

# 2504775

Registered provider: Andover And District Mencap

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This is a four-bed children's home providing overnight short breaks and day care for children and young people aged three to 19 years with additional needs.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since the home opened on 12 February 2019.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

### Inspection dates: 1 and 2 November 2021

**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      good

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

**Date of last inspection:** 4 March 2020

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** improved effectiveness

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>Inspection type</b>	<b>Inspection judgement</b>
04/03/2020	Interim	Improved effectiveness
24/09/2019	Full	Good

## Inspection judgements

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

Staff provide individualised care and positive experiences to children. Children have fun and enjoy new experiences. One parent said, 'She [daughter] is so happy when she arrives at the home for her visits, and staff welcome her so warmly.' As a result, children feel safe and respond well to the good quality of care they receive from staff.

Professionals and families say that staff provide a good transition process and support children into the home. This makes the children feel comfortable with staying at the respite service. The children's introduction to the home is very carefully thought through and planned. Each family's needs, wishes and views are considered. Parents are confident that staff know their children's needs and will provide good care. A parent said, 'I'm so relaxed leaving her [daughter] there, because staff know her and understand her needs.' This was also confirmed by a social worker, who added that, 'Staff are patient and will do their very best to ensure all of the children's needs are met to a high standard.'

Children continue to access school without disruption and this helps to provide them with consistency and routine. Staff work proactively with teachers to ensure that children's educational achievements are promoted. Staff use the education and health plans to develop small achievable targets for children. Regular contact and information-sharing with the school teams ensures that they share similar approaches when supporting children. This helps maintain the consistency of care given to each child.

Children's health needs are well managed by the skilled and knowledgeable staff team. Personal care needs are carefully planned and attended to with dignity and respect. Children with dietary needs are supported by trained staff who work collaboratively with professional dieticians to ensure that children's needs are met. Healthy living and eating are promoted to support children to understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle.

Staff are very skilled at communicating with children, including those who have no verbal communication skills. As a result, children's wishes and preferences are known and catered for. Staff encourage children to try new experiences to ensure that they develop new skills and broaden their understanding. Children are also helped to improve their social skills and gain confidence in improving their personal care and other skills such as carrying out household chores. Children who have intense focus on particular objects, such as their electronic devices, are supported to try new things such as gardening, cooking, art and craft. This helps children to enjoy new experiences and interests.

Children know how to make a complaint, based on their level of understanding. There has been one complaint from a child since the last inspection and this was

appropriately responded to by staff, managers and other external agencies. The child and parents were kept informed of all procedures by the registered manager.

Children are helped to understand matters relating to equality and diversity. Staff sensitively challenge any inappropriate behaviour by children towards others. They support children to understand their differences and treat each other with respect.

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

Children feel safe and trust staff. Parents and social workers expressed their confidence in the ability of staff to keep their children safe. Staff have a good understanding of the children's vulnerabilities and they ensure that risks are identified, assessed and managed effectively.

Children have not gone missing from the home. Clear individual risk assessments are in place and these give staff guidance about what they should do if a child goes missing.

Staff do not use physical intervention. They are trained and skilled to identify potential risks and triggers. De-escalation strategies specific to the needs of each child are used. Staff also ensure that children attend the home with other children who have similar interests and care needs, and this reduces any potential tensions between children and helps them to enjoy their stay.

Staff are trained to deal with safeguarding issues. They demonstrate a good awareness of what they would do if they had concerns about a child. Staff are also clear about how they would escalate concerns both internally and with external agents.

The organisation uses safer recruitment procedures effectively when employing new staff. Staff who work in the home have been suitably checked. This helps to promote the safety of children.

Children live in a safe home. All health and safety checks, such as fire checks and food checks, are completed. Children have individualised personal emergency evacuation plans that identify their medical and care needs. The plans include details of how children's needs could affect their access and exit from the home in the event of an emergency. Some children get involved in completing their own plans. This supports children to understand the importance of keeping safe in the home.

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

The manager promotes a happy and friendly culture in the home, which was described by one member of staff as a 'home away from home'. The manager knows the children and their families well. She prioritises building positive relationships with the children and their families. The manager also ensures that families are involved in decisions regarding the care given to their children. Regular contact and thorough

handovers are carried out with families when children arrive and when they are collected from the home.

Even though the children attend for short stays at the home, the registered manager and staff are very passionate about the progress made by children. This is tracked and reviewed effectively. All documents, including those involving children's health, are reviewed by leaders and staff frequently. This provides the manager with an effective oversight of practice and the progress made by children.

Leaders and managers ensure that training programmes specific to the individual needs of children are made available to staff. Staff value the range of training opportunities open to them. When the COVID-19 restrictions were in place, staff welcomed the introduction of a new online training programme and have used this together with face-to-face training, which has now been reintroduced. This has empowered staff to select required training and complete it in their own time, while enhancing their understanding of practice.

Staff state that they are well supported and receive regular supervisions. Staff are provided with supervisions which are centred on the well-being of both children and staff. Staff development and progress is also addressed in supervisions. However, the registered manager has failed to arrange and complete annual appraisals with staff. This does not allow for reflection on staff's professional development.

Senior leaders and the registered manager share a clear vision. Due to the high demand for respite services for children with complex needs, managers have ensured that an extension to the home has been completed. The work has been carried out to a good standard and is in keeping with the rest of the home, which is clean, tidy and well decorated. However, there are areas of the garden where old furniture is stored or used as barriers to secure areas that children should not access. These shortfalls detract from an otherwise homely environment and hinder safe access to the garden.

Notifications of significant events are not always made in a timely way and some have been sent after prompts have been made by the independent visitor. This means that Ofsted is not fully informed, at an early stage, about safeguarding matters in the home. This limits the regulator's ability to monitor the progress of safeguarding issues.

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## 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 notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay of any significant event, in line with the regulation. (Regulation 40 (4))</p> <p>The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if—</p> <p>a child is involved in or subject to, or is suspected of being involved in or subject to, sexual exploitation;</p> <p>an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious; there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there;</p> <p>a child protection enquiry involving a child — is instigated; or concludes (in which case, the notification must include the outcome of the child protection enquiry); or</p> <p>there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(a)(b)(c)(d)(i)(ii)(e))</p>	<p>31 December 2021</p>
<p>The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who—</p> <p>understand the children’s home’s overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children;</p> <p>use this understanding to deliver care that meets children’s needs and supports them to fulfil their potential.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to—</p>	<p>31 December 2021</p>

meet the needs of each child; and

enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home.  
(Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(i)(ii))

## Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that all staff have their performance and fitness to carry out their role formally appraised at least once annually. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.5)

## 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:** 2504775

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

**Registered provider:** Andover And District Mencap

**Registered provider address:** Andover & District Mencap, The Wellington Centre, Winchester Road, Andover, Hampshire SP10 2EG

**Responsible individual:** Helen Walker

**Registered manager:** Ami Turner

## Inspector

Alphie Khumalo, Social Care Inspector

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