

SC405933

Registered provider: Surrey County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This short-breaks home is run by a local authority and provides care for children with a range of complex disabilities, including those with autism spectrum disorder. Currently, 35 children are registered to use the short-breaks service and up to six children use the service at any one time.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since 11 February 2014.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

Inspection dates: 12 to 13 April 2022

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: 13 July 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/07/2021	Full	Outstanding
29/08/2019	Full	Good
23/10/2018	Full	Good
25/07/2017	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children benefit from staying in this home and they are supported well to make good progress. Staff read children's placement plans regularly to ensure that they are aware of any changes. As a result, staff know the children's needs well and they provide good-quality, individualised care.

Children make good progress in all areas of their lives. Staff work in partnership with a range of professionals to ensure that children's health is optimised and well maintained. Staff receive training specific to children's health, for example, regarding gastro feeding and epilepsy. A new system is in place regarding the notification of changes in medication; this is intended to reduce the likelihood of medication errors. Dietary needs are well met, despite the diverse and complex range of food and feeding styles.

Staff support the education arrangements for the children effectively. Staff attend education reviews at school so that they know about the children's progress and their assessed needs. Staff implement the relevant targets set at these meetings, and this ensures consistency of approach for the children.

There are good relationships between staff, parents and other professionals. Staff provide parents with reports on how their children have been while at the service and parents appreciate these updates. In addition, staff have developed an effective programme to involve parents in the continued development of the physical environment of the home. This is a particular strength and one that parents value.

Parents and professionals are complimentary about the service. One parent said 'we're only as chilled out as this because of this home', and another said 'we receive a mental break, a release'. Professionals said that the home 'adapts for parents and helps out in emergencies', and that parents usually ask for more opportunities for their children to spend time at the home. Feedback from parents and professionals was entirely positive. Children happily stay at the home and parents say that their children are always keen to attend.

Children's day-to-day experiences are positive. Staff take them out into the local community and support them to access fun activities, such as at the local farm or cinema. Children's wishes and feelings are respected and if a child does not wish to go, they are offered an alternative activity. Children are also given choices about the food that they wish to eat and the clothes that they wish to wear. This enables them to feel respected and valued.

Children are well prepared for their futures. They receive opportunities to develop independence skills, and this is often done in ways that are fun. One child has made significant progress in their cooking skills and happily helps in the kitchen at

mealtimes. A risk assessment is in place, and they understand some of the dangers in the kitchen.

Children receive a warm and welcoming introduction to the home. Introductions are thorough and, as a result, many children have continued to access the home for several years. Staff work closely with new providers when children are moving on. The sharing of information is recognised as a positive way to ensure a smooth transition into a new home. On some occasions, a young person's stay at the home has been extended for a short while after their 18th birthday. This has ensured that the young people have moved on in a planned and positive way.

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

Risk assessments are in place and staff ensure that they are aware of any changes or updates. Risks are identified and control measures put in place to ensure the children's safety. Staff have a good understanding of how to keep children safe and this includes understanding the vulnerabilities of children with disabilities.

Staff receive training in safeguarding children, and this is updated annually. They speak positively about the quality of this training and know how to report concerns about the safety of a child. However, some staff did not know about the role of the local authority designated officer and how concerns might be progressed outside of the home.

Staff take a positive approach to behaviour management that helps the children to develop and to learn. This approach includes using strategies that help to de-escalate a situation. Physical intervention is used as a last resort and only when necessary to keep the child and others safe. For example, in one incident when a child was displaying particularly complex behaviours and was becoming unsafe, staff confidently used de-escalation strategies before implementing a physical move to an environment where the child felt safe. This helped to reassure both the child and others who were being impacted by the incident.

Children do not go missing from this home. They are monitored closely, and safety measures are in place to ensure that they cannot leave the building without an adult. Staff recognise that children with disabilities are more vulnerable to abuse, and they respond appropriately when they have concerns about a child.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Leaders and managers ensure high standards of individualised care to all children who stay at the home. The training provided to staff means that they know how to meet the complex and diverse needs of the children who use the service. The consistent and stable staff team means that agency workers are not used, and a small bank team of workers are used when required. This enables consistency for children as well as for their parents, who have good, trusting relationships with the staff.

Leaders and managers are able to explain the progress that children are making. However, documents intended to monitor progress and development are not used consistently.

Leaders and managers understand the strengths of the home and the areas for development. They take effective action when necessary. For example, the manager responded quickly to a recent incident regarding a medication error. She put in place a group email address to ensure that all staff know about medication changes at the earliest opportunity. As a result, staff feel confident that there will not be a repeat of this kind of incident.

Staff say that they feel well supported. They are positive about the training that they receive, and they feel that this equips them to meet the specific needs of the children. Staff receive regular individual and group supervision. These meetings help them to reflect on their work while learning, developing and continuing to deliver high standards of care.

Leaders and managers have good professional relationships with external partners. Social workers are positive about the input from managers when attending meetings. They also commented on how well the manager knows the needs of the children. The manager is skilled in building relationships with parents. Consequently, parents feel involved and are confident in leaving their child in the care of the home.

Leaders and managers have several systems in place to monitor aspects of the home. However, the subsequent internal monitoring review lacks analysis and a clear plan of how they will improve identified areas. Leaders and managers are responsive to recommendations made by their independent visitor and ensure that staff know their own role in implementing the recommendations.

Leaders and managers have a strong commitment to the promotion of equality and diversity. This is evident throughout the home. Children's achievements are recognised on an achievement tree in the reception area. Children's dietary needs are met, regardless of their complexities. The staff group is diverse and staff are respectful of each other's differences. They respect children's and each other's religious and cultural beliefs. There is an equalities champion on the staff group and this person shares information with the team following any meetings that they attend.

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 leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children’s home that—</p> <p>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and</p> <p>promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(h))</p> <p>This particularly refers to ensuring consistency in reviewing, recording, and signing off on children’s progress in the home.</p>	<p>30 June 2022</p>

Recommendations

- The registered person should actively seek independent scrutiny of the home and make best use of information from independent and internal monitoring (including under regulations 44 and 45) to ensure continuous improvement. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 55, paragraph 10.24)
- The duties and responsibilities of local authorities and others who deliver children’s services with regard to safeguarding children are set out clearly in the statutory guidance, ‘Working together to safeguard children’. In particular, staff should be aware of the role of the designated officer and designated safeguarding lead. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 42, paragraph 9.2)

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: SC405933

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: Quadrant Court, 35 Guildford Road, Woking, Surrey GU22 7QQ

Responsible individual: Laura Hoyles

Registered manager: Elizabeth Mahdi

Inspector

Vevene Muhammad, Social Care Inspector

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