

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Christina Maddison
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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.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for the service.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding:	this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality
Good:	this aspect of the provision is strong
Satisfactory:	this aspect of the provision is sound
Inadequate:	this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Service information

Brief description of the service

The service is a purpose built respite and residential service, situated in a rural area. It is registered to provide eight respite and two long-stay residential places for children and young people aged between five and 18 years old who have learning disabilities and may also have physical disabilities. The long-stay places are in a separate, self-contained area of the building.

The accommodation is provided on two floors and a passenger lift is provided for the children to reach the first floor. All bedrooms are single rooms, and there is plenty of communal space provided. The service benefits from being situated next to a school that many of the children who use the service attend. The children have the use of the school playing fields and hydro-pool. All children are staffed on a one-to-one basis and are encouraged to access a range of fulfilling activities.

Summary

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

This is an overview of what the inspector found during the inspection.

The purpose of this unannounced key inspection was to check that the national minimum standards and the actions and recommendations made at the last inspection have been met.

There are some very good features to this home. Particularly the home is proactive in providing the children and young people with a very good quality environment where there are plenty of toys, games and an excellent sensory room that the children and young people enjoy. Children and young people are provided with at least one-to-one staffing during their stay which means that their care is highly individualised.

Work continues to be undertaken on improving recording systems to ensure that all working information is up to date and that there is agreement between parents, the local authority and the home about the methods of control and restraint that will be used to ensure that children and young people are safe.

Children and young people are looked after by a competent and committed staff team who clearly enjoy working with the children and young people who they look after.

Two actions have been raised. One is regarding finalising and implementing the behaviour management policy to ensure the safety of the children and young people. The other relates to ensuring staff who administer medication have received up to

date training. Two recommendations have been raised. One relates to recording when risk assessments are updated and ensuring these are signed by the manager. The other relates to ensuring the complaints procedure is available in a format that is accessible to the children and young people who use the service.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous inspection the manager was asked to ensure that the record of complaints included information regarding the outcome of any complaint and if the complainant was satisfied with the outcome. This information is now being recorded.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

There are good arrangements for promoting the healthy lives of children and young people who come to stay at the home.

Children and young people are encouraged to eat healthy home cooked meals. Ingredients are sourced locally and are often organic and of high quality; this ensures that meals are nutritious and wholesome. Staff have developed a good resource of symbols and pictures of different foods and meals so that children and young people can communicate their needs and choices. This means that children and young people are fully involved in mealtimes which are relaxed and sociable occasions.

Each child and young person has a healthcare plan that contains information about how their health care needs will be met. This means that staff are clear about the care that the individual child or young person requires.

When children attend the home for respite care then parents retain responsibility for their child's health care. Young people who stay on a longer-term basis have their health care needs detailed and specialist health care advice is obtained to ensure that their needs are met. This includes advice from a diabetes care nurse and staff training in the administration of epilepsy medication. All staff are trained in first aid to provide help if there are any accidents. However, not all staff that are involved in the administration of other daily medication have received training recently.

There are suitable medication procedures to help ensure that young people get their medication at the right times. These procedures are monitored by the management team to ensure that this important aspect of the children's care is completed effectively.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

The home has procedures and processes to safeguard children and young people when they stay at the home. Staff benefit from regular safeguarding training and are clear about safeguarding procedures. Privacy is respected and staff carry out personal care in private and ensure the dignity of the children and young people.

Due to the high levels of staffing unauthorised absences have not occurred recently. However, staff are clear about what action to take should this be an issue. Staff are proactive in resolving any behavioural issues and maintaining high levels of individual care.

All complaints are taken seriously and thorough processes are followed and outcomes recorded. There is not an accessible complaints format available for the children and young people who use the service.

There is ongoing work to devise an updated behavioural management policy that will detail what strategies and equipment staff will use regarding the safe control of children and young people when out of the home. This work is not yet completed with regard to the use of handling belts.

Staff have received training in an approved method of physical intervention and only use it as a last resort. There are few incidents of this. When physical intervention has been used, it has been used appropriately and is well recorded.

Young people's safety within the home is promoted by the use of risk assessments which identify potential individual risks for each child and young person. These are not always updated on a regular basis and signed by the manager and parents as agreed.

Records show that regular fire drills and equipment checks happen, these are monitored by the manager to ensure that staff and children know what to do in the event of a fire. Health and safety in the home are well managed and all disability aids and equipment are safe as they are regularly checked and serviced.

Robust procedures are in place to ensure that only suitable persons are employed. Files evidence staff have enhanced Criminal Records Bureau checks and the standards for recruitment are fully met.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

There is good individual support for young people, education is promoted and interests and hobbies are encouraged and developed.

Each child and young person has a detailed placement plan that identifies how individual needs will be supported. Staff provide good care and are knowledgeable about each child and young person's individual needs and how best to support them. There is good use of a range of communication methods, such as sign language and the use of symbols and pictures. This means that the children and young people are able to communicate their needs and wishes effectively to staff.

Education is supported and the home has good links with the adjoining school, where many of the children and young people who use the service attend. There is good communication between the home, school and parents to help ensure continuity of care between school, parents and care staff.

Staff actively encourage children and young people to get involved in a good range of leisure activities indoors and out in the community. There are a good range of resources at the home including toys, books, games, outdoor play area and a sensory room that is very well equipped. There are regular trips out and birthdays and special events are celebrated.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

There are good assessments of care needs prior to a child or young person using the service. Individually tailored packages of care ensure that children's needs are met and regularly reviewed. Cultural, religious and racial needs are identified and addressed.

Children and young people staying at the home are encouraged to give their views and opinions and participate in the daily running of the home. The use of individual forms of communication aid those who are non-verbal to express their wishes and feelings.

The staff ensure that there is good communication with parents and children and young people can maintain contact with families by telephone during their stay.

Pre placement planning is good. The home carefully considers the needs of any prospective child or young person and whether their needs can be met at the home. Parents are also invited to a taster session and the child or young person is able to have an overnight stay.

The home promotes anti-discriminatory practice. Staff are calm, relaxed, patient and non-judgemental in the way that they interact with the children and young people so that they are comfortable and secure in their relationships.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Children and young people enjoy living in a home that is well appointed, clean and comfortable. Each child or young person has their own room and the use of well maintained disability equipment if needed. Bedrooms for the long stay young people are personalised, clean and well maintained. Outdoor play equipment is available in the garden.

Children and young people are encouraged to be as independent as possible while they are staying at the home. For example staff encourage them to eat as independently as possible and they are encouraged to do their own laundry.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children and young people are supported by a competent and well trained staff team. There is an excellent rapport established between the children, young people and the staff. This allows for professional trust and friendship to be embedded in day-to-day care. The deployment of staff is highly effective and meets the needs of the children and young people.

Staff receive a range of training opportunities to enhance their skills and knowledge. Training opportunities include manual handling, physical intervention, first aid and safeguarding.

Children, young people and their families are provided with information that enables them to be well informed about what the service can offer to them. The information that is available for children and young people is in a style that captures the important things they need to know about their stays at the home. Information is available in symbols and pictures that are accessible for the children and young people.

The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. This is evidenced through the individual care given to the young people and the recognition of their diverse and individual needs. The staff team are from a diverse ethnic background and equality is promoted in the home at all times.

What must be done to secure future 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 Provider(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Std.	Action	Due date
13	ensure that all staff have the skills necessary for the work that they are to perform, in particular ensure all staff that administer medication have received appropriate training (Regulation 26)	31/01/2011
26	The registered person shall prepare and implement a written policy which sets out (a) the measures of control, restraint and discipline which may be used in the home. (Regulation 17)	31/01/2011

Recommendations

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

- ensure that all risk assessments are regularly recorded as updated and signed as agreed (NMS 26.3)
- ensure a complaints procedure is available in a format accessible to the children and young people who use the service. (NMS 16.1)