

1183826

Registered provider: Sunderland Care and Support Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately operated children's home provides short breaks for children and young people who have a disability.

Inspection dates: 10 to 11 October 2017

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

How well children and young people are helped and protected good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers good

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

Date of last inspection: 23 September 2016

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: None

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- The quality of individualised care is very good. The children and young people make good progress, and they achieve good outcomes. Their day-to-day

experiences are extremely positive. Relationships with the staff are caring and nurturing.

- The children and young people are very well supported to develop their independence skills. They enjoy a wide range of meaningful activities and they are very much a part of their local community. Good health and well-being are positively promoted.
- The children and young people are kept safe during their short breaks. Behaviour is managed positively. The home is furnished and decorated to a very high standard.
- The registered manager is a proactive leader who has implemented a number of positive improvements. The highly motivated staff team is committed to delivering good outcomes for the children and young people. The way that the registered manager and the staff support parents and families is commendable.

The children's home's areas for development:

- The record detailing child protection concerns is not compliant with regulation.
- There are shortfalls in some areas of risk management. For example, where potential restrictions are placed on the children and young people these restrictions have not been adequately assessed.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
23/09/2016	Full	Good

What does the children’s home need to do to improve?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet the Care Standards Act 2000, the Children’s Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the ‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’. The registered person(s) must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The registered person must prepare and implement a policy, which is intended to safeguard children accommodated in the children’s home from abuse or neglect. (Regulation 34 (1) (a))	31/10/2017
In particular, ensure that records are kept of any allegation of abuse or neglect, and the action taken in response.	

Recommendations

- Ensure that where there are measures in place that restrict children, that the use of these restrictions follows a rigorous risk assessment process and that the home obtains appropriate consents. (‘Guide to children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 47, paragraph 9.45)
In particular, this refers to restrictions using aids and equipment, such as bed-rails, listening devices and jack-handles.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The children and young people receive high-quality, individualised care that meets their needs. The staff team is very skilled in assessing the children and young people to ensure that they receive the care and the support that they need. These assessments start prior to a child or young person coming to stay at the home, and continue throughout their short-break placement. Information is gathered from a wide range of sources, including parents and other professionals who are involved in the care of the children and young people. This thorough preparation and good partnership working with parents and other agencies contributes significantly towards good outcomes for children and young people.

A parent said: ‘I think this home is outstanding, and it is vital to us. [Name] has many complex needs and [Name of the children’s home] is the only place that I would ever let him stay. I know that he will be well looked-after and that he will be safe.’

Relationships between the staff and the children and young people are very caring and nurturing. This establishes close bonds that support the children and young people while they are staying away from their homes and their families. As a result, there are very few episodes of the children and young people being homesick, and they see their short breaks as a fun and enjoyable experience.

A parent said: 'I was not sure about respite at first, and this was a big decision for me to let somebody else look after my child, but this was more about me than him. [Name] absolutely loves it, and sometimes he does not want to come home because he enjoys himself so much.'

All the children and young people are making progress and they are achieving as a direct result of having their short breaks. Key-workers have an exceptional knowledge of the children and young people they support. The care plans detailing how this support will be given are of a good standard. Having access to a wide range of meaningful activities plays a pivotal role in helping the children and young people to learn new social and independence skills. They are gaining in confidence significantly, which enhances their self-esteem.

The standard of the accommodation is very good. The home is beautifully furnished and decorated. A large, enclosed garden provides a safe area for the children and young people to enjoy outdoor play. In addition, the home is fitted with a range of aids and adaptations to support the children and young people who have a physical disability.

The children and young people are fully included and accepted within their local community. They take part in local events, and they have been involved in other ventures where they have contributed towards helping others. For example, the home has a large garden that includes a number of vegetable plots. The children and young people have helped to grow a range of fresh produce, which they have harvested to help them to learn about healthy food and healthy eating. Part of this activity included the children and young people choosing a range of fresh vegetables to take to the local food bank. Another activity involved the children and young people visiting a local care home to spend the afternoon with the elderly residents. This visit was a great success for the children, young people and the residents as they have developed new and meaningful friendships.

Some of the children and young people who attend for short breaks have complex healthcare needs, which require specialised care and support. The staff have received the training that they need to meet these needs and they work closely with a range of healthcare professionals who are part of the children's and young people's care team. This multi-agency approach ensures that the children and young people are safely cared for during their short breaks.

A social worker said: '[Name] is the only child who has been placed by our local authority and because of her positive experiences we want to place more children and young people at this home. The home is brilliant, and the staff team is committed and

dedicated. They know [Name] very well and they know all her needs and how to care for her. The care is totally consistent.'

The staff regularly consult with the children and young people. Each child and young person's individual needs and abilities are taken into account to enable them to participate in making decisions. The staff team uses a range of resourceful and imaginative techniques to interact with the children and young people who experience communication difficulties. The staff team is attuned to the children's and young people's indicators of positive well-being and other ways that they are able to communicate, such as the children's and young people's body language, facial expressions, and different gestures and behaviours. This caring approach values and respects the opinions of the children and young people.

A social worker said; '[Name] cannot communicate verbally but she can use gestures and facial expressions. I have watched the staff with her and they always offer her choices, even if some of the choices [Name] cannot respond to. I can honestly say she is always treated with dignity.'

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

The staff receive regular training to provide them with the knowledge they need to respond to child protection concerns. In response to a previous requirement, the registered manager has introduced new measures to improve the staff's understanding of how to keep the children and young people safe. These measures include having regular in-house training sessions and workshops that explore different aspects of child abuse. In particular, the sessions focus on safeguarding children and young people who have a disability. The registered manager also arranged for the designated safeguarding officer to visit the home to speak to the staff about her role and to reinforce what actions must be taken if they are concerned about a child's or young person's welfare. This proactive approach promotes the children's and young people's safety.

A staff member said: 'One of the best things that is happened since you were last here is that we have had lots of in-house training. This gives us the opportunity to talk about things as a group, and we can challenge each other in a good way so that we all understand what we need to do to make sure the young people are properly looked after.'

There have been no children or young people going missing, and none of the children and young people are at risk from exploitation or radicalisation. Behaviour is managed positively by the staff, who gently guide and encourage the children and young people to learn about positive social behaviours and interactions. There have been no physical restraints and sanctions are not used to manage behaviour.

Overall, risk management is effective and safeguards the children's and young people's welfare. Individual risk assessments clearly set out known risks, and how these will be minimised. The risk assessments are regularly reviewed and updated in line with any changes to the children's and young people's current needs.

There are, however, some shortfalls relating to some of the physical restrictions that are placed on the children and young people. For example, the home's uses equipment such as bed-rails, listening devices, safety harnesses and 'jack' door handles on some internal doors within the home.

There is no suggestion or concern that any of these measures or devices are currently being used inappropriately. However, the home has not carried out individual risk assessments to ensure that these devices are used to benefit and safeguard the children and young people, and that their rights are not being compromised. In addition, the staff have not always sought parental consent and, where appropriate, social worker consent, to use restrictive measures.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager has been in post since January 2016. She has the right skills, knowledge and qualifications to undertake her role. The registered manager is highly motivated and committed, and she actively seeks to improve the outcomes for the children and young people who attend for their short breaks.

Since the last inspection, the registered manager has introduced a range of improvements and developments that have enhanced the home's performance and the outcomes for the children, young people and their families.

A significant amount of time has been invested in team-building exercises and providing additional staff training. As a result, the staff team members are very respectful of each other and they share the same ethos and commitment to improving the children's and young people's lives. The introduction of regular reflective practice sessions has encouraged the staff team to explore how they meet the needs of the children and young people and how practice in the home can be improved. This values the staff and empowers them to drive improvement.

A member of staff said: 'One of the best things about [Name of the children's home] is the staff team. We all get on really well and we support each other. We do a lot of reflection, which I think is important. We talk about the young people and how we can do things better.'

The registered manager will challenge services, on behalf of the children and young people, if she feels that their rights are being compromised. An example of how she has improved outcomes significantly for some children and young people is that she was able to secure a significant grant from a charitable organisation. This money is being used to fund short-breaks placements for parents who are in the process of applying for funding from the local authority. This purposeful intervention has resulted in the home being able to provide immediate services to families who need short-breaks support.

A parent said: 'I have struggled with funding for some time, and the home being able to support me has made a big difference to me and my family.'

Good inter-agency working and the support given to parents are inspiring. The registered manager and the staff have engaged with a range of specialists to support the services that they provide to the children and young people. The support offered to parents exceeds expectations. This way of working supports vulnerable children, young people and their families.

A parent said: 'The staff do everything to support me. I am a single parent and without the help that I get from the staff I would struggle to manage.'

The home has progressed by meeting most of the requirements and a recommendation from the last inspection. All the care staff have now attained a relevant level 3 qualification in caring for children and young people. This ensures that the staff have the right qualifications to meet the needs of the children and young people. There are now clear guidelines in place that set out which events must be notified to Ofsted. This enables Ofsted to monitor the children's home between inspection visits. Changes made to staffing arrangements now ensure that there is always a suitably qualified and experienced staff member on duty who has the skills to manage the home in the absence of the registered manager. This promotes the children's and young people's welfare.

A requirement to improve the home's child protection procedure is not fully met. There have been improvements made to the procedure, which is good progress. However, the records to be kept of an allegation of abuse or neglect, including the actions taken in response, are not fully compliant with regulation. A new requirement will be raised in this report.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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: 1183826

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Sunderland Care and Support Limited

Registered provider address: Civic Centre, Burdon Road, Sunderland, Tyne & Wear
SR2 7DN

Responsible individual: Philip Foster

Registered manager: Lisa Powton

Inspector:

Debbie White, social care inspector

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