

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Emeline Evans
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This children's home is registered to provide short-term care for up to six children and young people primarily with physical disabilities and/or learning disabilities. The home is located on a multi-purpose site and operated by a large charitable organisation managed by a Board of Trustees.

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 quality of care is highly personalised and effective in providing good outcomes for young people with very complex needs. The management team has a clear vision and draws upon the views of others to drive forward improvements and raise standards for the young people.

Young people benefit from good relationships from staff, who understand their individual needs and aim to ensure that young people have a good time during their short-break visit. One parent commented 'my son would come here more often if he could, he loves it.' Staff support young people to make progress within their social development and independence. Young people are happy in their environment and by the use of alternative methods of communication, staff offer young people choices on many aspects of their daily life.

Young people say they feel safe and parents reiterate this. Effective safeguarding procedures ensure that young people's welfare is promoted. Young people stay in a secure environment.

Areas for improvement include consultation with the fire and rescue service to seek further advice on fire protection measures. Although good recording and management monitoring systems are in place, some of the home's documents lack sufficient detail and some aspects of management monitoring require further work. The manager acknowledges these shortfalls and is committed to addressing them.

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
4 (2001)	revise the Statement of Purpose within the children's home to include all of the matters listed in Schedule 1 (Regulation 4(1))	10/09/2012
17B (2001)	ensure that the use of any measure of control, restraint or discipline is kept as a written record in a volume kept for the purpose and includes the information detailed in Regulation (17B (3)(a-i) and Regulation 17B (4)(a-b))	10/09/2012
32 (2001)	consult with the fire and rescue authority to ensure that adequate precautions are taken against the risk of fire; in particular, that appropriate measures are put in place to use fire doors safely. (Regulation 32(1)(a))	27/08/2012

Recommendations

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

- ensure that the home's procedures on children missing from care are compatible with and have regard to the Runaway and Missing from Home and Care (RMFHC) protocols and procedures (NMS 5.6)
- revise the security risk assessment to demonstrate that the use of locks within the home allows children as much freedom as possible, consistent with the need to keep them safe (Volume 5, Statutory Guidance, para 2.108)
- ensure that the manager monitors all records kept by the home to identify trends and patterns to fully evaluate the quality of care provided. (NMS 21.2)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people make progress in many areas of their lives; their confidence and self-esteem are developing well. This is achieved by having a staff team who are skilled at delivering personalised care to each young person; they understand and interpret the very individual and complex needs of the young people. This approach ensures that young people's emotional well-being is central to all aspects of care planning and behavioural management plans. One parent commented, 'my daughter has

made progress in lots of ways and staff adapt to each child's need.'

The staff team encourage healthy eating. They support young people in adopting healthy lifestyles through physical exercise and a nutritious diet. Since the last inspection, there has been a focus on ensuring that young people are given an appropriate method of communication to exercise their choice in what they would prefer to eat. The kitchen is now accessible to the young people and they are encouraged to prepare food and snacks. This enables them to acquire independent living skills. Meal times provide an opportunity for social interaction whilst developing choice-making skills. Young people receive a personalised approach from staff and personal care needs are delivered by a staff team who demonstrate a respectful, warm and nurturing approach. This ensures that young people's dignity and well-being is promoted.

Young people benefit from these brief periods away from home. They are purposeful and young people are supported to develop social skills in order to maximise their independence. One parent commented, 'my daughter gets the chance to experience things at the home that she wouldn't be able to do otherwise.'

The service has resources to provide a range of activities in-house and has the use of a mini bus to access the community. Young people are encouraged to try new experiences and be involved in the community when they visit the home. Young people comment, 'we do lots of good things here.' There are many trips to local parks, shops, swimming pools and local places of interest. These opportunities are enabling young people to become more confident in social situations.

Young people's educational needs are fully supported. The manager attends educational reviews. She has developed links with the each of the schools' family liaison officers and also works closely with teachers. Individual targets are shared between the school and the home and incorporated into individual plans. This holistic approach ensures that young people are provided with the support and guidance to reach their individual goals.

Staff work in partnership with parents to ensure that a consistent approach is achieved. Effective communication between staff and parents ensure that key messages about young people's care and well-being are properly addressed. One parent explained, 'the home always lets me know what is happening, we work together.' The home uses the information gained through consultation to ensure consistency and this improves outcomes for young people.

Young people receive the care and encouragement they need to develop independence skills. Staff support young people, appropriate to their age, ability and understanding, to develop practical skills such as personal self-care and daily living skills. Young people are developing in this area and this is contributing to enhancing their self-esteem. For example, young people are now able to prepare meals and sit at the table. These achievements are enabling young people to develop new skills in preparation for the transition to adult life.

Quality of care

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

Young people benefit from good supportive relationships from an enthusiastic and committed staff team. This is validated young people's positive regard for the staff that support them. It is equally ratified by the young people's parents. Comments from parents include, 'I have so much confidence in the staff team' and 'a lovely group of staff, who know a lot about the children.'

Staff place emphasis on ensuring that young people have fun during their stay at the home. The staff team takes care to ensure that the needs of the young people accessing the service are compatible. This enhances the opportunities for peer interaction and enables young people to develop social skills.

Staff interact with young people using a range of communication methods. They are aware of and observe non-verbal communication, and are proactive in reassuring young people using a sensitive approach. Alternative forms of communication are used for young people to have their say in how the unit is run and to express their views. Young people were able to choose the new kitchen lay out and the rules of the home. This result in young people feeling their views are actively sought and they can see the result.

Parents are young people's main advocates and are included in the consultation processes. Regular emails and telephone calls take place between the home and parents. This strengthens opportunities for staff to act on what parents say about the care, welfare and support for their sons and daughters. One parent commented, 'staff always act on any suggestions I give.' The management team's focus on gaining views from young people and parents demonstrates the home's commitment to act upon comments in order to improve the quality of care for the young people.

Young people's care plans are consistent with their assessments and admission criteria. Young people's 'all about me' document involves parental input. This provides an abundance of vital information for developing care plans and risk assessments. Staff are very familiar with the young people's care plans and they are used as working tools on each shift. This practice promotes consistency in the quality of care received, so that young people's preferred routines are carried out.

Young people's wishes are taken into account. Where possible, young people are involved in the development of these plans; for example, they help with putting individual targets in place. These plans take into account the complex needs of the young people, including their health, cultural and behavioural needs. The plans also identify any additional support required.

Arrangements for dealing with medication are safe and appropriate. There is a clear audit trail of medication coming into and leaving the unit. There is appropriate attention provided to any emerging or on-going health or emotional needs.

The home provides a safe and pleasant environment in which young people enjoy their stays. It is located on a multi-purpose site and is within easy access to all local facilities. The accommodation provides good space for group and individual activities. The home has appropriate specialist equipment to ensure that the individual needs of the young people accessing the service are met, such as adapted baths and ceiling hoists. The sensory development of the young people is enhanced through the use of sensory equipment, a soft play room and a sensory garden.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

The routines and structure to each day support young people in feeling safe and comfortable in their surroundings. Young people say they feel safe in the home and parents say that safety is given a high priority in the home. This means that young people are able to achieve in their personal development as a result of feeling secure.

Staff receive regular training in safeguarding and they recognise particular vulnerabilities relating to the needs of children with disabilities. The supervision provided by good staffing levels minimises the risk of young people going missing. Written procedures are in place for responding to incidents if a young person is missing from the home, although there have been no incidents of this nature. However, these procedures do not fully reflect the Runaway and Missing from Home and Care (2009) protocols and procedures, which means staff could refer to out of date guidance if there were to be such an incident.

Staff promote positive behaviours by giving consistent messages to young people alongside a focus on encouragement, reward and de-escalation. Behavioural management and care planning clearly identifies risks and preventative measures. These are consistently implemented and keep the young people safe. Staff are knowledgeable about the particular vulnerabilities of the young people who use the service and this information is supported with care plans. Staff are regularly trained in behaviour management and in techniques of physical restraint. As a result, behaviour is well managed and there has only been one 'low level' restraint since the last inspection.

Incidents of restraint are recorded on loose incident report forms and summarised in a bound volume. However, the bound volume does not capture all the required information as detailed in relevant regulation and this makes it difficult for managers to monitor the effectiveness of interventions and patterns and trends.

Bullying is not seen as an issue at the home. Staff work hard to create a happy and friendly atmosphere. Staff support young people to form relationships and interact safely during their visits. Young people say they know the home's rules. They also helped in the implementation of new rules in the home. This enables young people to begin to understand other young people's feelings and to think about how their behaviours may affect others.

The home has a sound recruitment process, which ensures all necessary checks are completed before a member of staff starts work. This protects young people from having contact with unsuitable people. The manager has confirmation that the agency used to supply them with staff has carried out all the recruitment checks required.

Generally, there are sound health and safety systems in place to minimise unnecessary risks to the young people, staff and visitors. There are plenty of escape routes and a clear evacuation plan. Regular fire alarm tests and drills take place and are recorded and equipment within the home is checked and serviced regularly.

At the time of the inspection, some fire doors were occasionally being secured in an open position for ease of access. The home had not sought advice from the local fire and rescue service about safe means to secure fire doors. This means that if there had been a fire, the doors would have had to be released manually in order to provide proper protection. The manager undertook to address this immediately.

The building is kept secure through the use of fobs on external doors. Due to young people's complex needs, it is necessary, for safety reasons, to restrict their access to some parts of the building. This necessity has not yet been formally recorded in the building's risk assessment.

Leadership and management

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

Young people benefit from a Registered Manager and staff team who are committed and focused on improving the quality of care provided and demonstrate a capacity for continual improvement. Since the last inspection, the Registered Manager has been instrumental in driving forward the development of the service. The management team understands the strength of the home and is aware of areas for development. There is a development plan in place; this is very comprehensive, with a clear emphasis on achieving good outcomes for young people.

A clear Statement of Purpose is in place. This is very informative and outlines the service's aims and objectives. Staff are very familiar with the aims and know how they are implemented in practice. However, sections of the Statement of Purpose do not include all required information as detailed in regulations. Therefore, this does not give parents and placing authorities all the necessary information about what to expect from the home with regards their young person. The children's guide has been developed in an accessible format for the young people who use alternative methods of communication. The guide is appropriate to the young people's level of understanding and familiarises young people with the environment.

There are records of regular monitoring visits under Regulation 33 of the Children's Homes Regulations and there is evidence that young people are consulted during these visits. The Registered Manager undertakes Regulation 34 checks on a monthly

basis; however, these checks do not include an evaluation about how this process improves the quality of care provided or how the manager identifies patterns or trends.

The service is well resourced, ensuring that young people have good staffing ratios, access to purposeful activities and to leisure interests. The staff team are enthusiastic about their work and know the young people well. They work together and provide young people with consistent care. Staff undertake a detailed induction which provides them with the competencies required to meet the complex needs of the young people and also receive training which enhances their individual skills. Staff are complimentary about the quality and types of training they receive because it is relevant to their work with individual young people.

Young people's files are stored securely and contain documents, which are relevant and contribute to an understanding of the young people's life. There has been one notifiable event since the last inspection, which was reported appropriately to Ofsted and relevant agencies without delay.

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.