

# SC037521

Registered provider: Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This is a short-breaks service for children aged between eight and 18 years old who have complex health needs, including physical or sensory disabilities. The home provides respite for families and their children. Due to the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic, the provider has made the decision to reduce the number of children able to access the home at any one time. The home also offers an emergency bed to be used to provide children with temporary care and accommodation while suitable longer-term arrangements are made.

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

### Inspection dates: 25 to 26 August 2021

<b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account</b>	<b>outstanding</b>
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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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:** 23 October 2019

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** outstanding

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
23/10/2019	Full	Outstanding
04/12/2018	Full	Good
13/12/2017	Full	Outstanding
16/02/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding**

Children who have complex needs enjoy well-planned short breaks that significantly improve the quality of their lives. Children enjoy staying in a sociable, safe and welcoming environment that significantly enhances their well-being, overall progress and development.

Children engage well with staff and are making progress. Children are reported to be calmer and the number of incidents has reduced. For the children who stay at the home for longer periods, this has enabled assessments to take place and the right provision to be identified. Social workers state that the support from staff has enabled children to remain at home with their families and to make progress.

Children have helped to design their own children's guide. This captures the experience of the children and provides clear information for any child who stays at the home.

Children's views are captured through their interaction with the 'young inspectors' group. This is a group of young people who undertake regular visits to the home on behalf of the local authority. This has helped children to share their opinions and views about their care.

Positive relationships with parents ensure that staff are knowledgeable about the changing needs of the children. Parents will seek support from staff when needed. This ensures that the children are provided with a high level of consistent care, and that their needs are well known and understood.

The decision to reduce the number of children in the home due to COVID-19 has been communicated well to parents and social workers. The manager was proactive in working with social services to identify those children and families who were most at risk. This has helped to ensure that families in need continue to receive support.

Decisions to use the emergency provision have been well considered and in the best interests of the children who need support at the time. These decisions have been made in consultation and agreement with other professionals. This has ensured that all children to receive the support they need.

The staff are very aware of the children's backgrounds and other people involved in their lives. They are actively involved in meetings relating to the children to enable them to share their viewpoints. This enables staff to support the children in a holistic way, working with other professionals to achieve positive outcomes.

The home has recently been redecorated to a high standard. Children have had input into the design and have named the rooms. The walls in the home are

adorned with children's achievements, artwork and photos. This makes a large home feel welcoming and inviting, and helps children to feel a part of the home.

Although COVID-19 has restricted access to some activities, staff have been creative in engaging children, and have taken advantage of any opportunity to have access to external activities. The newly equipped garden provides numerous opportunities for the children to engage in activities and enjoy time outside. The sensory room provides additional stimulation for children, and is well used. This provides children with positive experiences to engage in within the home.

Adaptations have been made to the home to enable children to access the service. This helps to ensure that children with complex needs have access to the home.

Children's records capture the events of the day and make specific reference to current targets identified in the care plans. This provides children with an account of their lives that they can look back on and remember positively. It also enables targets to be easily reviewed, and progress to be identified and celebrated.

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

The ethos of the home is one of encouraging positive behaviour, kindness and respect. Staff work effectively as a team, and this means that children are supported in a consistent way. Staff are skilled and meticulous and have a detailed understanding of children's needs. This helps them to lessen children's anxieties and enables them to channel behaviour in a positive direction.

Incidents are rare. However, when they occur, staff take action. Incident records are quickly evaluated by the manager. This helps the manager to identify patterns of behaviour and implement new strategies to support the children.

COVID-19 risk assessments have been implemented and followed by staff in line with public health guidance. This has helped to reduce the risk of an outbreak and spread of infection within the home.

Staff know the children's health needs and are quick to respond to potential concerns. They are confident about seeking support from other professionals, including calling for an ambulance when needed, to ensure that children receive the care they need. This has helped to prevent children from becoming seriously ill.

The manager takes quick and decisive action to safeguard children. When one child's behaviour put other children at risk, the manager was confident in his decision-making. Although this ended the child's time at the home, the manager recognised that this was needed in order to safeguard the children and staff.

Staff observe, identify and address safeguarding concerns. This includes challenging other professionals when they have failed to follow safeguarding procedures. This has helped to better protect children.

Children's risks are well known and understood. The risk management plans provide clear steps for staff to follow. Updates are shared during handover and emailed to the staff team, to ensure that all staff are aware of any changes. This helps to reduce risks and promotes consistency.

Some medication errors have occurred, but have not had a direct impact on children's well-being. The manager has responded well to all errors and has consulted with other professionals. This ensures that safeguards are in place. In addition, further steps have been taken to reduce the risk of more occurrences.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

Leaders and managers have excellent communication with other professionals and each other. They feel supported and informed of plans and decisions relating to the children. This enables them to provide continuity and consistency of care for the children.

The home is not yet operating to full capacity. This is because of staff shortages caused by sickness and a delay in recruitment. The manager has an action plan to address this, and recognises the need for additional staff to be recruited before the home is fully operational.

The management team supports staff with their professional development. Supervisions are undertaken with all staff, and capture the children's needs and the staff members' own development plans. The recent implementation of a development plan to upskill a staff member has been successful in enabling them to progress. This provides staff with opportunities to progress, and provides children with staff who are knowledgeable and committed to their role.

All staff either have the training they need to meet the children's needs or are about to undertake it. A detailed training risk assessment identifies any potential shortfalls that have occurred due to a lack of training, and includes the plans that are in place to mitigate the impact of this. This has enabled the staff team to continue to meet the children's needs.

When maintenance issues arise, the manager escalates his concerns with senior managers. This ensures that children are not adversely affected and can continue to live in a pleasant environment.

The manager has been overseeing two homes, but has not received the support and external scrutiny needed to ensure that all administrative tasks are completed. Supervisions for the manager do not discuss both homes in enough detail and this has contributed to the regulation 45 report not being completed. This does not provide the manager with the opportunity to continue to improve the quality of care.

## 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 promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child;</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)(d)(h))</p> <p>In particular, the manager must have full oversight of all documents, and receive appropriate external support and scrutiny to help him to identify shortfalls, including review and submission of documents such as the statement of purpose. In addition, appropriate staffing levels must be in place to support all children and enable the home to operate at full capacity.</p>	5 November 2021

### Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that a review of the quality of care is completed and submitted to Ofsted every six months which is evaluative and identifies any actions required for the next six months. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.4)

## **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:** SC037521

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

Registered Provider: Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council

**Registered provider address:** Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council,  
Riverside House, Main Street, Rotherham S60 1AE

**Responsible individual:** Rebecca Wall

**Registered manager:** Darren Higgins

## Inspector

Debra Boldy, Social Care Inspector



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