

# SC039559

Registered provider: Halton Borough Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This local authority home is registered to provide short breaks for up to four children who may have learning disabilities, physical disabilities and sensory impairment.

At the time of this inspection, 15 children were receiving short breaks at the home. Three children have left the home, all of whom have moved on to adult services.

The manager registered with Ofsted in September 2023.

### Inspection dates: 25 and 26 February 2025

<b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account</b>	<b>good</b>
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

**Date of last inspection:** 22 February 2024

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
22/02/2024	Full	Good
15/03/2023	Full	Good
16/11/2021	Full	Good
25/02/2020	Full	Good

## Inspection judgements

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

Children enjoy their short breaks at this home. One parent said their child 'shrieks with excitement' when they know they are staying. Another child refers to the home as the 'children's hotel'. This is a view that is shared by the manager and his team, who work hard to ensure that children get the most from their short breaks.

The home is designed and furnished to meet the needs of all the children who come to stay. It is bright, welcoming and fun. There is a separate sensory room, therapy room and gym. The walls are covered in photos of smiling children taking part in activities both inside and outside of the home. The home also has a well-resourced playroom and a book corner. As a result, children's sensory needs are also well met.

The staff encourage children's individual communication styles and work hard to ensure that their voices are heard with regards to making choices and respecting their decisions. However, children are not regularly consulted about the quality of the care that they receive, including their feedback about the staff. Both of which are missed opportunities to make further improvements.

Bedrooms are nicely decorated and children can choose which room they stay in. The staff ensure that the rooms are prepared for children with their favourite items to make their stay comfortable. However, all children are visually checked on every hour throughout the night. This impacts children's privacy and has not been assessed as necessary or proportionate.

The staff plan monthly themes for the children that include activities and outings. Recent examples include space month and science month. The creativity of the staff in bringing these themes to life for children combine fun and education that have included star gazing, visits to the planetarium and science experiments.

Children make noticeable progress during their short breaks at this home. Some examples of this include, children now sleeping through the night, children responding to fire drills, and developing their independence skills. One child, whose nights are soon to decrease due to the progress they have made, is pleased with their achievements and has been involved in the decision to stay less frequently.

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

The manager is keen to develop safeguarding practices and since the last inspection has focused on staff understanding deprivation of liberty and fire safety. Additional training and research have resulted in changes to practice that benefit children coming to stay. For example, staff ensure that children receive the appropriate capacity assessments, and changes are made to personal emergency evacuation plans when necessary.

Children have good relationships with the staff, and the staff know them well. As a result, staff can de-escalate incidents. There has been one incident involving restraint since the last inspection, and this was necessary and proportionate. However, the record does not capture all the details required.

Most of the children require medication to be administered alongside some more complex procedures to ensure their well-being. The staff are appropriately trained and competent in providing this care. As a result, there have not been any medication errors or discrepancies.

Staff are guided by support plans and risk assessments that are regularly reviewed. However, these do not include agreed guidelines on how staff should assess the risk to a child following them banging their head or whether medical advice should be sought.

The manager ensures that the service is very much part of the local community. He has established links with the local police and fire brigade, who come out to visit the children in their vehicles. This promotes a positive impression of the emergency services, which some children previously found difficult.

The staff work in partnership with families to support children with other issues that they may be experiencing at home. For example, supporting them with grief and loss and providing bespoke care and additional stays when required. Additionally, the manager has introduced a direct link to the National Youth Advocacy Service.

The manager ensures that the home environment is safe and well maintained for children.

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

The manager is suitably experienced and qualified and is supported by a deputy manager. Together, they are a strong leadership team, whose members are committed to the children and motivated to ensure that they have positive experiences during their stays.

A key achievement since the last inspection is that the manager has now recruited a full staff team. This improvement has been noted from parents, professionals and staff alike.

The manager holds regular team meetings that are now split into a team agenda and child-focused discussions. This ensures that the children are prioritised and there is the opportunity to discuss all children. This means that the staff have the information they need to support the children effectively.

The staff feel supported by the management team, and they receive regular child-focused supervision sessions that allow them to reflect on their practice and be provided with the necessary advice and guidance.

The manager demonstrates a commitment to his own and the staff's continued professional development. He has sourced appropriate training for the staff as well as signing up to forums that will continue to support him in his role.

The manager has a good management oversight, with systems in place to ensure that this is thorough.

## What does the children's home need to do to improve?

### Statutory requirement

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet the Care Standards Act 2000, The 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 ensure that—</p> <p>the privacy of children is appropriately protected;</p> <p>children can access all appropriate areas of the children's home's premises; and</p> <p>any limitation placed on a child's privacy or access to any area of the home's premises—</p> <p>is intended to safeguard each child accommodated in the home;</p> <p>is necessary and proportionate;</p> <p>is kept under review and, if necessary, revised; and</p> <p>allows children as much freedom as is possible when balanced against the need to protect them and keep them safe. (Regulation 21 (a)(b)(c)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv))</p> <p>This relates specifically to the registered person reviewing children's plans around being visually checked on throughout the night.</p>	11 April 2025

### Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the staff assess the risk to children when they self-injure by banging their head and make the necessary arrangements to ensure the children's wellbeing. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5)
- The registered person should ensure that any use of restraint is appropriately recorded in line with regulation 35. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 49, paragraph 9.59)
- The registered person should ensure that the staff consult regularly with children on their views about the home's care to inform and support continued improvement in

the quality of care provided. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.11)

## **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:** SC039559

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

**Registered provider:** Halton Borough Council

**Registered provider address:** 3rd Floor Rutland House, Halton Lea, Runcorn WA7 2GW

**Responsible individual:** Jamie Pope

**Registered manager:** Phillip Woods

## Inspector

Kerri Lynch, Social Care Inspector



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