

# SC046276

Registered provider: Devon County Council

Assurance inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this secure children's home

This secure children's home is managed by a local authority and is approved by the Secretary of State to restrict children's liberty. The children's home can accommodate up to eight children aged between 10 and 17 years under Section 25 of the Children Act 1989. Admission of any child under 13 years of age requires the approval of the Secretary of State.

The commissioning of health services in this home is the statutory responsibility of NHS England under the Health and Social Care Act 2012. Education is provided on site in dedicated facilities.

The manager is registered with Ofsted. There were six children living in the home at the time of the inspection.

**Inspection date: 16 January 2024**

**Date of last inspection:** 12 September 2023

**Judgement at last inspection:** outstanding

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Information about this inspection

At this inspection, the inspectors evaluated:

- the care of children
- the safety of children
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers.

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children, using the social care common inspection framework. This assurance 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'.

## Findings from the inspection

We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance inspection.

Staff and managers know children's histories, needs and vulnerabilities well. Managers seek all relevant information before a child is admitted to the home, so that they can consider and plan for any potential impact on other children.

Staff are skilled at building relationships and engaging children in individual work to progress their care plans. They identify interests to plan activities in the community, when this is agreed by the team around the child.

There have been a high number of successful trips for children to enjoy activities, and to make use of resources in the community. These are all subject to risk assessment and are reviewed after each event. Children grow in confidence and are able to progress their development of life skills, which supports effective transitions from the home.

Children are making progress. One child is contributing to the preparation and planning for her move to a new home, including delivering training to the new staff group about her needs.

One child who has previously had poor experiences and outcomes has made significant progress in education. They are visiting colleges to consider courses for when they move on from this home.

Staff and managers proactively advocate for children to ensure the right services are in place when children move on from this home.

Health and care staff are carefully monitoring one child's sleep patterns to support improved sleep. Disrupted sleep is impacting their health needs and readiness for education. Weekly multidisciplinary meetings are held to consider the information and inform care planning.

One social worker said, 'I am very impressed with regards to the standard of care afforded to [name of child]. The team working around this child evidently have a wealth of experience and knowledge and work effectively together to endeavour to meet their complex needs. I have nothing but praise for them.'

When children first move into the home, staff carefully explain expectations about behaviours, routines and appropriate boundaries with peers and staff.

Children are supported to settle, using known information from their team around the child, including carers and family. Staff de-escalate incidents of challenging behaviours effectively, informed by assessment of what works well for individual children.

When there are incidents, records are detailed and include the lessons learned and the debriefs held with children and staff. All records of restraint and use of measures of control are robustly quality assured to ensure practice complies with policies and procedures. Quality assurance identifies learning and positive, effective practice.

Each child's safety support plan is reviewed and updated following any incident. A 'plan for today' is agreed so that staff are clear about the response to behaviours and/or risks. Children's views are sought to inform what works well.

There are detailed multi-agency assessments to inform plans to reduce and/or respond to self-harm by children. There is evidence of sensitive and skilled monitoring of risks and behaviours to inform staff interventions to keep children safe.

A recommendation made following the previous inspection, to ensure there are systems in place for oversight by the partnership board of physical restraints, has been addressed and is met.

Managers have taken note of and made progress on recommendations from the previous inspection. They are addressing the recommendations in relation to education and these will be reviewed at the next full inspection.

The senior management team continues to work well together to develop innovative and effective practice. For example, they have agreed to develop a sensory environment as part of the work to support children to regulate their emotions and behaviours. They are consulting with a university regarding a research project on this.

There have been very few staff changes since the previous inspection. Managers have successfully recruited to a small number of posts in the care, education and health teams.

There is evidence of conscientious reflection and learning and the implementation of changes following the review of measures of control, safeguarding incidents and daily records.

Staff say they are consulted with, receive supervision that is helpful and are provided with training and development opportunities. They say they feel valued.

## Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12/09/2023	Full	Outstanding
07/06/2022	Full	Good
09/02/2022	Full	Good
29/06/2021	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

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

### **Recommendation**

- The registered person should ensure that teachers have a firm knowledge of all children's starting points in mathematics and English, to help them plan the taught curriculum. Leaders should ensure that all teachers use feedback well to support children's development. They should also ensure that all children can access appropriate careers guidance to help them plan their future study and work goals. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 29, paragraph 5.18)

## Secure children's home details

**Unique reference number:** SC046276

**Provision sub-type:** Secure unit

**Registered provider:** Devon County Council

**Registered provider address:** Devon County Council, County Hall, Topsham Road, Exeter, Devon EX2 4QD

**Responsible individual:** Steve Liddicott

**Registered manager:** Helen Bowkett

## Inspectors

Cathey Moriarty, Social Care Inspector  
Gary Turney, Social Care Inspector

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