

SC429762

Registered provider: Atlas Healthcare Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately owned children's home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to nine children and young people. Five children and young people receive long-term residential care and four children and young people can receive short breaks. All the children and young people who use this service have profound and multiple learning disabilities and complex health needs.

Inspection dates: 30 to 31 May 2017

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: 20 February 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: Improved effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection

None

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is outstanding because:

- The inspirational and passionate registered manager empowers a consistent and skilled staff team to constantly meet children and young people's needs.
- Children and young people receive exceptional individualised care from a committed and caring staff team.
- Children and young people are empowered to participate in inclusive activities in the community that enrich their lives.
- Children and young people's complex and diverse health needs are well met, promoting their physical and emotional health.
- Outstanding collaborative working with partner agencies enhances children and young people's lives and ensures that they are reaching all achievable goals.
- Excellent safeguarding procedures, coupled with high staffing levels, ensure that children and young people are protected.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/02/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
09/05/2016	Full	Good
30/12/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
15/07/2015	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children and young people are happy and comfortable in their spacious and well-equipped home. The bedrooms of children and young people who live permanently in the home are decorated to their taste with chosen individual sensory adaptations. These include projectors for the ceiling so that they can watch films in their bedrooms. Children and young people who come for short breaks have their rooms prepared especially for them with their own special items, which promotes a sense of belonging. All of the children and young people can spend time together in the lounges, dining room, garden or sensory room. As a result, children and young people feel safe and secure, allowing them to build close, trusting relationships with staff and to blossom. A social worker said, 'I love going to [home's name], it's a lovely place.'

None of the children and young people who live in or come to the home for short breaks have any verbal communication skills. The majority are wheelchair users and their complex health conditions mean that most are peg fed, as they are unable to swallow and eat solid food. Excellent care plans detail children and young people's individual and diverse requirements. These help to ensure that, as well as meeting their physical and cultural needs, the skilled and well-trained staff team also anticipates and meets children and young people's emotional requirements. As a result, children and young people are blossoming and meeting their goals. A staff member said, 'We know how to manage their emotions as well. It is normal to do moving and handling but it is important to care about their feelings and emotions.'

Children and young people thrive as a result of the outstanding care they receive. The skilled staff team understands each child and young person's individual communication methods. Staff work warmly and consistently to empower children and young people to express themselves and make choices. Children and young people's interaction with the staff team and each other during inclusive activities enriches their lives. A staff member said, 'People look at our kids and they think they don't have a life but they don't know them. They definitely let us know what they want and don't want.'

Parents, family members and professionals all report extremely positively about the excellent relationships they have with the manager and staff. This close, collaborative working benefits children and young people to have regular contact with their loved ones. Maintaining these vital cultural and familial bonds supports children and young people now and will enhance their future adult placements. One young person is now able to have regular contact in an older sibling's home as a result of the proactive, targeted support the staff provide. A social worker said, 'The way they've supported his family to have contact with him in their home is massively important for [name].'

All of the children and young people attend local schools, where they are full members of the school community. The registered manager is a governor in the school the majority of the children and young people attend. She ensures that their needs are met and that excellent communication is maintained between the school and home, as a good parent would. Children and young people are supported to embrace every aspect of their school lives – for example, attending the prom at the end of the school year.

This enhances their emotional well-being and feelings of belonging. A parent said, 'I would give them 10 out of 10 for everything, it's fantastic. I can't fault them.'

Comprehensive medication procedures include detailed recording and robust attention to children and young people's health matters. This ensures that any change in their physical condition is acted upon swiftly. Improvements, as well as any concerns, are shared appropriately with medical practitioners. Since her admission, one child has experienced a marked reduction in the number of seizures she has had. This is attributed to her receiving more stimulation and being more engaged with staff and the other children and young people than she was in her previous placement. Another child's family member said, 'I'm kept informed and involved in everything to do with [name]. I don't have any worries or concerns about his medication or his safety. I'm happy.'

The dedicated and enthusiastic staff team understands each individual child or young person's communication methods very well. Staff work hard to empower children and young people to share their views on all aspects of their care, whether this be what clothes they want to wear today or what film they want to see at the cinema. Children and young people feel valued and included in the decision-making about their lives as a result. The registered manager said of a young person, 'She chooses the colour nail varnish she wants now. She will pull her hand away until she gets what she wants. These kids might not be able to talk but they'll tell you what they want and make their own choices.'

Children and young people are involved in a range of inclusive activities within their local area as well as further afield, in-line with their interests. For example, one young person attended a premier league football match in his hometown, and others regularly go swimming, horse riding and to the cinema. A staff member said, 'He went to the stables with us and he absolutely loved it. His mum said she would never have taken him there because she wouldn't have thought he would like it, but he does. He loves being here.' In addition, there are plans to take the children and young people on a summer holiday, reflecting home life.

The children and young people are very much a part of their local community. The girls took part in the 'Race for Life' last summer and this year the boys will be participating in the 'Miles for Men' event. All of these activities not only enhance children and young people's day-to-day experiences and enrich their lives, but also improve their social skills and burgeoning maturity. A staff member said, 'I think he feels more independent, he still likes to know the people who are around him but he's better now at making decisions about where he wants to be. He'll let us know if he doesn't want to be in the room or wants to get up.'

The majority of children and young people will be moving on to adult residential provision when they leave this home. The registered manager and staff team, in partnership with the placing authorities, work very hard to ensure that the new home will not only meet the young person's physical needs but will continue to stimulate them and promote their emotional well-being. One young person is just about to start this transition process after living in the home for 10 years. An excellent plan, agreed with all involved parties, aims to ensure that the move will be completed sensitively, with as little disruption to the young person as possible. Staff from the home will maintain contact with the young person for as long as necessary, as they do with other young people who

have moved on, to support them in their new lives. The registered manager said, 'We never forget young people who have lived here and keep those friendships and that relationship going.'

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

Excellent individual risk assessments cover every aspect of a child or young person's diverse needs. Adherence to these plans not only helps to keep children and young people safe and protected, but allows them to participate in activities in the home and community. As a result, children and young people are able to enjoy their lives and have fun. A staff member said, 'Children are safe here. All the staff are trained and all are aware that the safety of children is the most important. We must keep them safe at all times.'

High staffing levels, appropriate security systems within the home, and children and young people's health conditions mean that they are not likely to go missing or absent themselves. Nevertheless, the proactive manager has ensured that all staff have full training on the risks posed by child sexual exploitation and radicalisation. In addition, one member of staff has become an e-safety ambassador and helps to ensure that staff knowledge is current. Children and young people are protected by these measures. A social worker said, 'I've got no concerns about safeguarding at all, or that children are not safe. They couldn't have better care.'

Children and young people's well-being and safety are paramount to the management and staff. Due to children and young people's profound levels of physical and learning disability, restraints and sanctions are not used in the home. Children and young people feel safe and secure as a result of the consistent warmth and affection they receive from the staff team. A parent said of her daughter, 'She is really safe and comfortable and I'm really impressed at how caring the staff are. Nothing is too much trouble and I don't feel judged here, just welcomed.'

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The inspirational registered manager is passionate about providing children and young people with exceptional care. She has the requisite experience and qualifications to fulfil her role. The staff and professionals report extremely positively about the difference she has made in the home since her appointment in January 2016. A staff member said, 'We've had more since [manager's name] has been here for the kids and the home than we've ever had. She has come along and the bedrooms are done and the rooms have been done and she fights for equipment and everything. For me that is a massive thing because I'm all about the kids.'

There were no requirements raised at the last inspection. Nevertheless, the manager has continued to introduce productive new practices that improve and enhance care for children and young people. These include new monthly progress checks on care plans. These ensure that not only is the manager fully aware of actions being taken to meet with care planning, but also that any goal achieved by children and young people, no matter how small, is recognised and celebrated. There were no breaches of legislation identified at this inspection. The registered manager said, 'The children are loved, it's like one massive family. Staff see all the little changes in them and staff can see what

they are actually doing now and how they are progressing.'

Robust recruitment procedures are applied effectively, ensuring that only people who do not pose a risk to the children and young people care for them. Staff report how well supported they feel as a result of their targeted supervision sessions and high level of training. The proactive registered manager has introduced a new induction programme, which complements the company's procedures, and ensures that new staff members understand the specific and diverse needs of the children and young people in this home. Staff are motivated and enthusiastic about their jobs, and as a result children and young people are happy and safe in their care. A staff member said, 'I love this job. I love these children. The more I work the more I learn new things.'

The registered manager's comprehensive development plan details how to meet targets to enhance care and life opportunities for children and young people. This includes working with the company to open a provision for young adults aged 18 to 30 years that young people from this home can progress to. This commitment to children and young people's futures enhances their adult life chances as well as their current day-to-day care. A parent said, 'The manager is on top form. She knows exactly what [name] needs and makes sure he gets it, she's fantastic. Don't get me wrong, the other staff are amazing as well, but [name] is fantastic.'

Both the internal and external monthly monitoring reports contribute towards children and young people's safety and promote their well-being. They include the views of family members, staff and professionals and comply with regulation.

The ethos of the home, as stated in its statement of purpose, is that: 'Staff at [home's name] believe that each child is unique and as far as possible their individual needs should be met and their potential developed regardless of their disability. We feel that this is best achieved in a stimulating environment of nurture, care and consistency, where the children have confidence in the staff and feel safe.' In order to achieve this, it states: 'We believe that children and young people should be recognised, respected, consulted and given choice. Children and young people should have a good quality of life, are given equal chances and are able to live positive and productive lives.' As the children and young people are content, thriving and safely achieving each of their identified goals, the home is meeting its aims and objectives.

The registered manager is an excellent advocate for children and young people. She is driven in her desire to ensure that children and young people receive all they are entitled to and deserve in life and are not overlooked. This includes ensuring they receive appropriate statutory financial payments, which are saved to benefit them in adulthood. In order to ensure consistent collaboration, she actively challenges other services if necessary, while maintaining good and close working relationships with them. A social worker said, 'My first contact was [manager's name] defending [young person's name] to the hilt and making sure that when he goes out on contact that it is meaningful for him. If we haven't arranged something or completed something that needs doing, she pops up and reminds us, and she's always right.'

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: SC429762

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Atlas Healthcare Ltd

Registered provider address: Norcliffe House, Station Road, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 1BU

Responsible individual: Maureen Richardson

Registered manager: Gillian Fletcher

Inspector(s)

Ann-Marie Born, social care inspector

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