

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC003792
Inspection date	16/10/2012
Inspector	Linda Bond
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	12/12/2011
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This registered children's home is run by a charitable trust and provides care and accommodation for children and young people on both a long-term basis and for short stay breaks. It is registered to provide eight short break and two long-stay residential places for children and young people who have learning disabilities and may also have physical disabilities.

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 home provides a really good level of care which means that the outcomes for children and young people are good. Children and young people appreciate the care and support they receive from a very committed and dedicated staff team and enjoy living at the home. Parents and social workers are impressed with the quality of care and progress children and young people make.

Children and young people thrive within a warm, supportive and caring environment. Their needs and views are central to the development and operation of the home. Bespoke and individualised care plans ensure that all children and young people are compassionately and respectfully cared for.

Robust safeguarding practices promote the safety and welfare of young people who feel safe and comfortable living at the home. There is an excellent emphasis which supports young people to develop both socially and educationally.

A strong management ensures the home continues to strive to improve outcomes for children and young people. However, shortfalls were noted in the absence of two Regulation 33 reports and the clinical and austere feel to the children and young people's bathrooms. Recommendations are made to ensure these issues are addressed.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- ensure the home provides a comfortable and homely environment and is well maintained and decorated and that risk reduction does not lead to an institutional feel. This is specifically in relation to the bathrooms the children and young people use (NMS 10.3)
- ensure the registered provider's written report of a visit carried out under Regulation 33 is lodged in the home for the manager and the staff to read and to respond. (NMS 21.8)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

The emphasis placed on identifying and supporting children and young peoples' holistic needs is good. The opportunities for exploring their emotional resilience, physiological health, and inclusion are central to the care planning processes. These plans have recently been modified and updated and as a result children and young people are supported in developing an understanding of their lives.

Staff demonstrate a very strong commitment in supporting the needs of the children and young people with significant progress having been achieved. The home's expectations, rules and routines provide all with an environment that focuses on positive outcomes.

The children and young people benefit from very individualised and bespoke programmes that take in to account differing disabilities, abilities, communication and mobility. Children and young people, along with their parents and social workers are involved regularly in the reviewing of these. This level of care, inclusion and support helps them to develop a positive view of themselves and as a consequence develop a sense of value and importance from being included in the day-to-day running of the home.

Children and young people know they are supported as a result of the on-going and consistent dialogue between them and the staff team. Parents and social workers report communication both verbal and in the written form is 'excellent' and allows a sharing of information that impacts positively on children and young people and ensures safety is paramount. A consistent and experienced staff team offers children and young people a stable, nurturing base where they can thrive.

Staff are committed to ensuring that learning is fun and part of everyday life for the children and young people. Nutritious and balanced meals are provided daily to

ensure children and young people remain healthy. They are also made interesting and fun and take into account the differing dietary needs of all. Those children and young people that are able to be are involved with food preparation and cooking and by doing so are being assisted in developing independent living skills.

All children and young people attend school and benefit from the strong working relationship between the care and educational staff. By attending various educational placements which are tailored to meet their individual needs children and young people are enabled to achieve their educational ambitions. Parents emphasis how the many opportunities that are offered either through direct work or outings enable children and young people to develop and maximise their experiences.

Quality of care

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

Children and young people benefit from living in an environment where warm, caring and supportive relationships exist between themselves and staff. Where verbal communication is not possible, staff engage children and young people in using pictures and technical tools, for example an I-Pad to ensure their views and wishes are heard.

The staff team's composition, being mixed in gender, ethnicity and experience, enhances the care the children and young people receive. Staff ensure that the needs and wishes of all people are met while carrying out their duties in a supportive and professional manner. Children and young people benefit from positive reinforcement and participation in a range of activities.

Policies and procedures are established for dealing with complaints and these are clear and accessible. Children, young people and parents are supported to raise any matters of concern and know how to make a complaint: there is accessible information in the current children and young person's guide. Records are maintained of all complaints. Since the last inspection, the home has received no complaints. There have been compliments from professionals involved in the care of young people which refer to the 'excellent care and support' provided.

Bespoke and person-centred care planning, delivered by a consistent and experienced staff team, ensures children and young people receive a good level of care. Plans take in to account the holistic and individualised needs of each child and young person using the service.

All children and young people are registered with and access various local healthcare services. Specialist intervention services are provided to meet the specific needs of some children and young people. They are encouraged to pursue healthy lifestyle choices and to eat an excellent diet. Staff have access to a wide range of food and nutritional advice, thereby ensuring children and young people with specific dietary needs are well cared for.

Systems are in place for the safe storage, receipt, administration of medication and the disposal of any unused medication.

The home's design and location is suitable for its stated function. It provides children and young people with excellent facilities and is maintained to a good standard, being clean, tidy and comfortable. It is also well furnished and in good decorative order. The home provides good communal facilities to meet children and young people's individual and collective needs. Children and young people will have their own bedrooms but will share bathrooms. These are equipped with all necessary mobility aids to ensure the safe handling of children and young people with mobility issues. However, the bathrooms have a clinical and austere feel and could benefit from decorating and remodelling.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

There are robust systems in place to safeguard children and young people at the home. The home maintains an open and supportive dialogue with children, young people parents and carers, their respective placing social workers and the local safeguarding team. A copy of the Local Safeguarding Children Board's policies and procedures together with their contact details are readily available to staff. Staff receive a good induction and regular training which focuses on the protection of children and young people.

Part of the individual's risk assessment focuses on young people's vulnerability, including the risk of them going absent without authority. This is used to form specific responses for children and young people should they go missing. Since the last inspection no children or young people have gone missing.

Children and young people enjoy warm, open and consistent relationships with their key worker and staff. Parents and social workers report they are confident with procedures to maintain safety in the home. As a result, and coupled with regular communication children and young people's safety is maximised.

Children and young people are supported by good staff ratios. Challenging behaviour is managed well. Staff and the Registered Manager find supportive strategies to manage some very complex behavioural issues. The home has an appropriate policy and procedure for the use of physical restraint which, the records reflect, is consistently applied in practice. Physical intervention is used to a minimum; episodes are recorded clearly and accurately. There is good evidence of reflective learning that contributes to the regular reviewing of behavioural strategies.

Effective measures are in place to protect children and young people from bullying. There have been no recent incidents of bullying. Staff feel confident to support children and young people if there were to be any.

The home has learnt lessons from recommendations made at the previous

inspection. New robust staff recruitment practices have been established to ensure the protection of young people. These practices ensure that new staff are suitably vetted and do not commence employment in the home until all the relevant checks have been carried out.

The home provides children and young people with a safe environment in which to live. No environmental concerns were noted as part of this inspection. Health and safety policies ensure that staff and young people are appropriately safeguarded from avoidable risks. Risk assessments are regularly reviewed and updated. On one occasion identification was not requested, however, there was no pattern or trend of this occurring previously.

Leadership and management

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

Children and young people benefit from living in a home which is well managed and has a team that reflects upon ways it can improve its service to young people. There have been some changes but there remains a stable staff team. Staff feel extremely well supported in their roles through regular formal and informal supervision, daily handovers and regular staff meetings. These systems ensure that staff are kept up to date in all matters relating to the home and young people.

Children and young people are looked after by a staff team who are trained and competent to meet their individual and collective needs. Most staff are trained to the National Vocational Qualification Level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People. Staff value the additional training opportunities provided to them to develop their knowledge, expertise and competence. These include both mandatory and more specialist training. This is reflected in the care practice and positive outcomes achieved for children and young people which is very much appreciated by them.

Children and young people's records are complete and are stored securely. Newly devised care plans and placement plans also reflect their individual histories and needs. Parents are pleased with how the plans present a personalised account of the children and young people. This information enables staff to effectively care for young people. Any significant events relating to the protection of young people are routinely notified to all relevant parties. Staff ensure that young people's placing social workers are kept well informed and are regularly updated of young people's progress and well-being.

The Registered Manager is making good progress to ensure the home is well organised and all recommendations made at the previous inspection have been complied with. There are sufficient staff to provide young people with consistent care. Monthly monitoring reports on the quality of care in the home are provided by an external visitor. At the point of inspection it was noted that two Regulation 33 reports were outstanding.

The home has an up-to-date Statement of Purpose, development plan and children

and young people's guide. They outline the service and includes future steps to improve the service. These documents are regularly reviewed and provide a clear view about the home's aims and objectives. These help to ensure the policies and procedures of the home are adhered to and that the care delivered to children and young people is of a good standard.

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.