

West Sussex County Council

Fun and Breaks

Inspection report

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Ratings

Overall rating for this service

Outstanding 

Is the service safe?

Good 

Is the service effective?

Outstanding 

Is the service caring?

Good 

Is the service responsive?

Good 

Is the service well-led?

Outstanding 

Summary of findings

Overall summary

The inspection took place on 14 June 2018 and was announced. We gave the registered manager 48 hours' notice because the location provides a domiciliary care service and we needed to make sure someone would be in the office. We were assisted during our inspection by the registered manager. We gathered information about the service before the inspection and also attended a 'Steering Group' meeting as part of the inspection process.

This was the service's first inspection under this registration. The service was previously provided as Fun and Breaks (Chichester and Arun) and Fun and Breaks (Crawley, Horsham and Mid Sussex)

Fun and Breaks [FAB] is registered as a domiciliary care service which is run by West Sussex County Council. It provides support to children with disabilities, their parents and carers. It provides care to children within their home and in the community. The service is provided to those children who meet the threshold for the Child Disability Teams in West Sussex. Each family is matched with one volunteer who offers a regular commitment. The service provides children and their families with support for up to two hours per week with a trained volunteer. The time is used flexibly as arranged between families and volunteers. Volunteers take full care of the disabled child and can also look after siblings. At the time of our visit 25 families were receiving a service. There was also a waiting list for further families who wished to receive this support.

The service had a registered manager in place. A registered manager is a person who has registered with the Care Quality Commission to manage the service. Like registered providers, they are 'registered persons'. Registered persons have legal responsibility for meeting the requirements in the Health and Social Care Act 2008 and associated Regulations about how the service is run.

Children and young people were actively and positively encouraged and supported to engage in everyday activities and hobbies with the volunteers that enabled them to live good ordinary lives. Families fed back that the support they received had befitted their child or young person and enabled them to have, 'new opportunities', 'be more independent', 'be more confident', 'develop social skills' and that the support provided enabled the family to have, 'a break'. Children and young people were very positive about the volunteers and the relationships they had developed with them. Children said that the volunteers were their friends and family observed that there were meaningful relationships developed with 'trust'. We saw that wonderful relationships were fostered between volunteers and families. Professionals were also extremely complimentary and positive about the 'outstanding' service provided by Fun and Breaks to families at times of significant challenges in their lives. Volunteers made a real difference to avoid crisis for the children, young people and their families.

Without exception, families, children and young people all told us that they were very happy with the support they received from the volunteers who were 'matched' to their individual preferences. Feedback from young people and children demonstrated that they were exceptionally happy with the support they received from the volunteers whom had evidently become very valued in their lives of the families as well as

the children and young people. Relatives and children alike felt safe and 'comfortable' with the volunteers. Volunteers completed safeguarding training and were aware of infection control safe practices. However, young people and children did not routinely receive regular personal care from the volunteers.

Volunteers were exceptionally well supported in their roles by the registered manager who provided regular opportunities for face to face supervision sessions and provided training for the volunteers that was tailored to meet the specific and individual needs of the children and young people. Volunteers felt well supported and able to request further training to support them and those whom they supported.

Medicines were not routinely given to children or young people by the volunteer staff, unless in an emergency. Correct measures were in place to ensure that this would be done safely.

Volunteers were recruited safely. Necessary recruitment checks were completed which ensured that all volunteers were safe to work with young people and children. Children and young people's needs were assessed with family involvement. Volunteers knew to 'signpost' to other services for appropriate support if this was required by families. Support was provided to families to attend appointments which ensured access to important healthcare appointments when needed. Regular training and supervision was completed by volunteers. This meant that they were competent and well supported in their roles to provide the best support possible to families, children and young people.

Volunteers were described by family members of young people and children who received support as, "calm" and "patient" and that the volunteers made the children and young people feel "valued."

The service was led by a very caring, competent and dedicated registered manager and coordinator who evidently had the children's and young people's needs at the heart of the service they provided, whilst being aware of the strategy and business needs of the organisation.

The five questions we ask about services and what we found

We always ask the following five questions of services.

Is the service safe?

Good 

The service was safe.

Families, children and young people told us they received a safe service and that they felt safe with the support they received from the volunteers.

Safe systems and processes were established to protect the safety of people using the service. Risks were appropriately assessed and managed to reduce the risks of harm occurring.

Medicines were not routinely given to children and young people unless this was required in an emergency. Correct procedures were in place if this was required.

Personal care was not routinely provided to children and young people, but when this may be required, volunteers understood infection control and preventative measures to keep young people and children safe from the risks of infection.

Is the service effective?

Outstanding 

The service was very effective and volunteer's skills were tailored to meet individual needs of children and young people.

Children, young people and their families positively benefitted from the support they received from volunteers who were very well-trained to support the specific needs of the children and young people whom they cared for.

Volunteers were well supported in their roles by the registered manager and received regular supervisions.

Volunteers and young people and children alike benefitted from volunteers who were 'matched' to their preferences which enabled positive relationships to be developed and maintained.

Children and young people's needs were assessed very holistically with support and input from their families. Information technology was used to maintain positive relationships between families and the service which ensured care for the young person was always tailored to meet their

specific needs and preferences.

Volunteers were very sensitive and aware of the needs of the families, young people and children that they supported. Appropriate discussions took place between the volunteers and families which ensured that consent was obtained as and when required.

Is the service caring?

Good ●

The service was very caring towards young people, children and their families and approached every situation with calmness and sensitivity.

Children, young people and families told us that the service they received was very caring.

Volunteers supported young people and children to engage in everyday activities to encourage and maintain independence whenever possible.

We were told that dignity and privacy was respected by volunteers and that volunteers were kind and respectful towards the children, young people and their families alike. Meaningful positive relationships were developed which were valued by all concerned.

Confidentiality was understood and maintained with the right to privacy being upheld with robust systems and well-trained volunteers and management team.

Is the service responsive?

Good ●

The service was very responsive to the individual needs and preferences of the children, young people and their families.

The specific needs of the children, young people and families were reviewed appropriately with the involvement of all concerned. Information technology was used to support the communication needs of the children and young people and to support communication between the registered manager and families. Information was shared with young people and children in an accessible format for their individual needs.

Complaints processes were understood by those who used the service. There were no formal complaints at the time of the inspection and volunteers also said that they had never had to raise any concerns or complaints on behalf of those they supported.

End of life care was not provided by the service.

Is the service well-led?

Outstanding 

The service was extremely well-led by a very dedicated and passionate management team and exceptionally dedicated volunteers.

There was a clear service strategy and governance structure which supported the consistent delivery of high quality care and support. Without exception families, children, young people and volunteers were involved in the development of the service with their views being included and listened to.

Systems and processes enabled the service to be monitored effectively with senior management actively supporting the service provided to people.

Fun and Breaks

Detailed findings

Background to this inspection

We carried out this inspection under Section 60 of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 as part of our regulatory functions. This inspection was planned to check whether the provider is meeting the legal requirements and regulations associated with the Health and Social Care Act 2008, to look at the overall quality of the service, and to provide a rating for the service under the Care Act 2014. This was the service's first inspection under this registration. The service was previously provided as Fun and Breaks (Chichester and Arun) and Fun and Breaks (Crawley, Horsham and Mid Sussex)

The inspection took place on 14 June 2018 and was announced. We gave the registered manager 48 hours' notice because the location provides a domiciliary care service and we needed to make sure someone would be in the office. We were assisted throughout the inspection process by the registered manager. Two different inspectors undertook this inspection. We undertook information gathering as part of this inspection process on the 12 December 2017 and conducted a second day inspection on the 14 June 2018. There was a delay with us conducting the second day of this inspection which was due to a technical problem within the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

Before the inspection, the provider completed a Provider Information Return (PIR). This is a form that asks the provider to give some key information about the service, what the service does well and improvements they plan to make. We also reviewed previous inspection reports and notifications received from the service before the inspection. A notification is information about important events which the service is required to send us by law. This enabled us to ensure we were addressing any potential areas of concern.

We sent out questionnaires to people, their relatives, volunteers and professionals before the inspection. We received 22 replies to the questionnaires. As part of the inspection we reviewed the responses to our questionnaires.

We reviewed records for two volunteers and two care plans for children and young people who used the service. We attended a 'steering group' meeting with the registered manager, two volunteers, social worker [also FAB coordinator], group manager, 'Choice' team practice manager and a 'short breaks' commissioning engagement officer. We also received feedback from two other external professionals, which included a senior social worker and family support worker.

Is the service safe?

Our findings

All relatives told us that their child or young person was comfortable and at ease with the volunteer that was caring for them. All people who provided feedback told us that they liked the service. Children's and young people's families told us that they felt safe with the volunteers supporting their child. They said, "She [volunteer] understands their needs [child's] are quite different. My son requires high level of care in order to keep him safe. Our volunteer does this well. It is not an easy thing to hand the care of my children over to others but I totally trust our volunteer." A child also said to us, "I love my volunteer. I feel very comfortable and safe with her." A social care professional relayed to us that they had observed a FAB volunteer who provided, "very appropriate and safe care offered to the child" and that "it was very obvious that the volunteer had a good relationship with the child and there was a high level of trust."

Safe recruitment practices were followed before new volunteers were employed to work with children and young people. Checks were made to ensure the volunteers were of good character and suitable for their role. The volunteers were recruited in line with safe practice and we saw files that confirmed this. For example, references were obtained and appropriate checks undertaken to ensure that potential volunteers were safe to work with children and young people. Records showed that, before new volunteers started work at the service, criminal records checks were made with the Disclosure and Barring Service.

The children and young people benefitted from a safe service where the volunteers understood their safeguarding responsibilities. Volunteers had the knowledge and confidence to identify safeguarding concerns and acted on these to keep people safe. Volunteers had attended training in safeguarding children and young people from abuse. Volunteers who provided feedback said that they were able to describe the action they would take to protect children or young people if they suspected they had been harmed or were at risk of harm. The registered manager was clear about when to report concerns. They were able to explain the processes to be followed to inform the local authority and the CQC. The registered manager also made sure volunteers understood their responsibilities in this area. Volunteers followed the West Sussex policy on safeguarding. This was available to all volunteers as guidance for dealing with any such concerns. There was a whistle-blowing policy so if volunteers had concerns they could report these and be confident of their concerns being listened to. Volunteers confirmed that they understood the safeguarding adults processes and that they were supported by the registered manager regarding this. A volunteer told us, "[Registered manager] always asks at supervision about safeguarding. None reported as yet but we'd know where to go."

Risks to children and young people were carefully assessed. Thorough risk assessments were completed. A risk assessment is a document used by staff that highlights a potential risk, the level of risk and details of what reasonable measures and steps should be taken to minimise the risk to the child or young person they support. Risks were managed safely. Where risks had been identified these had been assessed and actions were in place to mitigate them. Clear individual guidelines were in place for volunteers to follow to reduce risks. Volunteers provided support in a way which minimised risk for children or young people whilst maintaining their independence and choice. The registered manager assessed the environment and premises for safety as part of the initial assessment, including slip and trip hazards. Relatives said they felt the volunteers were able to provide safe and caring support when risks were presented which included

behaviours that may challenge. A child's relative said, "When situations (e.g. concerning [child's] behaviour) have arisen she [volunteer] is keen to debrief and assess the situation in retrospect and I feel comfortable that we can have open and honest communication. I have experienced her calm patient approach with the children and her adaptation of language and expectations according to their age and abilities."

Medicines were not routinely given to children and young adults as part of this service. Families took overall responsibility for this. If medicines were required in an emergency, volunteers were trained and able to give emergency medicines on an 'As required' basis. Information regarding any emergency medicine was included in the 'health' care plans. Young people and children were protected from the risks of infection and volunteers were trained to understand appropriate preventative measures that may be required.

The service had a very open culture and regularly held 'Steering' meetings which enabled any learning to be discussed with the registered manager, coordinator and group manager as well as with those who commissioned the service, volunteers and family members.

Is the service effective?

Our findings

The volunteers were well trained to make sure they had the skills and knowledge to effectively support the children and young people. Relatives spoke positively about the volunteers and told us they were skilled to meet their child's needs. Relatives told us they were confident that their volunteer knew their child well and understood how to meet their needs. They told us they did not feel they had been subject to any discrimination, for example on the grounds of their gender, race, sexuality or age. They had confidence in their volunteer's skills and knowledge. Families confirmed that the volunteers knew the individual needs of the child or young person being supported and that their needs were assessed before support started. Volunteers also completed an 'all about me' document which included how they could support a child and the family unit as a whole. A child's relative told us how important it was that the volunteer clearly understood their child's individual needs. The family member said, "[Volunteer] has always been reliable which is very important for my son who deals better with routine and consistency. Volunteers took the time to get to know the individual needs and preferences of children and young people which enabled them to provide an effective service for them and their families. One family member said, "The time spent with my daughter with their volunteer fulfils my daughter's enjoyment whilst relaxing and playing at home. I know she is safe and happy." Volunteer's had an integral role within families and supported and facilitated families to attend medical appointments with the child or young person which ensured that access to healthcare services was received when it was needed. The service had developed "excellent" links with social care professionals. A social care family support keyworker told us of, "An excellent example of the FAB [Fun and Breaks] Team's joint agency working with a family" and that the support provided by the fun and breaks service "was essential to the family."

On commencing work at the service new volunteers were supported to understand their role through a period of induction. The induction was specific to each volunteer and matched to the child or young people they would be caring for. A volunteer told us that young people, children and families of those who used the service were included in the interview process for new volunteers. The service provided training focussed on the needs of the children and young people using the service. We asked volunteers what they thought of the training they received and if they felt it was suitable to support them in their roles. A volunteer told us, 'very impressed with it [training]' and, "it prepared me for what I was going to do." They also said, "We met people living with disability who told us what they needed and we met parents too". Another volunteer said, "There's always offers of ongoing training coming through." The service completed a thorough service review each year. We saw the results from the 2017 annual review. Volunteers were asked, "Has being a Fun and Breaks volunteer enabled you to learn and develop new skills? If so, how?" We saw a wide range of positive response from volunteers which evidenced the depth of development and training support the service gave to all volunteers. Feedback from volunteers included, "I have learnt more about epilepsy, tube feeding and all general care that goes with looking after a very disabled child. Now learning how to communicate with [child name] more as he signals some of his feelings. E.g. now does thumbs up when he is ok." Another volunteer said, "I've had to learn new 'play' skills and understanding how to manage a child with learning difficulties in the wider community." A further volunteer stated, "Dealing with challenging behaviour, greater patience." Further comments from volunteers were, "Definitely, I was looking to develop better understanding of working with families in the home and this has fulfilled this. This has made me more

aware of a child's personal needs within the community and I have grown in confidence. It has educated me on a new medical condition that I was not before aware of" and, "I have developed my communication skills, patience, understanding of children and their needs." This clearly demonstrates that the training provided by Fun and Breaks is tailored to meet the individual needs of the children and young people, but also to the development needs and 'soft skills' required by volunteers to be able to excel in their roles.

The children and young people had fed back their views of their relationships with the volunteers and the activities they had taken part in using appropriately adapted pictorial feedback surveys which were sent to children on an individual basis rather than through the organisations 'data hub'. This was collated using a more personalised process because those who worked for the service wished to hear "the voice of the child." Also reflected upon was the fact that they [staff] "know that children like having post and are able to give their views." The children indicated in their feedback how their volunteers were well matched to their 'likes' and preferences and demonstrated that they felt their volunteers had supported them to "meet new people", "try new things", "learn new skills, "go out more often" and to "do more things for yourself." Volunteers also told us how they used information technology which included the use of mobile phones and other electronic devices to support and enhance communication with the child or young person and the families, with the use of their preferred means for communicating.

Records were kept detailing what training individual volunteers had received and when they were due for this to be repeated. The volunteers training records confirmed that the training was up to date. Volunteers were positive about the training opportunities available. They told us that they felt confident and well trained to do their jobs. Some of the training completed by volunteers included, first aid, safeguarding and Makaton to enable volunteers to support children with communication needs effectively. The children and young people received individualised care from volunteers who had the skills, knowledge and understanding needed to carry out their roles.

The children and young people were supported by a volunteer who had regular supervisions (one to one meetings) with the registered manager or coordinator. We were told that supervisions happened between the registered manager or coordinator and volunteers at least every three months. All volunteers who provided feedback told us they felt supported by the registered manager. They said there was opportunity to discuss any issues they may have and any training needs they had, which included ways in which practice could be improved. The log of supervisions showed that volunteers had received supervision and further sessions were planned. Other supervision sessions took place at the family home where the registered manager or coordinator observed a volunteer with a child to ensure that their practice was safe and appropriate for the child or young person's needs.

Volunteers who provided feedback told us that they could discuss any issues or concerns at any time and that their input was encouraged and valued. Volunteers felt that they were inducted, trained and supervised effectively to perform their role.

All volunteers who provided feedback had an understanding about consent and put this into practice by taking time to establish what the child or young person's wishes were. We saw that the registered manager sought the consent of the person or people with parental responsibility for the child. This included their written consent to the care provided and their consent to share information. Information was given about the rights of children to be valued as individuals and encouraged to make choices. We were told that volunteers sought the child or young person's agreement before supporting them and then waiting for a response before acting. A volunteer said, "I always ask for permission to access equipment etc. I always arrive on time and let the family know in very good time if I am unable to attend. I always ask the child if it is ok with him to e.g. Take his shoes, top etc off. I always realise that I am a guest in their house." This

demonstrated that volunteers respected the families, children and young people they supported and always acted in accordance with the wishes of those they supported.

Where providing meals was part of the agreement and / or where there was concern that the person was not eating well the daily records included how much the child or young person had eaten. Where they were not eating well, volunteers would highlight that to the child or young person's relatives or the registered manager so that professional guidance could be sought. Information was shared with the child or young person's relatives in order that they could take action. This demonstrated that volunteers were monitoring people and taking action to ensure that their needs were met. Volunteers consulted with the child or young person and their relatives on what type of food they preferred. The child or young person's care plans contained information about their dietary needs and swallowing risk assessments. Volunteers regularly monitored the child or young person's food and drink intake to ensure they received sufficient each day.

Is the service caring?

Our findings

Positive, caring relationships had been developed between the child or young person and their volunteer. Volunteers had a very caring approach and were patient and kind. The children and young people told us that the volunteers were "caring and kind" and that they were treated with, "dignity and respect" by the volunteers who supported them. The caring ethos of the service was evident from the manner in which the registered manager and volunteers described their roles with families and the children and young people who were supported. The children or young people received care and support from volunteers who knew them well. The volunteers were skilled in talking to the child or young person and established a rapport in a short space of time. We sent questionnaires to children, young people, their relatives and professionals to seek their views of the service provided by Fun and Breaks. One family member of a young person who received a service told us, "[Volunteer] is the most loyal and supportive person in supporting the young person I care for. She is always willing to support and encourage the young person and will come at short notice and spend extra time here. She is the most valuable support we have in caring for a young person with challenging needs." A child's relative said, "This is an invaluable service that my family benefits from. I find it to be a wonderful change to our family life which has enabled all my children to have additional care and attention needs met." All the children and young people who completed the questionnaire told us that they believed they received the right support that enabled them to be as independent as they can be. A child fed back to the service about their volunteer, saying "They [volunteer] are nice and kind, they always think about me, they are caring." Another child said that their volunteer was, "Caring, kind, friendly, funny, sharing and patient."

The service reviewed feedback from the volunteers and the families who accessed the service. Families were asked if their child or young person was effectively supported by the service to become 'independent'. The feedback also captured were the views of the volunteers who described how they had supported a family in a caring and empathetic way. They said, "If the children are upset then I try to find out why and do what I can to fix it, if I'm unable to (e.g. they don't want to leave the park and it's time to go), I explain what's happening and we then lead them gently to where we need to go. If mum mentions finding something particular with the children difficult I sympathise with her and acknowledge things that are going well as well as offering practical suggestions." This demonstrated an extremely compassionate approach to the children and family as a whole.

The volunteers who provided feedback recognised the importance of upholding the child or young person's right to equality, recognised diversity, and protected their human rights. The registered manager had a very open and inclusive approach and outlook and understood and supported individual needs, choices and preferences of the children, the young people and also of their families. The registered manager told us that the volunteers supported anyone and told us "we expect them to be inclusive."

The care planning documentation used by the service helped the volunteers to capture information. This was to ensure the child or young persons received the appropriate help and support they needed, to lead a fulfilling life and meet their individual and cultural needs. Relatives told us that their child received the care that they wanted and were happy with the care received. The volunteers knew what the child or young

persons could do for themselves and areas where support was needed. Relationships between the child or young person, their relatives and the volunteers were warm, friendly and sincere.

All the volunteers who provided feedback said that they believed that everyone at the service was caring. The overall impression was of a warm, friendly and safe bespoke service where the child or young person, their family and volunteer were happy.

Children's and young people's personal data was protected. The registered manager understood the new General Data Protection Regulations 2018. Care records were kept securely and confidentially, in line with legal requirements. The volunteers received training in confidentiality as part of their induction. All personal records were only accessible by authorised staff. In people's homes, the care records were kept in a place determined by the children or young people's relatives.

Is the service responsive?

Our findings

Family members told us that the volunteers were exceptionally responsive to their child's needs. Professionals that we spoke with were also extremely complimentary and positive about the service provided by Fun and Breaks and noted the benefits to the family and the child or young person concerned. Family members were very happy with the support they received from the volunteers. One family member said to us, "Her [volunteer] time with them is quality time and I believe they [children] feel valued. They certainly look forward to time with her." Another family member said, "I've been very lucky over the years with my short breaks provided, she [volunteer] has been our life line over the years." The support from volunteers really made a difference to families lives. Children and young people received support that was individualised to their personal preferences and needs.

Children or young people had their needs assessed before a service was provided. Information had been sought from the child or young person, their relatives and / or any professionals involved in their care. Information from the assessment had informed the plan of care. The registered manager spent time with the children or young people and their families to ensure that the plan of care would meet expectations. Each child or young person was 'matched' to a volunteer. This ensured that the volunteers were able to meet people's needs.

Social care professionals told us that the service had been very responsive to the needs of a family who required support at short notice. The family support keyworker said, "Their [Fun and Breaks] support has been absolutely outstanding!" and that, "Each of the volunteers quickly formed a relationship with the mum and worked with her and the children to manage the high demands mum was faced with." They also told us that, "I know the help given by [registered managers] volunteers was essential to the family during [family member] absence and the continued support is very much appreciated." This demonstrated the huge benefits that this service provided to the family in challenging circumstances which enabled relationships to be maintained and strengthened within a family environment, preventing any breakdown of the family unit.

We saw that the care plans were personalised and detailed daily routines specific to each child or young person. The care plans contained information about their likes, dislikes and people important to them. The care plans were up to date and visit records showed care provided by volunteers matched the care set out in the care plans. The visit records were completed by staff at the end of their support visit. They included information on how a person presented whilst receiving support, what kind of mood they were in and any other health monitoring information. Visit notes were consistently completed and enabled relatives and the registered manager to get a quick overview of any changes in the child or young person's needs and their general well-being. Changes in people's needs or behaviours were reported to the child or young person's relatives and written in their visit notes. This helped ensure there was a consistent approach and meant that the child or young person's needs were met in an agreed way. Any changes in the child or young person's needs were updated in their care plan. This enabled volunteers to respond to people's changing needs. Families were involved in the reviews of care for the young person or child which ensured that the support provided reflected the needs and expectations of the family unit as well as the children and young people at the centre. A family member said, "We [registered manager] have great verbal communication too so any

concerns or ideas of safety etc get explored face to face, we have regular communication by text and email also in addition to the more formal process of the file held at home." This ensured that systems were in place for families to express any concerns they may have as well as discussing any changes to the care and support provided.

The provider was following the Accessible Information standard (AIS). The Accessible Information Standard is a framework put in place in August 2016 making it a legal requirement for all providers to ensure people with a disability or sensory loss are given information they can understand, and the communication support they need. The registered manager was fully aware of their responsibilities under the AI standard. The child or young person's assessments included specific details of their communication needs, this included information regarding assistive technology that may be required to support the child or young person to express themselves if physically or verbally unable to do so. For example, we were told how a young person had been supported to use systems such as 'eyegaze' to facilitate communication. Eyegaze is an information technology system that enables individuals to access their computer or communication aid using a mouse that is controlled with their eye movement. Volunteer's received training that enabled them to communicate with children using Makaton, when this was required. A volunteer told us that a child's "speech had improved dramatically" since they had learned how to engage more appropriately with them using Makaton and that this communication method wasn't now required as much for the child.

The children or young people were supported to maintain very positive relationships with people that really mattered to them and supported to access community activities to avoid social isolation. They were supported by volunteers to maintain their personal relationships. This was based on volunteers understanding who was important to the child or young person's, their family background and their cultural background. Volunteers supported families to live good ordinary lives and enabled the child or young person to engage in activities of their choice that they enjoyed. We received very positive feedback from relatives and the children and young people who used the service. One relative told us, "I've had such an amazing time and he [child] did things he hasn't done for ages." We saw photographs of a young person who had been supported by a volunteer to engage in regular horse-riding sessions that they had enjoyed. The volunteer told us, "[Young person] is doing so well that the instructor says she as good as any other child. This shows the progress that [young person name] has made and has gained independence and confidence, while the family has had the opportunity with volunteer support to have regular breaks." Another positive example was of a volunteer taking a young person's puppy to 'puppy training' classes. The young person's family member had said, "[young person] comes back in a better mood" because she can go out with the volunteer. The volunteer told us, "I'm her friend" and, "She tells me about boyfriends." The volunteer also demonstrated sound awareness of the importance of always involving the family members in sensitive issues which involved the child or young person. The volunteer said, "I've spoken to [young person's] mum about many issues" which included "sexuality" and stated that if a child texts them that they always copy an appropriate family member into their response to the child or young person.

The service had a complaints policy and a complaints log was in place for receiving and handling concerns. All feedback received was that people were happy with the service. Relatives and volunteers told us that were confident that any issues raised would be addressed by the registered manager. Family members told us they had open communication with the registered manager and volunteers and were able to discuss any matters of concern with them as they arose. No formal complaints had been made at the time of this inspection.

End of life care was not provided by this service.

Is the service well-led?

Our findings

The registered manager and co-coordinator took an obvious pride in the service and had sound knowledge and understanding of the overarching business strategy for the service. The service was extremely well managed by a registered manager and coordinator who fully understood the needs of the service and volunteers alike. A dedicated workforce had been created who were committed and loyal to their roles with the service to help young people, children and their families. Bespoke training was provided which ensured that each child or young person's specific needs were understood and well supported by the volunteers who worked with them. Volunteers were skilled to work competently and flexibly with families and used technology confidently as required by each different child or young person. The registered manager clearly understood their responsibilities to raise concerns, record safety incidents, concerns and near misses, and report these internally and externally as necessary. Where appropriate the registered manager ensured suitable information, for example about safeguarding matters, was shared with relevant agencies. This ensured the child or young person's needs were met in line with best practice.

The registered manager was fully aware of their responsibilities under the legislation and ensured that all significant events were notified to the Care Quality Commission. We use this information to monitor the service and ensure they responded appropriately to incidents that involved people. Volunteers who provided feedback said that if they had concerns the registered manager would listen and take suitable action. One volunteer said they had found the Fun and Breaks service to be, "extremely efficient and highly supportive." The registered manager said if they had concerns about people's welfare they liaised with external professionals as necessary, and would submit safeguarding referrals when they felt it was appropriate.

The registered manager told us that relationships with other agencies were very positive. We observed that the registered manager was very approachable and worked openly and transparently during a 'Steering' meeting with other professionals and volunteers. Feedback from professionals regarding joint working with the Fun and Breaks service was very positive. Social work professionals were exceptionally complimentary about the service for young people and of the overall benefits for the family as a whole. One senior social worker said, "The support offered to the carer and [the child] by [volunteer], has made a great difference to the stability of the placement and this support is vital. I would like to express my thanks to the Fun and Breaks service [FAB]." A family support keyworker professional told us of an "excellent example of the FAB Team's joint agency working with a family" and how they were "hugely grateful for the help [registered manager's name] team have provided and I know the help given by her volunteers was essential to the family."

The provision of a high-quality service was evidently very important to the registered manager and the coordinator. They were extremely passionate about maintaining and continually developing a bespoke service for individual families, children and young person's needs. They worked proactively to ensure that there were systems in place to drive continuous improvement. At the time of the inspection a new 'Quality Assurance' check had been introduced which had highlighted that some records could be further improved upon to continually develop the service. This demonstrated that this was a service that embraced a learning

culture and ensured that they were always looking to move forwards and improve any aspects of the service if these became apparent through their vigorous monitoring processes. We attended a 'Steering' meeting which discussed service wide matters. Two volunteers attended the meeting and gave valuable feedback to the registered manager and group manager regarding the service provided to families and their children. Volunteers views were listened to and used constructively to continually develop the service.

West Sussex County Council (WSSCC) is the registered provider of Fun and Breaks (FAB). There was an overarching vision and values which ran through all WSSCC services. The vision of WSSCC is, "that local communities are independent, strong and vibrant. We target our effort on those services that will make the biggest difference to communities, enabling them to help themselves in achieving their aspirations." This is positively reflected in the service provided by the dedicated FAB team. The registered manager and coordinator benefitted from a supportive senior management team within the council who provided ongoing support and input to the service from a more strategic perspective. This ensured that FAB delivered WSSCC's high level vision for the families, young people and children which was evident in the overwhelmingly positive feedback received.

The service had a very positive culture that was child-centred, inclusive and empowering. Feedback from volunteers, families and professionals without exception, reflected a highly person-centred service was provided. There was an open and friendly culture combined with a dedication to providing the best possible care to children and young people. Volunteers were keen to feedback to the service within an annual survey about their work which they were all passionately dedicated to. The overwhelmingly positive comments from volunteers when they were asked if working for Fun and Breaks had made a difference to them, included, "I feel that I have been of help to the family over the years and they feel that I am now part of the family" and, "yes, made me realise that there are some things you can't change in life, but you can make dealing with them easier." Other comments were, "I love my visits and have bonded with the whole family. I have a friend in the mother too" and, "Made me proud to be a friend to the child and the family and know I'm making a difference to their lives." Volunteers demonstrated a dedicated and passionate long-term commitment to their role with Fun and Breaks (FAB) which a family member told us "made a real difference" to their lives. Another child's relative said, "Thanks to FAB and our wonderful volunteer I am able to set aside quality time for each child and they in turn receive quality time with the volunteer."

Children or young people and their families had opportunities to feedback their views about the service and quality of the care they received. There were regular meetings for people, which meant they could share their views about the running of the service. Feedback surveys were given out to the child or young person's relatives and volunteers. The registered manager collated the responses, summarising people's comments and identified any areas for action. All comments were positive.

The registered manager and coordinator looked at ways to improve the service through involving stakeholders in the service. For example, regular meetings with volunteers. The volunteers that provided feedback said that they had the opportunity to have their views heard and taken into account. We were told and records confirmed that meetings took place regularly. Volunteers used this as an opportunity to discuss the care provided and to communicate any changes. Volunteers were aware of what their roles and responsibilities were. Regular meetings also took place on a more strategic level which included senior management across the organisation as well as volunteers. We saw a very detailed service review which followed feedback from the volunteers, families and children and young people as well as professionals who had accessed the service. Without exception, all views were positive and complimentary about the service provided.

The service review demonstrated the registered managers awareness of the Care Quality Commissions

(CQC) 'key questions' and was structured under the five main areas of, 'safe, effective, caring, responsive and well-led' with feedback from all stakeholders recorded under each section with ideas for further improvements considered. A newsletter was also provided for families and the volunteers with a 'short breaks statement' held on the West Sussex County Council website for people to view the 'aim's' of the service and to review what support they could expect to receive from the volunteers. This showed that the service provided clear, accessible information for families regarding the support that could be offered to them by the volunteers of the service, both for current and potential users of the service.