

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Philip Cass
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This short break centre is run by a registered charity. It offers overnight short break care places for up to five children and young people with learning disabilities, who may also have physical disabilities. Day care is also offered on the same site for children and young people with similar needs.

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 well-being of young people at this service is promoted by a caring and skilled staff team. Managers and staff are good at identifying and meeting the needs of young people. Because a range of creative methods are used to overcome communication difficulties, young people are given every opportunity to express their views and feelings.

Young people benefit from a range of stimulating activities which help them to grow in confidence. The home ensures that young people are healthy by promoting exercise and administering medication as required. Close and attentive supervision by staff means that young people are safe. Safety is further promoted by robust safeguarding procedures.

The service is required to make improvements in the way it records and monitors any restraint that takes place. It is recommended that the service makes the bedroom areas more homely, and improves quality assurance processes.

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
17B (2001)	ensure that within 24 hours of the use of any restraint, a full written record is made in a volume kept for that purpose. (Regulation 17B(3)(a)–(i)(4)(a)(b))	17/09/2012

Recommendations

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

- ensure that the registered person takes action to address any issues of concern that they identify or which are raised with them through quality assurance processes (NMS 21.9)
- ensure that the home provides a comfortable and homely environment and that risk reduction does not lead to an institutional feel. This is with particular reference to bedroom areas. (NMS 10.3)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

The service is very good at ensuring that the transition to and from family care is smooth and causes as little anxiety as possible to young people. Where young people struggle with changes to their routines, the service makes considerable efforts to support young people to cope. Staff provide high quality care and build warm, affectionate and trusting relationships. Consequently, young people present as happy while at the service.

Young people make good progress in relation to their health. Many have very complex health needs, and staff work hard to ensure consistency of care while staying at the service. Effective health monitoring means that health plans are quickly adapted where necessary and young people are supported to lead healthy lifestyles. As a result, health conditions can be stabilised and improved.

High levels of support and good multi-agency working mean that disability is not a barrier to education attendance. The service works well with schools, parents and transport providers to ensure that young people achieve very high levels of school attendance. Because the service is generally good at sharing information with schools, young people are supported well to achieve well and enjoy school.

Young people are very well supported to participate in decision-making forums and make a positive contribution to the service. Young people's meetings are organised in a way that fully promotes participation. High levels of participation in decision-

making forums means that young people gain improved social skills as a result of their time at the service.

Quality of care

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

Staff are consistently attentive, energetic and enthusiastic. Because staff engage so well, young people respond with great affection to them. One young person feels that staff are 'beautiful', and another feels the service is 'good' and 'nice'. Parents describe the quality of care as 'excellent'. They value the fact that staff display great warmth and affection in the way they care for young people, and the way they talk about the young people.

Needs relating to young people's cultural background, sexuality, disability, gender, age, and personal identity are identified well in care planning. This means that care plans are comprehensive and individually tailored to the needs of young people. The full range of care needs are addressed confidently by all staff.

Young people benefit from a wide range of toys and sensory play equipment which are stimulating and engaging. Young people are able to choose from a good range of activities within the service and in the community. In general, the service is well decorated and furnished. Communal areas are nurturing and stimulating environments for young people. However, because they are sparsely furnished and decorated, the bedrooms are not comfortable and homely. They do not reflect the individual tastes and preferences of young people staying in them.

The quality of healthcare provided at the service is good. Medication administration systems are safe and effective. Managers are proactive in ensuring that the complex range of health needs are addressed. Links with community health agencies are strong and effective. This means that the service is able to ensure that staff receive good quality advice and guidance from trained professionals. Where necessary, the service challenges shortfalls in community healthcare provision to ensure the best possible service to young people.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people stay in a safe environment. Supervision levels are high and staff are committed to ensuring that young people are kept safe. Close supervision also ensures that young people do not place themselves at risk by going missing from the service. Fire safety systems are effective and, where young people have difficulty with evacuation, the service develops individual evacuation plans that are clearly understood by all staff.

Risk assessments are comprehensive and frequently updated in response to identified risk. Staff are aware of these risk assessments and, because they adhere

to them fully, the risk of accident and injury is minimised. Fire safety systems are effective and appropriately monitored by the management team. Periodic testing of heating and electrical systems ensures that the risks to young people and staff are minimised.

The service has robust safeguarding procedures. Staff follow these procedures well and reflect positively on the transparent and open culture within the service. They are alert to any signs or symptoms that might indicate that a child is at risk of harm. Visitor records demonstrate that unchecked adults are appropriately chaperoned when on site. Appropriate recruitment processes reduce the risk of the service appointing inappropriate adults to work with the young people. The clear safeguarding ethos reduces the likelihood of abuse.

Behaviour management strategies are built on caring and warm relationships and positive communication. Staff use a range of communication techniques to ensure that young people do not behave in a dangerous manner. This means that incidents of restraint are rare and minimal force is used. Although all restraint is appropriate, some records do not accurately describe the behaviour that led to the intervention. In addition, management oversight of restraint records is not sufficiently prompt to ensure the highest standards of monitoring. This reduces the effectiveness of monitoring and safeguarding processes.

Leadership and management

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

The service is effectively and efficiently managed by the experienced and competent management team. The service is continually improving because the staff team are good at identifying potential improvements, and proactive in addressing weaknesses. Quality assurance systems effectively monitor standards of care and promote the safety of young people. However, the manager does not respond in a timely manner to recommendations made by quality assurance visitors. This reduces the effectiveness of quality assurance processes.

At the previous inspection a recommendation was made to ensure that all staff complete the Children and Young People's Workforce Diploma. This has been addressed because all staff are now enrolled on this course. Staff undertake a broad range of training. This ensures that they have the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the objectives set out in the service's Statement of Purpose.

Complaints are responded to in an open and transparent manner. The service liaises well with social workers and other stakeholders to resolve concerns. Where shortfalls are identified, the service develops clear strategies to ensure improvement. The service is sensitive to the anxiety and apprehension felt by parents when young people are away from home. The service views complaints positively as an opportunity to identify weaknesses and promote improvement. Improvements are further promoted by the service's development plan. This plan has driven improvements to consultation processes, decoration and maintenance systems,

training, and recording.

All staff receive regular supervision that they find useful. Staff meetings are used effectively to discuss and address practice issues, improve the service, and provide guidance and training. Managers use staff meetings and supervision well to communicate high expectations to the staff team. Well organised on-call systems ensure that managers are available, and provide support, at times of difficulty.

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.