

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Brian Mcquoid
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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 children's home is registered to offer placements to children with learning disabilities, physical disabilities and children with sensory impairment, on a respite basis. The home is owned and run by a charitable organisation. The home is a respite facility and accommodates children of both genders up to 18 years of age. It is currently offering a respite service to over 80 children and young people.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

The home provides a very good standard of individualised care for young people who have a wide range of disabilities. The environment is child centred, young people are kept safe at all times, they are treated with respect and they enjoy their time spent at the home. The staff group are suitably qualified and experienced. They operate very effectively as a team and are more than competent in meeting the needs of young people accessing the service. Provision for health care is outstanding and the home works in close partnership with parents to ensure specific health needs are able to be met. Parents have a very high regard for the home and the care provided for their children. The accommodation and facilities at the home are very well maintained and young people are provided with lots of opportunities to do things that they enjoy doing. The inspection was carried out on an unannounced basis and the home was inspected against all of the key national minimum standards for children's homes.

Two actions arising from the inspection relate to: the frequency of fire alarm testing and reviews of individual placement plans.

Recommendations made to the home as a result of the inspection relate to: ensuring any periods of time-out are recorded, accessible information provided for young people about the home, supervision and appraisal for staff, the need for regular staff meetings and for a system to be established for internal monitoring purposes.

Improvements since the last inspection

There were no actions or recommendations arising from the previous inspection report.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Young people benefit from being provided with a healthy diet while staying at the home. Meals are cooked using predominantly fresh produce with little reliance on processed foods. Special dietary needs are well met and young people are encouraged to try new things. Young people are encouraged to be independent at meal times with staff providing support when necessary. Staff are suitably trained to prepare food and the home has received a four star rating from a recent environmental health inspection. Young people do not access the kitchen area because of the risks involved, but are encouraged and supported to be involved in activities such as cake making within the dining area.

There is outstanding provision at the home for promoting the physical and emotional well-being of young people. Parents retain primary responsibility for meeting their child's routine health needs, but they work extremely closely with staff to ensure any specific health need is able to be met. Detailed information is gathered prior to a young person arriving at the home and all young people have health plans identifying their individual physical, emotional and health related needs. Although young people remain registered with their own general practitioner the home has an excellent working relationship with the local surgery, which they can access should it be necessary. Individual protocols are in place to address specific health needs, including the administration of emergency medication, and staff have received appropriate training in relation to these.

Provision for the management and administration of medication at the home is excellent and provides suitable safeguards for the welfare of young people. Medication is stored securely, records are well maintained and only trained senior staff carry out administration. All staff are first aid trained and records of accidents are being appropriately maintained and monitored.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Young people at the home are treated as individuals. Their right to privacy is respected and there is excellent provision for ensuring they are safe and well protected from harm. The manager and deputy are the designated persons with responsibility for child protection and both have completed multi-agency training relevant to the role. All staff have also received training and are well aware of their responsibility to safeguard young people and the procedures to follow should any concerns arise. There have been no child protection concerns at the home since the previous inspection.

The home has a suitable complaints procedure in place but has never received any complaints of a formal nature. Staff have excellent relationships with parents and deal very effectively with any concerns they may have at an early stage. There is an

acute awareness amongst staff of their responsibility to advocate for young people and records showed that they do so. Observations saw staff communicating very effectively with all of the young people present during the inspection.

Staff know individual young people extremely well and adopt a positive approach to managing their behaviour. No sanctions are used and young people are praised and rewarded regularly for displaying positive behaviour. Time-out is being used positively to provide young people with an opportunity to calm should they need to, however records do not reflect every occasion. Incidents of challenging behaviour do occur and staff do employ physical intervention techniques. These incidents are, however at a very low level and managed extremely effectively by staff who are trained in doing so. Appropriate records of these are well maintained. High staffing levels provide for the close supervision of young people should it be necessary and there are no concerns about any bullying-type behaviours within the home. Observations saw staff being skilled at constructively engaging young people.

Young people accessing the service are provided with a safe and secure environment where there is excellent provision for managing risk. Health and safety matters are effectively addressed, and written risk assessments ensure young people are safeguarded while on the premises and while in the community. Arrangements for fire safety are good with an up-to-date fire risk assessment in place and practice evacuations being held regularly. Tests and checks of fire safety equipment are being carried out but currently the fire alarm is not being tested at suitable intervals.

Staff employed at the home are subject to recruitment procedures which provide suitable safeguards for young people's welfare, and which are being rigorously applied.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people benefit from good levels of individual support which is provided according to their needs. Detailed plans are in place for all young people and suitably address their individual needs in all areas of their daily lives. Staffing provision is good with one-to-one arrangements in place for some young people and with all having a designated key worker. Staff know individual young people extremely well, are able to communicate effectively with them and so can provide support accordingly. Young people were observed being encouraged to be as independent as possible during the inspection and to be entirely comfortable with the staff interacting with them. Social interaction was seen to be appropriately encouraged and those young people who clearly enjoy their own space were able to do so. Staff work closely with parents and external professionals in implementing any programmes associated with specialist services such as physiotherapy programmes.

Staff provide good support for young people which enables them to maintain their attendance at school while staying at the home. There are established and positive relationships with the schools attended and staff routinely transport some young

people to and from school each day. Facilities including a computer are available within the home and staff provide support as necessary for any young person who has school work to complete. As a respite facility the home places a strong emphasis on ensuring young people enjoy their stay and are successful in doing so.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The home has established systems in place for obtaining information and assessing the needs of young people referred for respite. Comprehensive information is obtained from parents and professionals which is used to inform the care provided for individuals. Individual care plans were seen on all case records sampled but were not being subject to regular review within the home. Statutory reviews were seen to be taking place at the required intervals and key workers complete detailed reports as part of the process. Young people do not generally attend their reviews but have their views represented by parents and staff from the home. Young people are introduced to the home in a gradual manner with sensitivity to their needs. As many visits as necessary are arranged prior to any young person staying overnight for the first time.

The home enjoys excellent relationships with young people's parents and the service is highly valued by them. They describe having extremely good communication with staff and being appropriately consulted and informed about welfare matters affecting their children. Relationships with placing authorities are also very good. Young people are able to make and receive telephone calls and staff provide them with support to do so when necessary. Young people are provided with as much choice as possible in their daily lives with food, drinks and activities being examples observed during the inspection.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

The home does not routinely become involved in young people's transition to adult services. Staff however have been involved very successfully in individual cases where support has been requested. This has included staff from other establishments spending time at the home in order to get to know the young person concerned. Young people are encouraged by staff to be as independent as possible in all areas of their daily lives while at the home and this was observed during the inspection.

The home provides a very child-centred environment for young people which is well suited to meeting their needs. The accommodation and facilities are of a very good standard and are being well maintained. A lift ensures those young people using wheelchairs can access the upstairs accommodation. There are six double and two single bedrooms, with parents indicating in writing if they are happy for their child to share a room. Communal areas provide sufficient space, there are adequate bathroom and toilet facilities and specialist equipment enables the specific needs of

some young people to be met. Provision for play and recreation at the home is excellent. Indoor adventure play equipment has been installed since the previous inspection and features soft play and sensory activities. Art and craft materials are readily available and there are lots of toys and books around which young people were observed making use of. There is a large garden area accessible to young people which is well-equipped with play equipment including some designed specifically to be used by young people using wheelchairs. The home has its own transport and staff provide young people with regular access to community facilities such as the local cinema and leisure centre.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The home provides good information for parents and placing authorities in the form of a comprehensive and up-to-date Statement of Purpose. A well-produced newsletter is also distributed quarterly to parents by the organisation's fund-raising department. Young people undertake a very gradual introduction to the home prior to their first overnight stay, giving them the opportunity to become familiar with the premises and staff. Some information for young people about the home is available, but is not in a variety of accessible formats.

There is good provision for staffing at the home. The staff are an established group who possess significant experience and who are well qualified to meet the needs of young people they care for. There is a good balance in terms of gender and staff operate very effectively as a supportive team. An extremely low turnover ensures consistency of staffing which benefits young people, and agency workers are not used. There are always sufficient staff on duty both day and night to meet young people's needs, with a duty rota providing additional support should it be necessary.

Newly appointed staff receive good support and spend time shadowing more experienced staff members. There is excellent communication between staff with daily handovers between shifts and the facility to email each other. Staff meetings however are infrequent and staff are not receiving appropriate supervision and appraisal.

The home is operating effectively with Regulation 33 visits taking place as required and reporting positively on the care provided for young people. The home's manager has a good awareness of events within the home but does not have a system in place for monitoring the matters under Schedule 6 of the regulations.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Documentation shows a clear commitment to providing equality of opportunity and to promoting diversity. Staff successfully meet the needs of young people who present a very wide range of needs and no young person is subject to any form of discrimination. Opportunities to access the community and to do things they enjoy doing are provided for all young people accessing the service.

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
26	ensure that the homes fire alarm is tested at suitable intervals. Regulation 32 (c) (v).	01/01/2011
2	keep under review and revise individual placement plans as necessary. Regulation 12 (2).	01/01/2011

Recommendations

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

- ensure periods of time out for young people are suitably recorded. (NMS 22)
- produce information about the home in a variety of formats accessible to young people. (NMS 1.3)
- ensure all staff receive appropriate supervision and appraisal. (NMS 28.2 and 28.7)
- ensure staff meetings occur at least monthly (NMS 28.10)
- establish a system for monitoring matters set out in schedule 6 of the regulations at appropriate intervals. (NMS 33.1)