

# Heswall Disabled Children's Holiday Fund

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9 Milton Road, Waterloo, Liverpool L22 4RE

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this residential holiday scheme for disabled children

Heswall Disabled Children's Holiday Fund is a charitable organisation which provides a summer holiday for disabled children and children with complex health needs and special educational needs. It provides a one-week holiday at a residential activity centre. It aims to provide a range of activities and experiences for disabled children who would not otherwise have a holiday.

The registered manager registered with Ofsted in 2014.

In 2021, the organisation expanded its services by introducing a one-week holiday option in both the South West and North West regions, caring for up to 30 children at each. The South West holiday takes place the week following the North West holiday.

The inspectors visited the children's holiday scheme at Barnstondale Centre in the North West.

### Inspection dates: 11 and 15 August 2023

**Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account** **outstanding**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **outstanding**

The residential holiday scheme for disabled children provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the

residential holiday scheme contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people.

**Date of last inspection:** 22 August 2022

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** outstanding

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding**

During this inspection, children enthusiastically expressed their happiness about their holiday, through both their conversations and non-verbal cues. Parents were positive about the holiday scheme. One said, 'My child experienced everything that a non-wheelchair user would experience.' Another said, 'Helpers are great. They make adaptations to ensure that all children enjoy the full range of all activities.'

Before each holiday scheme, the manager and helpers undertake meticulous planning for the assessment of each child. They conduct a comprehensive assessment of all children's needs. The assessment is compiled during visits to children's families, with the support of occupational therapists. This assessment is kept under review, and any new information added. This is an effective approach to getting to know children, which means that their care is very well planned.

Children are welcomed by dedicated helpers assigned to them based on their needs and helpers' strengths. Helpers assigned to children remain with them for the entire holiday. This promotes positive trusting relationships and consistency for children.

There is an excellent range of on- and off-site activities. This year children were able to access a local youth zone. This enabled children to take part in inclusive sessions in a range of activities, regardless of their ability. These included accessible dance sessions, glo sports, using a climbing wall and taking part in arts and music sessions.

A high ratio of helpers to children, and an inclusive attitude and extensive planning, mean that the children get to try new activities and experiences. For example, one child expressed an interest in trying ballet lessons and was able to do this. Other children tried activities including a visit to a shooting range and archery centre, and enjoyed tractor rides. The wide range of activities is broadening the children's experiences and increasing their confidence.

The children are supported to develop their social skills, interacting in a safe setting where they encourage one another. This environment encourages new friendships, thanks to the helpers who skilfully navigate group dynamics and display a keen understanding of the children's needs. One parent said, 'Each time [name of child] goes away, his self-confidence is boosted. He can play inclusively without barriers and do normal things like other children, even with his medical needs.'

The helpers adopt an inclusive approach to communication throughout the holiday. They use Makaton signing to complement verbal interaction. Pictorial symbols are employed to aid children in expressing their emotions and making decisions. One child was observed choosing an activity by indicating the corresponding picture that had been added to his communication device.

As each day comes to an end, children and helpers gather to celebrate their accomplishments. They document their holiday experiences in their daily diaries. Many children return each year. One helper reminisced about their own time as a child at the holiday scheme. They are now invited to assist the current children during their holiday stay.

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

Proactive safeguarding practices ensure that all children, including the most vulnerable, are kept safe. Children and helpers know who to go to and are encouraged to report any concerns, however minor.

Children have their holiday in a specially equipped setting that meets their needs. High levels of adult support and an appropriately safe environment ensure that children can enjoy freedom of movement inside and outside of the accommodation. All activities are risk assessed and planned to accommodate each child's specific needs and preferences. This increases children's chances of safely trying a new experience.

When necessary, helpers gently redirect children to alternative activities. They provide children with options and alternatives, rather than imposing unnecessary boundaries. This allows children to flourish by exercising control over their day-to-day experiences. This promotes children's self-esteem.

The children receive consistent and insightful help and support from well-trained and thoroughly briefed helpers. The reflection sessions at the end of the day include a review of planning for the next day, to capture any learning and feedback. This allows for responsive and proactive amendments to planning and contributes to the smooth running of the holiday.

The helpers ensure that the children feel safe and happy during their holiday. When children struggle with their emotions, staff are very sensitive to their needs and creatively help them to work through their emotions.

Positive approaches to supporting children are embedded in the practice of the team. Helpers are carefully recruited. In addition to necessary safeguarding checks, managers carefully explore their suitability to carry out the organisation's approach to child-centred care. This was evident during the inspection, because all helpers engaged with children continually, proactively anticipating their needs and wishes.

The helpers promptly address all first-aid incidents with a calm and attentive approach. There is a dedicated team in charge of medication. They are trained to administer medication safely and are always available. As a result, medication is managed and administered very effectively.

## **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding**

Senior managers inspire the team and communicate their high aspirations and expectations effectively to all helpers. There are clear lines of accountability and highly effective oversight of the holiday. The managers and the helpers are reflective and innovative in their approach and support children to have fun in a safe environment.

The helpers are confident and clear about their roles and responsibilities. This is supported by robust information and training before the holiday begins. Helpers are well equipped to meet the individual needs of the children. The helpers are supported by the effective mentoring and management arrangements.

Experienced group leaders provide guidance and are positive role models for newer helpers. As a result, the helpers are extremely enthusiastic about their roles. The helpers say that they look forward to the holiday every year and the majority return year after year.

A robust reflective approach is embedded in the helpers' practice, from the newest helper to senior managers. Team reflection time is built in after each holiday, to celebrate what has gone well and to identify and reduce any challenges in the future.

Inclusion is central to the holiday scheme across all levels. Some of the holiday helpers were once participants themselves and are now assisting others. Managers actively help children who might otherwise miss out on the holiday, supporting diversity and bringing opportunities to those who would not typically have them.

The senior management team is present throughout the holiday and maintains strong and effective oversight of the day-to-day running of the holiday. This approach results in the holiday programme being very organised. The service review is comprehensive and adheres to regulations, and was provided to Ofsted for transparency, offering insight into the operational procedures of the scheme.

## **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 Residential Holiday Homes for Disabled Children (England) Regulations 2013 and the national minimum standards.

## **Residential holiday scheme for disabled children details**

**Unique reference number:** 1027082

**Registered provider:** Heswall Disabled Children's Holiday Fund

**Registered provider address:** 9 Milton Road, Waterloo, Liverpool L22 4RE

**Responsible individual:** Charlie Bough

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### **Inspectors**

Jennifer Quest, Social Care Inspector

Judith Birchall, Social Care Inspector

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