

SC059203

Registered provider: Northumberland 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 short breaks for up to six children who may have learning disabilities.

The manager has been in post since 2011.

The inspectors spoke with all three children who were accessing this service during this inspection.

Inspection dates: 20 to 23 January 2023

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

Date of last inspection: 10 December 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
10/12/2021	Full	Good
14/02/2020	Full	Outstanding
07/03/2019	Full	Outstanding
12/03/2018	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children have a positive experience during their short breaks. Staff carefully consider children's individual needs. The staff are skilled at matching groups of children for each break. This careful matching provides opportunities for children to develop friendships and enjoy activities with other children.

Children receive a warm and friendly welcome from the staff, regardless of whether they are new to the home or returning for a short break. New children are invited for visits and are gradually introduced to the staff and other children. The children are allowed to settle in at their own pace. This provides parents with reassurance that their child is happy in the home before they stay for their overnight break.

Children have moved on successfully to new foster placements, longer-term residential care placements or on to adult services because of the positive support that they have received from the staff.

Children have developed trusting relationships with the staff. Staff speak affectionately about the children and enjoy spending time with them. The staff know the children well. They communicate with the children, using the child's preferred method of communication. The stable team of staff are familiar with the children's personalities and behaviours and so they respond consistently to the children's needs. This helps the children to build trust and creates positive relationships between them and the staff.

Children enjoy a range of activities and opportunities during their stay. They are encouraged to plan their weekend with the staff when they arrive. Staff support the children to engage in activities that promote their independence and they are helped to develop important life skills. Careful care planning ensures that the children have different experiences where they have increased confidence and self-esteem.

Children are helped and supported to develop their social skills and communication. Staff have high aspirations for the children. They work very well with parents and other professionals in setting realistic goals designed to help the children to make progress. Children's achievements are recognised, celebrated and captured in photos and artwork throughout the home.

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

Children's care plans are detailed, reviewed and updated regularly, and produced in a way that the children can understand. Therefore, children know how the staff will support them and what the staff are doing to help them to become increasingly safe. This helps the children to participate fully in the personalisation of their care.

Children's short-term stays are well planned. Effective care planning ensures that the children's stays occur at the same time as their siblings or friends are staying. This detailed planning ensures that the children enjoy each other's company and that there are no incidents of bullying.

There have been no incidents of physical restraint or self-harm since the last inspection. Staff have a good understanding of the children's needs, and they know how to support the child if they become distressed or upset.

Staff are knowledgeable and well equipped to manage the children's complex health needs. Medication procedures are robust, and the staff are provided with clear instructions. This ensures that the children's health needs are met to a high standard during their stay.

There are clear procedures in place for the staff and children to make complaints or raise concerns about the service. Children are told about these procedures before they join the home, and this is reiterated during children's meetings and a range of other methods they can use to share their views. Complaints are taken seriously, and the manager responds to these appropriately.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager has substantial knowledge and expertise in supporting children with complex needs and their families. She plays a crucial role in enhancing the children's quality of life during their short breaks.

The service is valued by children and their families. There is an abundance of compliments received from the children, their families and the team around the child. Children enjoy their time in the home so much that they do not want their short breaks to come to an end.

Staff meetings are planned and well attended. The discussions focus on the children's needs, and they provide the staff with an opportunity to reflect on their practice and develop as a team.

Staff are skilled and equipped to meet the needs of the children. Healthcare professionals who know the children well provide the staff with a range of bespoke training opportunities. Training needs are reviewed by the manager, who has a robust system in place. This assures her that the staff are appropriately trained to meet the needs of the children.

Staff feel well supported by the manager. They are provided with regular and meaningful supervision sessions. These sessions provide the staff with an opportunity to reflect on their practice and for the manager to identify any learning needs.

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: SC059203

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Northumberland County Council

Registered provider address: County Hall, Morpeth, Northumberland NE61 2EF

Responsible individual: Adam Hall

Registered manager: Susan Ghulam

Inspectors

Cherie Chen, Social Care Inspector

Claire Webster, Social Care Inspector

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