

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Tola Akinde-Hummel
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	16/12/2011
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This home, run by a company, is registered to provide short-break care. The home cares for up to nine children and young people who have a learning disability and/or a physical disability and/or sensory impairment.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: a service that significantly exceeds minimum requirements

Good: a service 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 positive experiences for all children and young people receiving short-break care.

Children and young people are assisted by staff who are very dedicated and keen to help them progress. Staff use their excellent communication skills to meet their needs and seek their views on their care. The staffing ratios are high, enabling children and young people to be kept safe and receive individual attention. This supports their development and engagement in activities of their choice.

Thoughtful planning and appropriate amounts of relaxation and activities help children and young people cope with a group living environment. Staff remain calm and patient when trying to assist children and young people to change their behaviour or learn new skills.

Leadership and management of the home are strong. Leaders and managers are effective at tackling weaknesses and securing improvement. However, Ofsted has not been informed, as required, of the change in responsible individual even though it happened some time ago. This is important so that Ofsted knows who is accountable and who to contact about any aspects of care and support to children and young people.

Requirements and recommendations for improvement have been made with regard to some of the bathroom provision, training in fire safety, policy and procedural documentation and management arrangements.

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
31 (2001)	ensure all parts of the home are kept clean and reasonably decorated and maintained; with specific reference to one bathroom (Regulation 31 (2)(e))	31/08/2012
38 (2001)	give notice in writing to HMCI as soon as it is practicable to do so where there is to be any change in the identity of the responsible individual. (Regulation 38 (e)(iii))	25/05/2012

Recommendations

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

- ensure there is an emergency escape plan that all staff and children are familiar with and have practiced so they know what to do in an emergency (NMS 10.9)
- ensures all staff work is consistent with these Regulations and National Minimum Standards and the homes' policies and procedures, particularly ensure that the organisation and home's procedures correlate with each other. (NMS 21 21.3)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Children and young people are relaxed in the home and become familiar with their surroundings. They are able to enjoy tea visits until they are ready for overnight stays.

Children and young people are able to extend their friendship groups and participate in activities that they may not otherwise have access to. They make progress during their short break. For example, children and young people experience improvements in their behaviour, nutrition, socialisation, and independence. These developments are significant in their lives. This demonstrates the positive impact this service has had on their life and of those who live and work with them. Successful joint working with families and professionals provides a consistent approach to help achieve positive changes.

One parent commented, ' The transition planning between the school and the home was fantastic, this helped my child settle. My child can be incredibly challenging at times and the way they deal with this is excellent.'

Children and young people enjoy a variety of activities. These stimulate all the senses, facilitate exercise and encourage engagement with the wider community. Appropriate transport ensures that distance does not preclude children and young people accessing places of interest further afield.

Quality of care

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

Staff demonstrate their commitment to children and young people through their actions. Attention is paid to all children through one-to-one support and detailed knowledge of their individual personalities

Children and young people are cared for by staff who receive good information from their families, school and social workers in order to properly meet their needs. Communication between families, professionals and the home is of a high standard, detailed and relevant, ensuring a holistic package of care is provided. One parent stated, 'The home got an awful lot of information about my child. They were fully informed.'

This information forms part of the highly individualised placement plans and addresses areas for children and young people to learn and develop. Personal care needs are understood and addressed with sensitivity. Staff help children and young people understand what is socially acceptable behaviour and promote this.

Placement plans address equality and diversity issues, such as religious and cultural needs, well. The individuality of children and young people is evident in these plans and is translated into practice. Although this is a Jewish organisation, children and young people of various racial, religious and cultural backgrounds use the service. The Staff team readily identify the diversity of the children and young people and meet their needs accordingly. For example, staff pray with children and young people of a different religion if this is their daily practice.

Staff have the skills and abilities to effectively communicate with all children, regardless of the method of communication children use.

The home manages medication well. Clear written instructions are kept of medication needs of and medicines are properly stored and administered. Parents and carers are happy with the systems in place. Staff are trained in skilled health tasks, including peg feeding, and this ensures children's health needs are fully met.

Regardless of mobility, children and young people move around the home freely and participate in activities. These are successfully designed to keep their interest and provide opportunities to engage in new things. Staff sing and play musical

instruments as well as read stories with children and young people. Children participate in cooking, some enjoy pampering sessions and others make use of the sensory room and outdoor space.

The home is designed for children and young people with disabilities. Bedrooms are comfortable and well presented. Communal areas are spacious and adequately furnished. The home is due to undertake a major refurbishment of the lounge and dining area with the aim of further improving provision. Children and young people have been widely consulted about these areas of the home and as a result have been able to influence the final design, layout and decoration of the space. The home has three bathrooms. Two of these have been redecorated with high quality equipment and one has not. The décor and equipment, such as the bath and shower chair, although functional, is old and showing signs of wear. This means children and young people may not always have access to facilities of equal quality.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Children and young people are safe in the home. They are cared for by highly competent staff who offer one-to-one support. The way in which children and young people relate to the environment in the home clearly indicates that they are comfortable and feel secure. The home ensures that the environment is conducive and safe for all children and young people to get the most out of their stay.

The behaviour of children and young people is good. They are cared for by staff who clearly know how to manage them. The home has good behaviour management strategies in place to address challenging behaviour. Staff understand and avoid potential triggers, such as being hungry and overstimulation, that can lead to an escalation in challenging behaviour. Staff are trained to use physical intervention as a means of managing behaviour. This is seldom used.

One social worker added, 'The young person presented some challenging behaviour during the short break, these have been resolved. I have no concerns and no complaints regarding the home.'

The home has up-to-date and detailed policies and procedures relating to the care of children and young people for staff to follow. The organisation's guidance, however is outdated and does not tally with the guidance in the home. This means that staff have conflicting information which potentially could cause confusion and hinder their ability to properly protect children and young people. A number of policies, such as physical intervention and missing person's procedures, do not fully explain procedures for instance, the information to be recorded within some of the home's record of physical restraint.

All children and young people have an equal opportunity to enjoy their short break. High staffing ratios and good planning coupled with detailed care plans and means that children and young people are protected from bullying and there are no

incidents of children and young people going missing from the home.

Children and young people are looked after by staff with excellent knowledge of safeguarding. Staff know what to do should there be an allegation or suspicion of abuse and unexplained marks around the body and implement these in practice. This safeguards the welfare of children and young people.

The recruitment and selection process in the home is good. Staff are carefully selected and undertake a series of checks to ensure they are suitable to work with vulnerable children and young people.

Children and young people enjoy a safe environment. Regular health and safety checks are carried out on a daily basis by staff as part of their shift duties. In addition, good records are kept of the testing of gas and electrical equipment and appliances. Repairs are promptly reported and dealt with. Security inside and outside the home is good without hindering the freedom and development of children and young people.

Leadership and management

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

The home is run by an experienced and competent manager who is keen to continually develop the service and the staff. There have been organisational changes which have resulted in a change of registered provider. As previously mentioned, the provider has not informed Ofsted of this change as they are required to do.

When practice issues have arisen these are recorded, explored and areas for improvement, such as the need for more detailed recording of the fluid intake of children, are discussed with the whole staff team and changes are made. These Improvements are monitored to measure their effectiveness. All requirements and recommendations made at previous inspections have been addressed within timescales. The requirement set to standardise the records of physical intervention has no direct impact on children and young people. The preparation of a development plan and initiatives highlighted for the coming year will be measured in terms of impact for children and young people at the appropriate time.

Effective monitoring of the service demonstrates the homes desire to address any improvements the home can make to enhance the experience children and young people have during their stay. For example, children and young people now have better access to the kitchen to choose and prepare snacks and drinks and increase their independence.

The manager recognises areas for improvement and the recent development plan explores ways of addressing these within reasonable timescales. Regulation 33 monitoring visits and detailed discussions with the appointed visitor contribute to the development plan. For example, ensuring all children and young people have regular

reviews of their care by either the local authorities or the home, depending on their care status. The home is also seeking to improve the way in which they report on the activities and experiences of children and young people during their stays and share it with them, their families and placing authorities.

The home's Statement of Purpose accurately reflects the aims and objectives of the home. Placing authorities, parents and carers know what to expect from the service.

Trained and competent staff take responsibility for direct care and support to children and young people. The children and young people benefit from additional staff if this is needed. Trips and outings that require additional staffing are not compromised to reduce staffing costs.

Fire and generic risk assessments are available and accessible. These are detailed and informative. All staff have received fire safety training and children and young people participate in day and night time fire drills. The home's fire risk assessment outlines their intention to further improve practice by the use of specialist equipment to move disabled children and young people to a place of safety in the event of a fire and during the regular drills that take place. It also proposes to implement personal emergency evacuation plans. While there has a delay in implementing these improvements the safety of young people is not compromised by this.

Staff contribute to all aspects of development of the service to ensure they share the vision of the home and put children's needs at the forefront. Regular supervision and team meetings help staff to progress professionally and in turn provide a high quality, focused service to children and young people.

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.