

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 **adequate**.

Young people are supported by a committed manager and experienced staff team. They work together with an aim to ensure that the young people have a good time during their short-break visit. One parent commented, 'the home does an amazing job and without them life would be incredibly difficult. My son claps his hands when our car arrives as he simply loves being there and sometimes doesn't want to come home.'

Young people benefit from individualised care by a staff team who know the young people well. This provides young people with caring staff that understand their needs and complex behaviours. Young people are supported to progress in many areas such as social development and independence. Staff use a variety of ways to try and gain the views of young people, this ensures young people feel valued and their views are taken into account.

Through the relationships formed with staff, young people are relaxed and feel safe and parents reiterate this. Staff respond professionally and appropriately to unexpected behaviours and are equipped with the skills to recognise when young people are upset or worried.

The senior management team are involved in the development of the service; however, it is not clear how the children's home is evaluated as a separate entity by the management team. The Registered Manager is currently not involved in creating management systems directly relating to the home. This lack of involvement does

not enable the manager to be fully effective at tackling and recognising weaknesses and therefore securing improvements. This has resulted on an impact on the judgement made at this inspection. There are breaches of regulation, which relate to the monitoring of the home and improvements are required in this area.

Several recommendations have also been raised to improve outcomes for young people.

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
33 (2001)	ensure the registered provider shall visit the home and interview with consent the children accommodated there, their parents and relatives and persons working at the home in order to form an opinion of the standard of care provided at the home and prepare a written report, with particular regard to the content and quality of these reports (Regulation 33 (4)(a)(c))	30/11/2013
34 (2001)	establish and maintain an effective system for improving the quality of care provided in the children's home. To include consultation with children, their parents and placing authorities. (Regulation 34(1)(b)(3))	30/11/2013

Recommendations

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

- ensure restraint records are in a format that can not be tampered with after the event (Volume 5, Statutory Guidance, para 2.91)
- ensure consent from a person with parental responsibility is clearly documented on each child's file. This specifically relates to permission for staff to administer first aid and medication (Volume 5, Statutory Guidance, para 2.54)
- 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)
- update the Statement of Purpose to ensure this is specific to the home and clearly reflects the service offered to the children (NMS 13)

- review the development plan to identify the future of the home and how the home will achieve outcomes for children (NMS 15.2)
- ensure the induction package currently in use is equivalent to the Children's Workforce Development Council's induction standards (NMS 18.3)
- ensure all records are consistently clear and of a high quality, this specifically relates to medication records. (NMS 22)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

Young people benefit from personalised support during their stay, which helps them grow in confidence. Young people make measurable progress in many aspects of their lives. Staff and parents recognise the achievements young people have made and are able to give numerous examples of how young people have developed as a result of their stays. Young people's self-esteem is developing well because of the child-focused care provided by a staff team who are skilled at understanding the individual ways young people express their needs. This practice maximises the potential of each young person. Young people have made progress in their behaviour, personal care skills and social interaction. Young people are now able to carry out personal care skills independently and accept and respond to peer interaction. One parent commented, 'my son is encouraged with his personal care and he has moved on in this area.'

Young people engage in a range of activities in the community and are encouraged to learn and try new experiences when visiting the home. Staff ensure that young people make good use of age appropriate local amenities such as parks, restaurants and local attractions. This provides the young people with opportunities for social interaction to be further enhanced. Young people have access to a variety of activities within the home including a range of sensory items. Comments from parents include 'my son is always offered things the staff know he enjoys such as swimming or going for a walk.' The opportunities provided are enabling young people's social and emotional development to progress.

The staff encourage and support young people to make healthy lifestyle choices through exercise and a nutritious diet. Young people are involved in contributing to the menu and are supported in food preparation; this assists in developing independence skills. Meal times are seen as social occasions and provide an opportunity to develop new social skills, and young people are encouraged and supported to make decisions in order to maximise their independence.

Young people's educational needs are fully supported; staff communicate well with the schools and attend educational reviews as appropriate. Staff work closely with teachers and individual targets are shared between the school and the home. This holistic approach ensures that young people are provided with support and guidance to reach their individual goals.

Young people receive the care and encouragement they need to develop independence skills. Staff report that young people are developing well and this is contributing to enhancing their self-esteem. There have been measurable outcomes achieved in these areas. Young people have learnt new skills such as making their beds, washing and cooking. These achievements are preparing young people for the transition to adult life.

Quality of care

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

The young people benefit from good supportive relationships from committed and attentive staff members. Staff are responsive towards young people's needs and understand when young people are upset; this alleviates unnecessary anxiety for the young people. Observations were indicative of the trusting and fulfilling relationships between the young people and staff. Comments from parents include, 'friendly, genuine caring staff who help keep my son safe and happy' and 'continuity of staff helps with understanding the children's needs.'

Young people are supported to make choices and express their and feelings in the running of the home. 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 are supported to choose food on the menu and give views on what the food is like and also choose activities they would like to participate in. This results in young people feeling that their views are actively sought and acted upon. Young people are supported to be able to make a complaint. Since the last inspection, no complaints have been received.

Staff are skilled at understanding the individual ways young people express their needs; this practice ensures young people's emotional well-being is central to all aspects of care planning. Young people are cared for in line with detailed 'all about me' plans. Individual needs are identified and well understood by staff. These placement plans take into account the diverse and complex needs of the young people accessing the service including their medical, health and cultural needs and additional support required due to disability. These documents also include consent forms for medical treatment and first aid. However, these have not been signed in all instances and it is not clear if these specifically relate to medical consent.

Arrangements for dealing with medication are safe and appropriate. There is a clear audit trail of medication coming into and leaving the unit. However, there are some inconsistencies in the quality of record keeping in relation to controlled medication. The log book has not been fully completed in all instances. This omission could lead to confusion. Staff work in partnership with parents and professionals to ensure that appropriate attention is provided to any emerging or on-going health or emotional needs. This practice ensures that key messages about young people's care and well-being are properly addressed.

The home is situated in a residential area within easy reach of local facilities. Young

people enjoy their stays in a safe and pleasant environment. The home has appropriate specialist equipment to ensure 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 and a sensory garden.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people demonstrate that they feel safe in the home by their relaxed and trusting behaviour with members of staff. Through feeling safe and confident in these relationships, young people are able to communicate any issues as they arise and make progress in their personal development. Staff maintain a safe environment by being vigilant at all times. Staff receive regular training in safeguarding and demonstrate a recognition of the particular vulnerabilities relating to the needs of children with disabilities. Parents comment, 'my son feels safe and enjoys going to the service.'

The risk of young people going missing is minimised by high staff ratios and level of staff supervision. A written policy is in place should an incident occur. Staff are aware of the procedures to follow in the event of young people going missing. Staff have appropriate understanding of behaviour management and are vigilant in responding to young people's gestures and behaviours. They use rewards and positive encouragement and de-escalate situations as much as they can. This has resulted in a low number of restraints since the last inspection. The restraints records are not currently in a format where pages cannot be easily removed. Therefore, these records are not secure to ensure that they cannot be tampered with after the event. Short-break placement plans identify risks for young people and preventative measures. These are clear and inform the staff of appropriate action to take. Behaviour management plans are comprehensive and staff use these fluidly across the shifts to keep young people safe.

The home has a sound recruitment process in place, which ensures all the necessary checks are completed before a member of staff starts work. This protects young people from having contact with unsuitable people.

The servicing and routine checks of fire safety systems, equipment and gas and electric installations take place as required. There are risk assessments in place, both environmental and individual to the young people. Since the last full inspection, the home has been in contact with the local fire and rescue service. There has since been a fire safety audit and appropriate action has been taken by the home. All young people have their own personal fire evacuation plan, which details their particular need in case of a fire. The building is kept secure through the use of fobs on external doors. Due to the young people's complex needs it is necessary for safety reasons, to restrict access to some parts of the building. However, this has still not been formally recorded in the building's risk assessment. Therefore, this recommendation is re-stated.

Leadership and management

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

The Registered Manager and staff team are committed to and focused on improving the quality of care in the home. However, the Registered Manager is not involved in creating management systems directly relating to the home. For example, the development plan in operation has been compiled by senior managers with great emphasis on the organisation and not the short breaks service. The Registered Manager has not been involved in this process. Therefore, the strengths and areas for development as explained by the Registered Manager are not incorporated into this plan. The development plan lacks detail and content, with very little focus on identifying and evaluating good outcomes for the young people who access the service. As a result, it is therefore unclear how the management team evaluate the children's home as a separate entity and fully understand the strengths of the home and areas for development within a regulatory context.

The Statement of Purpose clearly states the aims and objectives of the service and the facilities it provides. There is a clear focus on working in partnership with young people, parents and outside professionals to achieve a consistent approach to meeting the needs of young people. However, although this has recently been reviewed, in areas it refers to the organisation and is not specific to the service the children's home offers. This could lead to confusion. The young people's guide is informative and comprehensive and is suitable for the young people's level of understanding.

The internal monitoring of the home does not indicate that routine consultation with young people, parents and placing authorities takes place or how this information is used to further improve the quality of care provided. In addition, external monitoring does not currently identify patterns and trends and lacks content. It is difficult to fully evaluate the standard of care provided in the home.

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 very enthusiastic about their work and they know the young people well. They work together and provide young people with consistent care. Staff undertake a detailed induction to provide them with the competencies required to meet the complex needs of the young people. However, it is not clear if this induction is equivalent to the Children's Workforce Development Council's induction standards. Staff receive a range of training which enhances their individual skills.

Young people's files are stored securely and contain documents, which are relevant and contribute to an understanding of the young people's life. At the last interim inspection in January 2013 there were two recommendations made. One has been re-stated and the second recommendation relates to Regulation 33 visits, following this inspection, a requirement has been now been made.

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* and the evaluation schedule for the inspection of children's homes.