

SC034210

Registered provider: North Yorkshire County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned and managed by a local authority. It provides pre-planned short breaks in a residential setting to children who have learning disabilities and/or physical disabilities, and associated complex healthcare needs. The home can also provide extended and bespoke packages of care. The home is divided into two separate homes.

The registered manager is in day-to-day charge of the home. She registered with Ofsted in May 2016.

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 December 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 9 March 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
09/03/2022	Full	Good
17/12/2019	Full	Outstanding
11/09/2018	Full	Outstanding
23/08/2017	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

In emergency situations, the local authority accommodates children on a full-time basis into this short-break provision. Sufficiency of appropriate provision has caused delays in children moving. The daily movement of children accessing their short breaks routinely disrupts the children living in the home longer term. This disruption is managed through the planning and preparation of children's visits. The staff ensure that all children, no matter what their service offer is, receive individualised care that meets their identified needs.

Children who use this service have the opportunity to participate in activities that they may otherwise be excluded from. Children have experienced going swimming, canoeing and 'trick or treating' at Halloween. Children also benefit from time spent together which helps them to develop friendships. A parent described the excitement on her child's face when they recognised another child from the short break home when out in the community. The children's enjoyment and engagement in activities is wonderfully captured in photographs.

The progress that children make has a positive difference to their lives. The staff spend quality time with the children. For one child who lives in the home, this time has helped them to develop their verbal communication and improved the use of their communication aid. This has helped the child to consistently be involved in decisions about their day, reducing their anxieties and frustrations.

Staff's interaction with children and their access to extensive resources means children can make choices about their engagement in activities. Children with movement-limiting disabilities use adaptive technology to allow them to control computer games by pressing a button. Children can struggle when activities end. Pictorial sheets have been created for children to help them to understand when and why activities end.

The manager understands her role and responsibility to meet the needs of the children that live full time in the home. These children are helped to attend routine health appointments. The children are helped by the staff to improve their health; for one child, this was focused on teethbrushing and exercise. Staff guide the child through these daily tasks and give lots of praise for their engagement.

Education arrangements are in place for children who live full time in the home. One child's timetable has developed to increase their hours, but this remains under the expected 25 hours per week. The staff plan additional educational-based activities for the child. Sufficiency of appropriate provision has caused delay in this child's moving to a specialist home with education.

One of the homes is well furnished and designed to provide a welcoming and nice environment for children. The garden space provides children with an area for

outside fun and exploration. However, the other home requires some maintenance and redecoration to improve the standard of decoration and cleanliness of this section of the home.

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

Staff understand the importance of providing choice to disabled children. Children have the right to refuse and make choices about their day-to-day life. The staff's confidence to respond to the non-verbal cues of children ensures that the children who are non-verbal can express their preferences. Children's personal care needs are delivered sensitively by the staff, and only once a child feels familiar and trusting of the staff, will these staff provide personal care. Children are treated with dignity and respect, and they are encouraged to direct and control how staff perform their personal care.

Some children like to receive hugs from staff, and this provides children with comfort and reassurance. However, children's learning disabilities and diagnoses increase their vulnerabilities, particularly their understanding around stranger danger. Children are helped by the staff to understand what appropriate touch and safety around adults is.

Staff understand children's associated risks and their responsibility to safeguard children. Potential safeguarding concerns are shared with managers and escalated where necessary to social care. This practice is significant for a child whose welfare is currently being reviewed through a local authority child protection plan. Additional steps have been taken to develop this child's care records to encourage professional curiosity and reflection. During this child's short-break, their individualised care records direct staff to think about the child's presentation and if this could be associated to concerns within the child protection plan. However, the manager needs to provide additional guidance to her staff to ensure there is a cohesive understanding of child protection.

Children have been physically restrained by staff. This measure of control was assessed as necessary to protect children from harm. Reports about these restraints consistently contain manager's oversight. Children's social workers also receive these reports which provides an additional level of oversight and scrutiny. The manager is working with one child's education provision to review, and where necessary, adapt staff practice with the aim to reduce the use of physical restraint. The manager keeps clear records of all physical interventions. However, external monitoring reports by the independent person contain factual inaccuracies about the number of physical restraints. This impacts Ofsted's oversight of care practice in the home.

Personal emergency evacuation plans are created for the children. These plans identify the special arrangements to help staff to assist children safely out of the home during an emergency. Children receive fire safety information and staff fulfil their responsibilities of routinely checking fire safety equipment and procedures. However, the recent external annual fire extinguisher service has failed to evidence

that they checked all the fire extinguishers. In particular, the foam fire extinguishers within the first-floor office space.

On one occasion, staff's poor decision-making has provided the opportunity for one child to inflict injury onto another child. This happened because of a moment of absent supervision of children by staff. This incident remains under investigation, but lessons have been learned and the manager has reiterated practice expectations to her staff team. An incident where a child is hurt can impact on the families' trust of the service and the child's wish to attend their breaks away from home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The manager has extensive knowledge and experience that drives this home forward. The manager ensures that children gain positive experiences. She continues to organise creative and inclusive festivals and parties for disabled children, their friends, and their families.

The manager's development of the staff and the training they receive helps them to excel within their roles, and some staff have achieved internal promotions. This has brought movement within the team and in particular the senior leadership. The manager has implemented strategies to support staff into newly appointed roles to help assure quality standards.

The manager's oversight of the home develops the home and the staff practice. Staff feel supported by their manager. The manager uses the team meetings to provide staff the necessary guidance. This maintains the focus that the staff provide safe and nurturing care for children in a welcoming and pleasant environment. However, there is a door to the basement laundry that would benefit from the fitting of a thumb-turn lock.

Staff protect and promote the best interest of the children. Parents voice their reassurance that no matter if their children live in the home or attend for short breaks that the staff always do their best for their children. All the children's achievements are routinely recognised by the staff team and celebrated and showcased on the magical moments display board.

Partnership working is a strength and professionals, and families report how vital this service is for disabled children. The manager has taken steps to improve communication with families, and families report that they are kept well informed about their child's time spent at the home. Families describe this service as their lifeline.

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 positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on—</p> <p>positive responses to other children and adults.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>meet each child's behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 11 (1)(c) (2)(a)(i))</p>	3 February 2023
<p>The care planning standard is that children—</p> <p>receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home's statement of purpose. (Regulation 14 (1)(a) (2)(a))</p>	3 February 2023
<p>The independent person must produce a report about a visit ("the independent person's report") which sets out, in particular, the independent person's opinion as to whether—</p> <p>children are effectively safeguarded; and</p> <p>the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being. (Regulation 44 (4)(a)(b))</p>	3 February 2023

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the home is decorated and cleaned to provide a nurturing environment that is welcoming. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.7)
- The registered person should ensure that all the staff understand about child protection and that safeguarding awareness may need to be greater for specific children. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 35, paragraph 7.20)
- The registered person should ensure the home complies with relevant health and safety legislations. This includes annual maintenance to all fire extinguishers. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that the basement laundry door is fitted with an internal thumb lock in addition to the external key lock. This would enable a child to safely exit should they find themselves locked in this room. The managers' decisions to limit a children's access to this area of the home is intended to safeguard their welfare. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.10)

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: SC034210

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: North Yorkshire County Council

Registered provider address: County Hall, Northallerton DL7 8AD

Responsible individual: Gemma Sheader

Registered manager: Katherine Clarke

Inspector

Jennifer Fenlon, Social Care Inspector

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