

SC003792

Registered provider: Lifeworks Charity Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is run by a charitable trust, providing care and accommodation for children, both on a residential basis and for short breaks. The home provides six short-break and four residential places for children who may have learning disabilities, physical disabilities or a sensory impairment.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since October 2018.

At the time of the inspection, four children lived in the home and 18 children visited for short breaks.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

Inspection dates: 16 to 17 June 2021

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

How well children and young people are helped and protected requires improvement to be 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: 3 December 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
03/12/2019	Full	Good
19/12/2018	Full	Good
09/01/2018	Interim	Improved effectiveness
10/05/2017	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children who live or have short breaks in this home have made excellent progress. They have carefully tailored support and care, which enable children to enjoy a variety of activities and experiences. Relationships between children and staff are secure and trusting, which help children reach their potential.

Staff know the children well. They are focused on ensuring that children's physical and emotional needs are met, while also providing a happy and fun home life. Staff are in touch with children's feelings and respond appropriately. They use social stories and timetables to help children feel safe and secure. At night time, children are looked after safely, and their care is coordinated well.

Staff consult with children in a variety of ways about all aspects of their home and their care. For example, a manager asks children which adults they would like to care for them each week. Children's confidence and skills are boosted by a small weekly residents' meeting at which children share turns in chairing and taking notes. Many ideas, interesting discussions and plans for the future have developed from these meetings.

Feedback from parents and professionals was overwhelmingly positive with descriptor words such as 'phenomenal' and 'amazing' used. Children who struggle to go out at all in other environments have conquered these fears due to the support they receive from staff. They can enjoy activities and socialise with other children. Children who normally struggle to stop using electronic devices have accepted guidance and boundaries. Consequently, they now have limited device time and enjoy other activities. Additionally, children who have previously been given medication to control their feelings in other environments, or who have used aggression to communicate, have not done so in this home.

While children's needs are placed at the centre, staff support relationships with children's families and take time to cement good working relationships. Therefore, family members feel part of the experience and valued, which in turn has a positive impact for children, and their family time is facilitated well.

Professionals noted that staff always attend meetings for children, come prepared and contribute. Staff take their responsibilities for advocating for children seriously. They are especially careful to promote a child's views and needs when a child has a communication difficulty.

Children enjoy a varied range of activities, which include visits to country parks, camping in the garden, holidays, private pool hire and local memberships to organisations as well as home-built entertainment. Staff monitor each child's participation and enjoyment. This information is linked to children's suggestions, which the lead staff member takes into account when organising future activities.

Staff compile many photographs and written information about children's experiences, but not all this information has been organised for each child.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

Staff are alert to potential safeguarding issues and the increased vulnerability of the children they look after. Staff have received safeguarding training specifically about caring for disabled children. They have recognised concerns, and the manager has made subsequent referrals to professionals. If allegations are made, internal investigations are completed thoroughly, and clear recommendations are made and followed through.

Each child has a personal evacuation plan and, when fire drills are carried out, or the fire alarm is set off by accident, a written analysis of the effectiveness of the evacuation is completed for future learning.

Any relationship issues between children are monitored closely and dealt with well, so that incidents are kept to a minimum and any potential for bullying is prevented.

The systems for medication have been revised following some errors identified through audit. These errors did not cause harm to children, but managers treated these incidents seriously and have revised the medication policy. Staff were also given additional training. Arrangements for the handling and dispensing of medication are safe.

Recruitment checks to protect children are completed for all staff. However, an overseas convictions check for one member of staff was overlooked, which meant that a staff member was recruited without the full information. This potentially put children at risk. When alerted to this error, the manager responded immediately to rectify the issue and amended the recruitment policy.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The COVID-19 restrictions have had a significant impact on the lives of the children who live in or visit the home. The manager has dealt with this extremely well and limited the negative effects where possible. The manager has succeeded in balancing children's needs, including the need to shield, with the necessity of following and interpreting government guidance to ensure children's safety. Although the home has not had any positive COVID-19 test results, staff have at times needed to isolate with children. Staff managed these periods extremely well so that they were a positive experience for children. For a short period, the home could not offer short breaks to children. The breaks resumed as soon as the manager deemed it safe enough, and she ensured that those children who needed the breaks most were prioritised.

The manager values her staff. She has appropriately attended to performance issues to ensure children's safety and, therefore, has maintained high standards of caring.

The manager has worked hard to promote a stable workforce and, since February, has stopped using agency staff. A small and consistent team of bank staff is used; they are supervised and trained to the same high standards as permanent staff. The team is a mixture of longstanding staff and staff who have been recently recruited. The team reflects a united approach of enthusiasm, interest, pride and wanting children to achieve their best and have fun. The manager's, the deputy manager's and staff's commitment, care and advocacy for children stand out.

Managers have organised bespoke training sessions about individual children for staff, to promote a consistent and skilled approach to children's care. While staff have received compulsory and additional training, they have not had formal training on ADHD. Although staff have knowledge of this condition, training would benefit the children who have this diagnosis and accompanying medication.

Complaints and 'grumbles' are transparently recorded. One record of a complaint, although responded to, did not evidence how it was resolved, and the outcome was not recorded.

Improvements to the home environment have continued since the previous inspection. Parts of the home are cosy and comfortable, but some areas still come across as more clinical than homely. This does not reflect the excellent care and homely approach that the staff provide. Therefore, this requirement is repeated.

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, 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
<p>The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who—</p> <p>understand the children’s home’s overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; and</p> <p>use this understanding to deliver care that meets children’s needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 6(1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(i))</p> <p>This particularly refers to the manager, in consultation with the children, reviewing all aspects of the home environment so that it is as homely as possible.</p>	<p>29 July 2021</p>
<p>The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children’s safety.</p> <p>The registered person may only—</p> <p>employ an individual to work at the children’s home; or</p> <p>if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home,</p> <p>if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3).</p> <p>The requirements are that—</p> <p>full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32(1) (3)(a)(b)(d))</p>	<p>29 June 2021</p>

This requires the manager to ensure that necessary checks are completed when a prospective employee has lived abroad.	
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Recommendations

- Staff should keep and encourage children to keep appropriate memorabilia of the time spent living at the home and help them record significant life events ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9). In particular, collate photographs and information so that they are organised for individual children to look back on.
- The registered person must lead and manage the home in a way that delivers the ethos, outcomes and approach set out in the home's statement of purpose ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 52, paragraph 10.4). In particular, ensure that a record is made of how a complaint is resolved and that a written response is sent to the complainant, in line with the statement of purpose and good practice.
- The registered person should ensure that staff can access appropriate facilities and resources to support their training needs, and should understand the key role they play in the training and development of staff in the home ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.11). In particular, consider staff's training needs in relation to attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

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: SC003792

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Lifeworks Charity Limited

Registered provider address: Blacklers Park Road, Dartington Hall Estate,
Totnes, Devon TQ9 6EQ

Responsible individual: Brian Smith

Registered manager: Kelly Westbury

Inspector

Sarah Canto, Social Care Inspector

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