

# SC036804

Registered provider: Gateshead Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

The home is operated and managed by a local authority. The home provides short-break care for up to six children with learning disabilities and physical disabilities. The home currently supports 47 children.

The manager registered with Ofsted in January 2017.

The inspector observed and interacted with the three children who were staying at the home during the inspection.

### Inspection dates: 1 and 2 September 2025

**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 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:** 24 April 2024

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** outstanding

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>Inspection type</b>	<b>Inspection judgement</b>
24/04/2024	Full	Outstanding
30/05/2023	Full	Good
04/01/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
13/07/2021	Full	Good

## Inspection judgements

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

Children really enjoy staying at the home, relaxing and having fun. Staff's interactions with children are consistently warm, friendly and supportive, fostering a nurturing and stable home environment. Staff show genuine affection, creating a space where children feel safe and valued. Children describe their experience as a home from home.

Children have extremely positive, caring and trusting relationships with staff. The staff know the children very well, invest time in them and promote their well-being through shared activities and celebrating their achievements. The children have a strong sense of stability and security. One child said, 'I love it here.'

The children progressively gain essential life skills, such as eating and drinking, dressing and managing their personal hygiene. The staff remind children just how capable they are. One child, who previously could not use cutlery, is now feeding themselves. Another child, who previously needed full adult support in dressing, can now pull clothes up and fasten buttons. These are significant achievements that further promote the children's independence.

The staff are aspirational for children. Children participate in various leisure and community activities that help them to explore their interests, have fun and build their social confidence. Many friendships have blossomed among the children, who enjoy activities such as baking, gaming and garden picnics and have pampering nights together. Staff support these experiences by organising trips. Recently, children enjoyed going to the farm with each other, feeding and petting the animals. These experiences enrich children's childhoods.

Overall, the progress children make, considering their starting points, is remarkable. One parent said, 'I cannot really find the words, but the dedication and stickability of [name of home] means my son is doing things that I never thought would be possible.' Another parent said, 'To see my child play with other children is life changing. It is because of the staff at [name of home] his life has expanded.'

Staff excel in supporting children to express their views, wishes and feelings through a diverse range of communication methods. These methods include tools such as the Picture Exchange Communication System and social stories. For some children, staff skilfully adapt to their preferred communication methods, incorporating recognised signs, sounds, words and gestures. Each child's unique communication style is carefully documented and shared, ensuring that their voices are heard and understood.

Staff work closely with children's parents and carers. They go the extra mile in offering support when families most need it. Some parents said that staff had shared helpful behavioural strategies with them. The implementation of the shared strategies has helped the child's anxieties to significantly reduce, both at home and school.

Staff are enthusiastic and devoted in the way that they support children to do well. They place a strong focus on equality and inclusion, recognising the positive impact this can have on children's future life opportunities. Staff have consistently shown that even in difficult circumstances, they never give up on children.

The team implements a detailed and thoughtful admission process for each new child. The assessment process is carefully designed to accommodate children's individual needs and unique personalities. The meticulous process has enabled one child to transition into the home from a clinical healthcare setting, which is something professionals and family did not think would ever be possible. The team has been commended for its efforts, and as a result, the child is already thriving.

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

The staff team has an excellent insight into the different risks and vulnerabilities that the children face. These are highlighted in the highly individualised and extremely detailed 'all about me' plans. The staff carefully plan the day-to-day arrangements in the home. Sufficient staffing arrangements mean that the children are supervised and safely observed without being deprived of their liberty.

Systems are in place to monitor the trends and patterns of the children's behaviour. The staff discuss their findings and observations, which then inform the children's individual positive behaviour support plans. Consequently, incidents of children becoming anxious, frustrated and displaying unsafe behaviours significantly reduce.

The use of physical intervention is rare. When it is used, it is proportionate and only used as a last resort to keep children safe. The manager ensures that incidents are recorded and that conversations take place with staff and children whenever staff have had to hold or guide children. Through this, staff practice remains safe and appropriate.

Some children require support from staff to meet their personal care needs. This support is always delivered sensitively, with a strong focus on preserving each child's privacy and dignity. Staff have worked closely with bowel and bladder services, using research-informed practices to guide their approach. As a result, several children have made significant, life-changing progress with toileting. Some are now able to use the toilet independently, while others are no longer experiencing daytime incontinence. The team recognises these developments as important steps in safeguarding and promoting children's well-being as they grow older.

Medication management is robust and underpinned by comprehensive, individualised healthcare plans that are tailored to each child's specific needs. For children with complex medical conditions, staff proactively seek specialist guidance to maintain consistently high standards of care. Strong, well-established partnerships with external health professionals have enabled staff to access specialist training, including home ventilation, gastrostomy care and epilepsy management. As a result, staff are exceptionally well equipped and confident in meeting even the most complex health needs. Each child benefits from the consistent support of a designated key staff member during their stay, ensuring continuity of care and reinforcing a strong focus on children's dignity, safety and well-being.

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

The home is managed by a highly experienced and dedicated leadership team. The manager is extremely well motivated and ambitious and has high aspirations for the children. This includes offering her own knowledge and expertise across regional platforms to improve the quality of care that disabled children receive. One social worker said that she wishes that all the children she supports could stay at this home.

The manager is a caring, ambitious and inspirational leader. She is fully involved in the children's lives and is a highly effective and strong advocate for them. Children, their family members, the team and other professionals hold the manager in high regard.

The staff say that they are supported by both the manager and deputy manager to fulfil their roles. They say that they are listened to and can contribute to the running of the home. Staff receive high levels of supervision and appraisal that considers wider professional feedback. This helps to raise the confidence of the staff and ensures that the home is constantly thriving to improve the care for children.

Children are consistently supported by an experienced, skilled and stable staff team. The managers have high expectations of their staff and inspire them to feel empowered and fully use their individual expertise. Staff commented about how much they love and enjoy working in the home. One member of staff said that coming to work was a pleasure and that the home is an extension of their family.

The leadership team has a seamless approach to how the home is run. Their comprehensive oversight and robust monitoring systems ensures that the home remains effective and efficient in the way that care is delivered each day. Leaders are driven by their own vision where children are provided with every opportunity to be happy and make progress in all areas of their lives.

The registered manager promotes working together to ensure that children are getting the best care and opportunities for the future. Professionals from other agencies, family members, the staff and the children are all overwhelmingly positive about the difference the home makes to children's lives.

No requirements or recommendations have been made following this inspection.

## **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:** SC036804

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** Gateshead Council

**Registered provider address:** Adults, Children and Families, Gateshead Council,  
Group Secretariat, 1st Floor, Regent Street, Gateshead NE8 1HH

**Responsible individual:** Lesley Thompson

**Registered manager:** Laura McNeill

## Inspector

Claire Webster, Social Care Inspector

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