

# SC032069

Registered provider: Praxis Care

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This service provides short breaks, in homely, adapted accommodation, for children with learning disabilities. Some children have associated physical disabilities. The registered manager is suitably qualified.

**Inspection dates:** 9 to 10 April 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:** 23 May 2018

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** Good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** None

## Recent inspection history

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>Inspection type</b>	<b>Inspection judgement</b>
23/05/2018	Full	Good
17/10/2017	Full	Good
16/03/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
21/06/2016	Full	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 may permit an individual to start work at the home if—</p> <p>the registered person has taken all reasonable steps to obtain full information about each of the matters in Schedule 2 in respect of the individual, but the enquiries in relation to any of the matters in paragraphs 3 to 6 of Schedule 2 are incomplete;</p> <p>full and satisfactory information in respect of the individual has been obtained in relation to the matters in paragraphs 1 and 2 of Schedule 2;</p> <p>the registered person considers that the circumstances are exceptional; and</p> <p>the registered person ensures that the individual is appropriately supervised while carrying out the individual's duties, pending receipt of any outstanding information on the matters in paragraphs 3 to 6 of Schedule 2, which is then considered satisfactory by the registered person.</p> <p>The registered person must take reasonable steps to ensure that any individual who is working at the home is appropriately supervised while carrying out the individual's duties. (Regulation 32 (7)(a)(b)(c)(d)(8))</p>	31/05/2019
<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>	31/05/2019

<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>	
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## Recommendations

- Although it is not a legal requirement for non-looked after children to have access to an independent advocate, homes caring for these children should ensure that children can access advocacy support and should also consider the use of an independent advocate where necessary. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 23, paragraph 4.18)

## Inspection judgements

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

This home is a comfortable environment that is fully adapted to meet children's needs. Children enjoy their stays and benefit from activities and social experiences with peers. They build trusting relationships with staff during their stays. Staff involve children in decision-making, where possible. They use a range of methods to consult with children and families. Identifying and responding to children's choices and preferences are embedded in staff practice.

Professionals and families reported that staff share information in a timely way and are proactive in finding ways to ensure that children benefit from their stays. Children are admitted for short breaks following a carefully planned process. Staff visit families at home to capture essential information about their child's routines and to clarify information about the home. Families and children visit the home before an overnight stay. This ensures that staff are well prepared to care for children with complex needs and behaviours.

There are detailed records about each child's health needs and behaviours. There are also clear procedures for administering medication. There have been a small number of medication errors, but these have not had an impact on the health and welfare of a child. Where there has been a medication error, managers have undertaken a learning lessons exercise. However, there is not a robust audit trail to confirm that this information was shared with staff.

Staff liaise closely with education and health professionals. Staff visit schools to observe children. This provides helpful information, particularly about communication needs. Staff use each child's preferred method of communication and encourage the children to learn new methods of communication.

Staff support older children and their families well, particularly when they are preparing

to move into adult care services. All children are supported to develop independence skills. During this inspection, one child was enjoying helping to clear the table and load the dishwasher after dinner. These steps towards greater independence are promoted and celebrated.

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

Staff know that good information sharing about each child is essential to a safe stay, particularly for children who are non-verbal. Staff prepare well for each child's stay. This includes taking time to fully understand how best to monitor children at night, children's safe sleep systems and children's methods of communication.

A safe environment is maintained. Any damage is reported and repaired in a timely way. There are high levels of monitoring and support. As a result, there are no missing episodes and very few physical restraints or significant incidents.

The manager recently attended refresher training on missing from home procedures. The local police safeguarding lead has recently visited the home. In case of an emergency when children are in the community, staff always ensure that they have essential information about each child with them.

Staff are conscientious about recording any marks, bruises or injuries to children on body maps. This is because some children have self-harming behaviours or have frequent accidents. Staff check any new information with families and agencies and follow child protection procedures. Staff carefully monitor any changes to presentation and mood when children come to stay.

Safeguarding training includes information about the management of allegations against adults who work with children and the whistleblowing policy. Staff understand their personal responsibility to report any concerns about practice in the home.

The recruitment records of a recently appointed member of staff did not evidence that gaps in employment had been accounted for. This member of staff is currently undertaking an induction and is subject to supervision in the home. The manager is addressing the gaps in information.

The advocacy service previously commissioned by the local authority is no longer available to the children staying in the home. It is recommended that the manager reviews and addresses this issue, given the additional vulnerabilities of disabled children.

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

Since the previous inspection, there have been changes to the staff group. Managers have not appointed new, permanent staff quickly enough. Staff reported that there has been low morale at times due to staff shortages. There has been an increase in the use of sessional and agency staff. However, the manager has used sessional staff who are familiar to children whenever possible so that continuity of care is maintained. The provider has recently improved conditions of service. As a result, managers are more

optimistic that they can fill all remaining vacancies.

The manager has covered shifts herself to ensure that staff are supported. However, this has had an impact on the effectiveness of management monitoring of the home and quality assurance systems. Management information does not provide evidence that shortfalls in practice have been robustly addressed. For example, the dissemination of information to staff after medication errors were identified has not been evidenced. A requirement is made to improve quality assurance mechanisms and practice in order to continuously develop the quality of care and experiences for children in the home.

Children's records do not always contain up-to-date care plans, education plans or health plans. This means that the children's placement plans are not informed by up-to-date information.

One of the strengths of the service is the child-centred practice of the staff. This results in positive relationships between staff, children and families. Families and professionals reported that staff share information about children's experiences in a timely way. There is good partnership working with all professionals involved in the child's care. Staff and managers are prompt to respond to any concerns about the service. As a result, there are very few formal complaints.

## **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:** SC032069

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

**Registered provider:** Praxis Care

**Registered provider address:** 25 Lisburn Road, Belfast BT9 7AA

**Responsible individual:** Andrew Mayhew

**Registered manager:** Donna Withers

## Inspector

Cathey Moriarty, social care inspector

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