

SC034900

Registered provider: Nottingham City Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is registered to provide short breaks for up to 11 children and young people at a time who have learning disabilities and/or physical disabilities. It is owned and run by a local authority.

There are suitably experienced registered managers.

Inspection dates: 12 to 13 March 2024

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: 10 October 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: Outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: None

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
10/10/2022	Full	Outstanding
01/03/2022	Full	Outstanding
05/02/2020	Full	Outstanding
12/12/2018	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

As soon as children begin their short break, outcomes for children and families begin to improve. Families say that they highly value the opportunity for a break from caring. Children value the opportunity to try new and exciting activities and spend time with their peers.

For one child, and their family, their lives has changed immeasurably. Staff at this short break service have supported children to follow a new medication regime. As a result of this, an eating disorder that had totally controlled their lives, has now improved so much that they can better engage in activities at home and whilst at their short break.

Managers have developed a service that is much more than providing short breaks. Families are offered the opportunity to join a carers group, where families find peer support, and help with any feelings of isolation. These sessions also offer information sessions on, for instance, sleep, and on communication.

This short break service is extremely flexible in how it meets the needs of the families, and children. When families require additional short breaks in an emergency, managers have ensured that families wherever possible are helped, whenever and however they can. For another family, excellent planning of short breaks meant they were able to organise an important family celebration.

Children are cared for by a dedicated and well-established team of staff. Their passion for their job is evident in all aspects of the care they provide. Staff provide an extremely high level of nurturing care. Children are encouraged to become as independent as they are able. For some children this is becoming less dependent on adults with their personal care needs.

The staff team are highly effective advocates. Staff identify when children and families may need support, so their needs are better met. For one child who required specialist clothing to ensure their safety, staff researched the best clothing, and this was provided for the child. As a result of this intervention, children are now safer both when at their short break service, and at home with their family.

Every success is celebrated. For some children, success is that they have enjoyed going out in the community bowling. For others, success is saying new words, or being more independent with their self-care.

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

Staff work hard to ensure that children are kept safe. Highly effective plans and risk assessments contribute to a reduction in risky behaviour. Staff work hard to respond to known risks and they manage behaviour effectively. Incidents are minimal. Children are supported wherever possible to have opportunities to develop independence in a safe and structured environment.

Staff have access to a broad programme of training and development opportunities. Often this is tailored to the complex health and social care needs of children who have their short breaks. More recently staff have had training in pathological demand avoidance, pica, and mental capacity.

Children have their short breaks in a calm environment, that is bespoke to their needs. When required, the environment is made lower stimulus, by the removal of fixtures and fittings that may cause a rise in anxiety for some children. The environment is a calming and relaxing space, which helps children settle when away from their family. Such an environment means if staff must use a physical intervention, they rarely escalate into a higher level of restraint.

Children receive a very high quality of safe care. Staff encourage children to use their own individual communication method. For the children that have short breaks, this can be verbal, and the use of pictures and symbols. Other children have individual communication systems to make their views, wishes and feelings known. Because staff understand the children's communication, this makes children safer.

Children have accessed the community, independently of staff, and put themselves at risk for a short amount of time. However, staff ensured that any risk was minimised. They responded immediately and took appropriate and effective safeguarding action. Because of this, children were kept safe. After any significant event, families are always kept informed. A high level of reflection on practice, improvements to the environment and changes to risk assessments, means that the likelihood of a repeated event are minimised.

Safeguarding practice is constantly evolving and improving. Managers are working on a safeguarding project, which encompasses several areas of practice, including participation, and how the criminal justice system works for older children with autism. This research-based project will ensure that this team keep themselves updated on contemporary thinking, about the safeguarding of children and young people with a disability.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

This short break service is led by very experienced and long-standing registered managers. They have utilised their knowledge, skills and experience to promote positive outcomes for children, and the provision of essential breaks from caring for

families. The registered managers lead an excellent senior team, who oversee a committed and motivated staff team. All staff have a shared ethos, to support stability within families, and to provide excellent experiences for children. All staff are passionate, confident, and ambitious for the children.

Managers and staff consider families as partners in their child's short break journey. Relationships with families are based on trust and are excellent and effective. Although families are rightly cautious and anxious to let their children stay for a short break, staff work extremely hard to build confidence and offer reassurance.

Managers maintains close oversight of the running of the short break service. However, there is a whole team approach to the monitoring of the care provided to children, involving staff at all levels. She has high standards and expectations in relation to the care all children receive. This is achieved in an atmosphere of nurturing care and support that the children flourish in.

Managers work alongside families and the social worker, when planning and supporting transitions to another service. The staff team immerse themselves in all aspects of transition planning, including visiting different services. They ensure that children only move on to a service that will meet their complex care requirements. Staff help families navigate systems to ensure that transitions are achieved as smoothly as possible.

Managers ensure that families are right at the centre of the planning of short breaks. Partnership working with parents is exceptional. When children's needs change, and their care plans require adapting to meet these changes, families are fully involved. When statutory care planning meetings take place, families are supported by their children's keyworkers. Families hold key workers in very high esteem, highlighting their consistent and supportive approach and the ease of communication.

Training is of good quality and is regularly updated to ensure that staff are equipped with essential skills and knowledge. Staff said that they enjoy coming to work. The staff are extremely motivated and want to do their best for the children having their short breaks.

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: SC034900

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: Loxley House, Station Street, Nottingham,
Nottinghamshire NG2 3NG

Responsible individual: Kay Sutt

Registered manager: Joanne Wright
Ella Lawrence-Cowling

Inspector

Simon Hunter, social care inspector

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