

SC394025

Registered provider: The National Centre for Young People with Epilepsy

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home provides education and residential care for up to 60 children across eight separate homes. Children attend the organisation's non-maintained special school, which is approved by the Department for Education. Children who have a variety of disabilities, primarily learning difficulties, autism spectrum disorder, complex health needs and physical disabilities, are accommodated for 38 weeks or 52 weeks. Many, but not all, children who stay at the home have a diagnosis of epilepsy.

The delay in having a manager registered with Ofsted is beyond the provider's control.

An adult college and some houses that are exclusively for 18- to 25-year-olds are on the same site. These are regulated by the Care Quality Commission.

Inspection dates: 28 to 29 August 2019

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 requires improvement to be good

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

Date of last inspection: 19 February 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
19/02/2019	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
27/06/2018	Full	Good
09/01/2018	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
06/06/2017	Full	Requires improvement to be 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, 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 registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children’s safety. The registered person may only— employ an individual to work at the children’s home; or 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, if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3).</p> <p>The requirements are that— the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform; full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1)(2)(a)(b)(3)(b)(d))</p> <p>This especially applies to making sure the necessary checks are in place for agency staff.</p>	31/12/2019
<p>The registered person must maintain records (“case records”) for each child which— are kept up to date. (Regulation 36 (1)(b))</p>	31/12/2019
<p>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; and sets out the procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse or neglect. (Regulation 34 (1)(a)(b))</p>	31/12/2019

Recommendations

- A record of supervision should be kept for staff, including the manager. The record should provide evidence that supervision is being delivered in line with regulation 33(4)(b) ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.3)
- Regulation 40(4) requires the registered person to notify Ofsted and other relevant persons if one of the situations specified in regulation 40(4)(a)-(d) occurs, or if there is an incident relating to the protection, safeguarding or welfare of a child living in the home which the registered person considers to be serious (40(4)(e)). ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 63, paragraph 14.10)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children and young people live in a life-enriching environment where they are free to enjoy new experiences as well as to pursue their existing interests. Some have enjoyed a holiday for the first time, while others have performed a charity parachute jump. Children and young people make good progress, such as in mobility, social integration and epilepsy management.

Staff provide children and young people with high-quality care that is delivered with enthusiasm and warmth. Staff demonstrate due diligence and celebrate each child and young person's unique personality.

Staff are attuned to each child and young person's communication needs. They use bespoke methods to engage with each child and young person. Staff interpret eye contact, facial expressions and noises so each child and young person, regardless of their level of communication difficulty, has a voice. A professional said, 'A young person prepares his answers in advance of the house meeting, allowing him to fully participate within the group in a timely way.'

Staff encourage children and young people to consider the wider community, for example by collecting food for a local foodbank. Children and young people were able to make a large donation and meet the volunteers.

The organisation's own health professionals are on hand to provide specialist advice and support to meet children and young people's health needs. Children and young people make significant progress, for example a reduction in the number and frequency of seizures, being able to walk or sit independently and being able to manage their own personal care.

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

Staff provide the children and young people with a safe place to live. They have a good understanding of the children and young people's needs. They use well-written and clear risk assessments that support children and young people's safety inside and outside of the home. Staff perform regular checks to keep children and young people safe, such as recording bath temperatures to ensure that children and young people do not get scalded.

Staff record incidents well. There is not an overuse of physical intervention. Staff follow the bespoke behaviour management plans to help children and young people develop their coping strategies and social skills at a rate commensurate with their understanding and abilities.

Staff help children and young people to understand risk and how to stay safe. Staff appreciate the need for children and young people to become independent. A staff member said, 'We used to be risk averse, but now we allow children to take appropriate risks.'

Children and young people enjoy trusting relationships with the staff. Staff place children and young people's well-being and safety at the centre of practice. Children and young people's learning difficulties make them particularly vulnerable, and this means that staff have to plan effectively and in detail to ensure that they are kept safe. A young person said, 'I feel happy and safe here.'

In one case, senior leaders did not ensure that staff fully applied the safeguarding procedure in practice. Safeguarding records lacked sufficient details. There was a lack of professional curiosity. Reasons for action taken, such as speaking to a child or staff member, were unclear. Although children and young people were not at risk, senior leaders did not complete an internal investigation promptly.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

The approach to record keeping needs improving. Some case records are not up to date or contain conflicting information. For example, staff reviewed one placement plan before a review but did not update it with the new goals following the review. Staff supervision records did not always demonstrate that the issues raised were followed up in subsequent supervisions.

Safer recruitment practice is followed for permanent staff. However, staff responsible for recruitment do not quality assure the practice of employment agencies to ensure that all the necessary checks, required by regulation, are completed to a satisfactory standard. They do not check whether the required level 3 qualification is through the adult or children route.

Leaders and managers have demonstrated their determination to strive for continuous improvement by changing the staff structure. They have ensured that there are clear

levels of accountability and delegation. The registration status of the provision is being negotiated with Ofsted, to determine whether it should be inspected as a residential special school or a children's home. Leaders and managers continue to be solution focused and have experienced delays in resolving the registered manager status that are beyond their control.

Senior leaders have well-advanced plans to make a considerable investment in the physical environment. This includes refurbishing children and young people's bedrooms and making the environment homelier, with less of a 'clinical feel'. They have identified other weaknesses, such as the need to improve software for managing incidents. Equally, plans are well advanced to address this.

The organisation's leaders are experts in their field. They work with health professionals, education professionals and universities to develop new tools to advance the understanding and treatment of epilepsy. Staff train other organisations about epilepsy. Care staff recently provided bespoke training for staff in a supported living placement, so that they understood the particular needs of a young person moving into adulthood. They also provide training to household members that helps minimise anxieties when children and young people visit their family.

Leaders and managers monitor events across all of the homes. They notify others of significant events. In one case, managers did not notify Ofsted of an event due to their interpretation of the guidance. The independent visitor provides another level of monitoring. He acts as a critical friend, providing a detailed report of his findings and subsequent recommendations. Leaders and managers take these seriously and use them as a tool for improvement.

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: SC394025

Provision sub-type: Residential special school

Registered provider: The National Centre for Young People with Epilepsy

Registered provider address: St Piers Lane, Lingfield, Surrey RH7 6PW

Responsible individual: Rosemarie Pardington

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Keith Riley, lead social care inspector

Paul Taylor, social care inspector

Chris Peel, social care inspector

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