

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Stephen Graham
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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* (March 2011) and the evaluation schedule for children's homes.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: a service that significantly exceeds minimum requirements

Good: a service that exceeds minimum requirements

Satisfactory: a service that only meets minimum requirements

Inadequate: a service that does not meet minimum requirements

Service information

Brief description of the service

The home, in partnership with the local authority and health trust, provides short breaks residential care for children and young people, aged from 6 years old up to 17 years old, who have moderate to severe learning disabilities.

Overall effectiveness

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

The outcomes for young people staying at the home are good. They benefit from very close individual support and enjoy supportive relationships with staff. They receive good help with their personal health care needs and can practice some self-care skills where possible. Young people receive good support from staff who allow them to attend their education regularly. They can participate positively in a range of leisure activities in the community. Young people and their parents receive very good support and encouragement from staff to discuss their care needs. The building provides a very homely and comfortable environment for young people to live in. However, the routine checks on fire safety equipment needed to keep the building safe are not always completed at the frequency required.

Young people are looked after by an experienced and stable staff team. They provide young people with satisfactory support to help keep them safe. Young people feel safe living at the home and enjoy positive relationships with staff and each other. However, the records demonstrating how young people are kept safe are not always completed by staff using the agreed guidance in place. Not all of the protocols needed to keep young people safe are in place. These are administrative issues and suitable arrangements are in place to protect young people.

The home is generally well led and managed. The staff team receive good training and support. However, the written guides provided to young people, parents and social workers using the service do not include all of the information recommended. The arrangements used to monitor the service on behalf of the registered provider are thorough. However, some of the monitoring reports for the service have not been forwarded to Ofsted as requested.

Areas for improvement

Statutory Requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
29 (2001)	maintain the records specified in Schedule 4, in particular the statutory provision (if any) under which a child is accommodated (Regulation 29 (1) Schedule 4; section 1(f))	29/02/2012
16 (2001)	ensure the prompt referral to the local authority of any allegation of abuse or neglect (Regulation 16 (2)(b))	29/02/2012
4 (2001)	ensure that the Statement of Purpose for the home includes each of the matters listed in Schedule 1. (Regulation 4 (1))	29/02/2012

Recommendations

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

- include photographs of the home in the written information provided to each young person in advance of their stay (NMS 11.3)
- ensure that the procedures to be used if a child were ever absent from the home are compatible with the protocols and procedures maintained and managed by the police and local authority (NMS 5.6)
- ensure that all staff understand and apply the home's written policy on managing behaviour at all times (NMS 3.3)
- complete all safety checks with the regularity recommended to help ensure that any avoidable hazards at the home are removed (NMS 10.3)
- keep a clear record of the recruitment and vetting checks carried out on those staff working at the home (NMS 16.3)
- ensure that the children's guide to the service includes all of the information recommended, particularly how a child can contact their Independent Reviewing Officer, the Children's Rights Director and Ofsted (NMS 13.5)
- provide Ofsted with a copy of each monitoring report completed by the manager. (NMS 21.2) (Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 5: Children's Homes, statutory guidance, paragraph 3.14)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for children and young people are **good**.

Young people visiting the home enjoy very good individual support from staff which

is tailored to meet their individual cultural needs. The staff team talk very regularly with parents, young people and their placing social workers to ensure that the outcomes agreed in the short break care plans of each young person are achieved. The manager and senior staff at the home closely monitor the support provided to young people to further ensure that it remains effective. Detailed care records are maintained by care staff. These demonstrate clearly the overall good outcomes achieved with young people.

Young people visiting the home continue to participate positively in a range of healthy activities within their local community. These activities and resources are used by staff to promote a healthy and active lifestyle. Young people continue to practice and develop their self care skills where this is possible. Good planning ensures that young people can continue to access the health services and support that they need during each visit to the home. The staff team receive regular support and training to help them maintain good health outcomes for young people in partnership with their parents and carers. The staff team have access to a very good range of information and resources which they share with parents and carers and use to help young people maintain their good health. Young people confirm that the staff team look after them if they are ever unwell during each visit to the home.

Young people enjoy good outcomes in their education. There are very good arrangements in place which ensure that young people continue to attend their education regularly. Staff at the home work closely with parents, carers and education staff. This ensures that information regarding the education of each young person is shared very effectively. Young people are encouraged to participate positively at school. The staff team celebrate their individual daily achievements with them.

Quality of care

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

Young people, their parents and carers receive very good encouragement from the staff team to contribute their views to their care and placement plans. Parents and carers confirm that staff 'always' keep them informed and that they are encouraged to attend meetings, to give their views and to talk with staff as often as they wish. One parent describes how the home 'provides safe professional care for my child who has disabilities, providing me with much needed respite. We communicate fully on all matters concerning my child.' The care records maintained by staff describe very clearly how the individual needs of each young person are being met. One social worker with links to the home describes staff as having 'good relationships with parents.' They also describe staff as having the skills needed to meet the care needs of the children they had placed at the home. Meetings are organised very regularly to review the effectiveness of the care plans. Managers and staff team members attend these meetings and provide very detailed information regarding the progress being made by each young person.

The home has well-organised admission procedures which are used by staff to help

young people coming to visit the home to settle in quickly. However, the written information used to help young people and their families to be more familiar with the service in advance of their stay, does not include photographs of the home as recommended. Also, the register of attendance maintained at the home does not include the legal status of each young person. The manager completes detailed risk assessments for each young person in partnership with their parents and placing social workers. These work effectively to help ensure that young people are admitted safely. The staff team help young people to maintain contact as they wish with their family and friends during each visit.

The building overall is very comfortably furnished and decorated and meets the needs of the young people coming to visit. Each young person has their own bedroom. The dining room and lounge are very well presented and furnished. The kitchen is well equipped and presented. There are more than sufficient bathroom facilities. The home has good access to local public transport.

Young people enjoy healthy diets that meet their specific needs. The individual food preferences of each young person visiting the home are confirmed by the staff team and are recorded for reference. The range of food provided at the home includes healthy choices and examples of food from different cultures. The staff team receive training in first aid, the safe administration of medication and safe food hygiene. Any medication needed by young people is stored safely. The arrangements to administer medication are monitored very closely and reviewed with parents very regularly to ensure that young people are cared for safely.

The staff team work hard to promote and sustain positive and constructive relationships with the young people visiting the home. The use of restraints and sanctions at the home are rarely necessary. There are no incidents of bullying occurring at the home. Young people and their parents receive regular encouragement to give their views on how the home is run. Their views are clearly recorded and acknowledged. One carer describes how 'we are well informed and receive regular invitations to the home to hear of news and developments.' Any concerns received are investigated very quickly and are resolved positively by the manager and staff team.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

There are satisfactory arrangements in place at the home to safeguard the young people who live there. Young people feel safe when visiting the home. The staff team have access to detailed safeguarding guidance and reporting procedures. They are trained to protect young people from abuse and to keep them safe. Previously delays have occurred in sharing information appropriately when initial concerns were identified. However, additional training and guidance has been provided which has further improved the understanding of staff regarding their roles and responsibilities. The staff team complete detailed risk assessments in partnership with the parents of

young people and their placing social workers. Parents are aware of the procedures staff would follow if they were ever concerned for the safety of any young person.

There are clear procedures in place which are used by staff to help ensure that if young people were ever to go missing they would be found and kept safe, as quickly as possible. However, the procedures in place have not been agreed with the local police to ensure that they comply with the statutory guidance. Very positively, there have been no incidents involving young people going missing from the home.

The use of restraints and sanctions are very rarely necessary. The staff team manage behaviours positively and effectively. One parent describes how 'my child's needs are top priority. Staff work to improve negative behaviour patiently and appropriately'. However, the written records maintained by staff of events occurring at the home are not always completed as described in the agreed guidance at the home.

The staff team use detailed risk assessments and checks are completed on the safety equipment needed to help protect young people. However, these checks are not always completed with the regularity needed to ensure the home remains a safe place for young people to visit. The staff team are trained to know what to do in any emergency. They practice this regularly to further ensure that young people are cared for safely.

Young people benefit from a very stable staff team. Arrangements are in place to complete checks on any new staff team members to ensure they are suitable to work with children. However, not all of the information needed to demonstrate the checks completed is kept available at the home. 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**.

There are good management arrangements in place at the home. A Statement of Purpose is in place which gives some clear information about the service provided. However, the current version does not include all of the information required. For example, the qualifications of the registered provider, the contact address of the registered provider and manager, information regarding arrangements to minimise any risk of absences from the home, the arrangements to minimise the risk of bullying and to promote health arrangements and a description of the internal intercom system in use. Young people and their parents receive their own summary guide to the home. It also contains clear information about how the service is provided and is presented to a good standard. However, the current version does not contain all of the information recommended. For example how a child can contact their Independent Reviewing Officer, the Children's Rights Director and Ofsted.

The staff team are experienced in working with children and young people and are well qualified. The staff team overall have the knowledge and skills to care for young people successfully. However, some staff members need to complete some additional

recommended training. The staff team receive regular supervision, appraisal and additional training opportunities. The daily staffing levels at the home are closely monitored by the manager to ensure that young people receive the care and support they need. Staffing levels are further adjusted where necessary to meet the needs of young people.

There are systems in place which are used by the manager to monitor the home's records and to create reports regarding the quality of the service provided to young people. The information gathered is used by the manager and service provider to help plan further improvements to the service. However, copies of these monitoring reports are not currently provided for information to Ofsted as recommended.

Monitoring visits to the home also take place on behalf of the registered provider. These visits report clearly on all of the matters required and recommended. Positively, the four actions and one recommendation made at the previous inspection visit have been fully implemented by the manager and staff team. Arrangements at the home now ensure that all persons employed by the registered person are receiving appropriate supervision. New staff now receive one-to-one supervision at least fortnightly during the first six months of their employment. Over 80% of the work force at the home are now qualified to National Vocational Qualification at level 3. All staff are receiving appropriate training on at least six days each year. The forms used to record any accidents occurring at the home are now completed in full detail.

Equality and diversity practice is **good**.