

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC000673
Inspection date	03/07/2013
Inspector	Stephen Graham
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	07/02/2013
--------------------------------	------------

© Crown copyright 2013

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Service information

Brief description of the service

This children's home is operated by a national voluntary organisation. It offers short-break care and accommodation for up to 10 children with a learning disability, including one place for use in emergencies.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: a service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements

Good: a service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements

Adequate: a service that only meets minimum requirements

Inadequate: a service that does not meet minimum requirements

Overall effectiveness

The overall effectiveness is judged to be **good**.

The overall effectiveness of the service in meeting the needs of young people living at the home is good. Young people enjoy outstanding outcomes in their care and receive good support from the staff team to help them to achieve this. They and their parents and carers can discuss their individual care needs with staff regularly. They receive good advice regarding their personal health care needs. They participate regularly in a broad range of healthy leisure activities in their local community. They receive very good support to help them attend their education regularly and to be successful in it.

The home is decorated and furnished to a very good standard and is well presented. It provides a very safe and comfortable environment to the young people who live there. The staff team gives young people good advice and support to help keep them safe.

The home is very well led and managed. The management arrangements work effectively to support both the good quality of care provided by staff and the outstanding outcomes achieved by young people visiting the home. There are some minor shortfalls within some of the records in use at the home. However, these shortfalls have had no impact on the overall good quality of care that young people receive from the staff team and manager.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure that any prescribed medication is administered in accordance with the prescription (NMS 6.14)
- ensure that the Children's Guide to the service informs each child how they can contact their Independent Reviewing Officer. (NMS 13.5)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **outstanding**.

Young people, along with their parents, carers and placing social workers, regularly discuss the success of their individual care plans with the staff team at the home. This helps to ensure that the outcomes agreed in their care plans are achieved. Young people interact very well with the staff team and with each other. They enjoy the care they receive when visiting the home. One parent describes how, 'my child looks forward to going every month. I feel the staff go above and beyond to meet their needs.'

The staff team ensures that the individual achievements of all young people living at the home are documented clearly and are celebrated. Social care professionals with links to the home agree strongly that the needs of all the young people who live there are considered appropriately, irrespective of their age or gender. They believe that improving outcomes for children is a clear priority for staff at the home. One describes how, 'the home is very well thought of by parents and professionals.' Another describes how, 'the staff team manages the complex needs of the young people very well; I'm very pleased with the placement.'

Young people are achieving some very good health outcomes. They benefit from the support available to them both from the home and appropriate specialist health care services. They enjoy a healthy and active lifestyle during their visits. They participate regularly in a good range of healthy activities both within the local community and beyond. They also enjoy a healthy diet.

Young people enjoy outstanding outcomes in their education. The staff team maintains very good links with specialist education services and with local schools. They work very effectively to maintain and improve educational outcomes for young people living at the home. One social care professional describes how in their experience of working with the home, 'the staff maintain clear goals and care plans and work closely with parents, schools and other professionals.'

The staff team provides young people with very good support and practical advice to help them practise and develop their individual self-care skills. This helps young people who move on from the home to make a successful transition to adult care services. One parent describes how the home, 'provides an invaluable service to our child and family; the care and professionalism with which they are looked after is

wonderful, giving them the chance of independence and choice in a safe and caring environment.'

Quality of care

The quality of the care is **good**.

The staff team at the home works in close partnership with parents, carers, young people and their placing social workers. The care plans for each young person visiting the home are monitored regularly. This ensures that their individual needs are fully known and addressed successfully in their individual care arrangements. Social care professionals linked to the home confirm that the staff team works well with them. They also believe that improving outcomes for young people is the 'clear priority' of the manager and staff team at the home. They describe the service provided as 'good' or 'excellent'. One gives the view that, 'we work together to plan ahead', and describes how, 'staff have been creative and flexible in meeting the complex needs of the children.' Another simply states that, 'communication is good.'

Regular meetings are organised to review the effectiveness of short-break care plans. Parents, carers and young people themselves attend these meetings and can give their views directly to the social care professionals involved in meeting their care needs. The manager and staff team members also attend the meetings and provide good information and detailed written reports regarding the progress being made by young people. One parent describes how, 'the staff team are attentive to my child's individual needs, carefully following procedures decided upon at review. As a parent I am confident that my child is cared for and supported by professional staff.'

The home has very detailed and effective admission procedures. These help young people coming to visit the home to settle in quickly. The manager and staff team also complete detailed individual risk assessments in partnership with parents, carers and placing social workers. These arrangements help to ensure that young people are admitted safely. One carer describes how the home, 'has given my child some independence away from home, which I think is a very good way for them to move forward. They now have more confidence, as they have not been out of the family environment before.'

The home is furnished and equipped to a high standard. Young people enjoy visiting the home. It provides them with a very comfortable and safe environment which meets their needs. The location provides them with very good access to a broad range of local community facilities and recreational opportunities. One parent gives the view that, 'the staff are fantastic and the facilities are great too. It provides a lovely, safe, homely environment that is completely appropriate to my child's complex needs. It is somewhere where they can go, on their terms, and have fun.'

Young people eat well when visiting the home and enjoy a healthy diet. They are involved directly in menu planning and are encouraged to help with food preparation where this is possible. They regularly try different foods from a variety of cultures. The staff team is trained in first aid. This helps to ensure that the health needs of

young people are met in any emergency. There are detailed arrangements in place to administer medication to young people safely. However, very occasionally these procedures have not been fully implemented in practice. The manager and senior staff monitor these arrangements very closely. They take effective action in partnership with parents, carers and placing social workers to improve arrangements where this is necessary. This has helped to ensure that the impact of any shortfalls in these arrangements on the care of young people has been minimal.

The staff team develops and sustains very positive and constructive relationships with the young people who come to visit the home. Young people, their parents and carers are encouraged to give their views and to be involved in the overall running of the home. One social care professional describes how, 'the staff team are very good at reassuring parents.'

Safeguarding children and young people

The service is **good** at keeping children and young people safe and feeling safe.

The staff team at the home is very experienced and committed to keeping the children in their care safe. They receive training to help them protect young people from abuse and have access to necessary safeguarding guidance and procedures. The staff try to help young people understand how to protect themselves. They complete detailed care plans in partnership with parents, carers and placing social workers. These plans help to identify any risks and protective factors for each young person visiting the home. They are monitored and reviewed very regularly to ensure that they remain effective in helping to keep young people safe.

Social care professionals linked to the home believe that the staff team understands how to protect children and to safeguard their welfare. One parent describes how in their view, managers and staff have created a 'caring and safe environment' at the home.

There are agreed procedures in place to help ensure that should young people ever go missing from the home, they would be found and kept safe as quickly as possible. The staff team is trained to use physical restraint where this is ever necessary to keep young people safe. However, the use of any physical interventions at the home has rarely been necessary. The staff team promotes, supports and celebrates the positive behaviour of the young people who visit. Overall, the relationships between the staff team and young people are very positive.

The home provides a safe and comfortable environment to the young people who live there. The manager and staff team ensure that regular health and safety checks are completed to help minimise any potential risks to young people. The staff team knows what to do in any emergency and the staff practise this regularly with young people. One social care professional describes how, 'the home is very well designed and the grounds are safe.'

Arrangements are in place to complete checks on new staff team members to ensure

they are suitable to work with children. Young people have been encouraged and supported to be involved in the processes to recruit new staff. Any visitors to the home are supervised by staff to help ensure that children are kept safe when they are present.

Leadership and management

The leadership and management of the children's home are **good**.

The arrangements for the manager and senior staff to manage and monitor the quality of the service provided at the home work very effectively. Regular reports are completed regarding the quality of the care that young people visiting the home receive. The manager works closely with the staff team, parents, carers and young people themselves, to plan and implement further improvements to the service.

Social care professionals believe that the service provided to children visiting the home is good or excellent. They believe that improving outcomes for children is the clear priority of the manager and staff team. There is a Statement of Purpose in place which accurately describes the service provided at the home. Young people receive their own summary guide to the service. This is well presented and contains some good information. However, some of the information included is not currently accurate.

The staff team overall is very experienced and qualified. The staff use their experience and knowledge well to provide young people with some outstanding outcomes in their care. Additional training opportunities are planned by the manager and senior staff in consultation with the staff team. This helps the service overall to further develop and maintain the knowledge and skills needed to care for young people successfully. The manager ensures that the staff team receives appropriate supervision and annual appraisal. The manager also monitors and reviews the daily staffing levels at the home very regularly. This helps to ensure that young people receive the care and support they need.

Independent monitoring visits to the home are completed regularly on behalf of the registered provider. Reports are completed in good detail. The manager reviews the contents of these reports and any recommendations made. The manager also consults regularly with young people, parents and carers, staff, social workers and other professionals, to gather views on the effectiveness of the service and to plan further improvements to it.

Two recommendations were made at the previous inspection visit; these have been implemented in full by the manager and staff team.

About this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service and to consider how well it complies with the relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the *Inspections of children's homes – framework for inspection* and the evaluation schedule for the inspection of children's homes.