three months, and clear and attainable targets are set, which are understood by staff. This approach means that good practice is praised and shortfalls in practice are quickly identified and acted on.

The manager ensures that the staff team is suitably trained to meet the needs of each child. Where children have complex health needs, staff have completed the relevant training. Where children have additional needs, the manager has sourced training for staff, which has been delivered by a professional with expertise.

The manager ensures that staffing is sufficient to provide children with appropriate and safe supervision and continuity of care. However, a child moving into the home to live on a permanent basis has created some challenges in relation to staffing levels. Consequently, some children have had their short breaks cancelled at short notice. Moving forward, the manager has a plan in place to address this shortfall. This will help to reduce the likelihood of this having a long-term impact on children and their families.

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

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that the short-break service has sufficient staffing to ensure that children and families can consistently access the number of days allocated to them. They should ensure that the service has sufficient staff to avoid the cancellation of access to the service at short notice and to ensure that the routines for children and families are not overly disrupted. ('Guide to The Children's Homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 51, paragraph 10.1).

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: SC033152

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: Church Square House, 30-40 Church Square,
Scunthorpe, North Lincolnshire DN15 6NL

Registered provider: North Lincolnshire Council

Responsible individual: Darren Chaplin

Registered manager: Johanna Haynes

Inspectors

Rachel Webster, Social Care Inspector

Cath Sikakana, Social Care Inspector

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