

Ofsted inspection of Canons House Childrens Home

Background

1. Canons House were inspected by Ofsted in February 2022 and were found to be inadequate. They were re inspected on the 13th June 2023 and had an overall judgment of Requires Improvement.
2. In November 2023 Ofsted conducted a full inspection of Canons House which is registered to provide a short break service for up to seven children/young people at a time and overall, it supports 20 children/young people. Some children/young people have physical disabilities, learning disabilities and/ or sensory impairment.
3. The inspection report was published on the 22nd January 2024 (see appendix) and judged that the overall experiences and progress of children and young people is Good, an improvement on the last inspections:

Judgement	Grade
Overall experiences and progress of children and young people	Good
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
The effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement to be good

Key highlights from the findings are as follows:

- Parents and professionals said they were very happy with the service provided to their children and described this as a 'vital' support.
- Staff contribute to the progress their children are making. For example, one parent said their child has made progress with their communication and now has increased social experiences.
- Good communication systems mean that parents and professionals are kept informed of their child's stay.
- Staff adapt their communication to suit the needs of each child. One parent said staff had received training in a specialist communication method suited to their child. This has improved communication and enabled their child to make more choices.

- Children's plans clearly detail important elements of children's communication styles.
- Children frequently have the opportunity to share their views about their time at Canons House and Managers and staff act on this feedback.
- Care plans are child focused.
- Managers have adapted how they plan children's stays, so they now consider the group of children staying together. This has improved children's experiences when they stay at the home.
- Children's safety and well-being are at the centre of staff practice. Staff are curious about children's welfare and report any concerns they have to leaders and managers. After managers have reported to safeguarding agencies, they robustly follow up on actions and outcomes to ensure they know how to safeguard the child.
- The registered manager is skilled and experienced and works hard to improve the service and ensure children receive an enjoyable short break. The leadership team understands the strengths of the home and are progressing with their development plan

4. Two areas for improvement were identified and our focus continues on these:

- Leaders and managers reviewing their current process for managing concerns about observed injuries or marks on children to ensure that the correct safeguarding procedures are followed.

The report states 'The current process for managing and reporting unexplained injuries or marks has a potential risk of staff undertaking investigatory tasks before a qualified social work professional has assessed the information'.

We were not in agreement with this finding which related to one young person, a number of children had been reviewed as part of the inspection. No concerns had been raised or examples given of incorrect safeguarding procedures around observed marks or unexplained injuries during the inspection. The Inspector was not in agreement that a Key Worker had spoken to a parent first, then as per process out of hours had spoken to a Social Worker, which is part of our safeguarding process. We disagreed with the Inspectors view.

The Director and Head of Service met with Ofsted's regional lead and the lead Inspector on 5th February. It was agreed that the wording on one document needed to be changed. We advised that we would not be reviewing our safeguarding procedure as it is fit for purpose. Canons House records have

recently been progressively transferred to our Liquid Logic system. We are in the process of transferring our safeguarding pathway on to our Liquid Logic system which will improve visibility of this process and decision making.

- This relates to the registered provider ensuring that children have achievable targets and staff have clear guidance on how they can support children with these.

We continue to update plans so that outcomes are clear and relate to specific activities and achievements for children and young people. We have set up an annual review process to work alongside Child in Need Planning to ensure these are agreed, achievable and measurable targets that are activity based, ie life skills, personal care, social skills. Canons will then support children and young people to achieve these during their respite breaks.

5. Children's services leadership and the Registered Manager are very proud of this achievement and the high standard of care provided to children and young people at Canons House and the dedication of the team. We continue to be ambitious in what we want our children and young people to experience and achieve during their respite at Canons House.

Conclusion

6. The Board is informed of the outcome of the inspection of Canons House Childrens Home and notes the plans in place to progress recommendations.

Appendices

Link to published Ofsted Inspection Report
[50237506 \(ofsted.gov.uk\)](https://www.ofsted.gov.uk/inspections/50237506)