

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Susan Southey
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	30/01/2013
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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**.

Young people benefit from good standards of care when they stay for short-break visits. The home is well run by a dedicated management team. Staffing levels are high and staff retention is good. Therefore, the staff team are experienced and provide competent care for young people.

The home has made progress since the last inspection and independent visitor reports now show checks on disciplinary actions and missing from home records. This meets a recommendation made at the last inspection. Regular internal monitoring by the Registered Manager is also undertaken but a report has not been submitted to Ofsted. However, this requirement does not affect children and young people's outcomes, which remain good.

Young people make use of a range of activities provided by the service, both in the home and community. This benefits young people as they try new experiences and build confidence in their skills. Young people also benefit from widening their social circles, building new relationships with both adults and peers.

Young people make good progress in acquiring practical skills that support enhanced independence. This promotes successful transitions to adulthood.

The Registered Manager has booked contractors to undertake renovations to the home environment. Some areas of the home requiring repairs are not scheduled for these improvements; however, the annual development plan identifies further home

improvements early next year. This demonstrates that the Registered Manager wishes to enhance the physical environment for young people.

Young people are kept safe in the home. There are some minor shortfalls identified with regard to: the HMCI being provided with a report regarding the manager's review; addressing potential hazards in the home; the further development of missing from home policies. However, young people are safe, they do not go missing or have accidents in the home. This demonstrates that staff safeguard young people in this home well.

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
34 (2001)	ensure the registered person supplies to HMCI a copy of any report in respect of any review conducted by her for the purposes of paragraph (1) (Regulation (34)(2))	31/01/2014
31 (2001)	ensure that all parts of the children's home used by children are reasonably decorated and maintained, with particular regard to repairing the bathroom ceiling. (Regulation (31) (e))	31/01/2014

Recommendations

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

- ensure avoidable hazards are removed as consistent with domestic settings (NMS 10.3)
- ensure staff working within the home know and implement the local authority policy in relation to children going missing and their role in implementing that policy. (NMS 5.2)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

Young people enjoy new experiences, that promote improved socialisation skills. Staff support them to visit different places including regular day trips to London, pantomimes and local restaurants. Young people develop positive relationships with their peers, meeting new young people and spending time with those with whom

relationships are established. This gives young people who access this service opportunities to increase their social circles. This supports a reduction in social isolation for young people who have complex social difficulties.

Young people make positive contributions to the home. They have chosen themes for bedrooms, demonstrating their involvement in plans for the home. Themes include seaside, jungle and music rooms. Young people mainly stay in their chosen rooms when they come for their short stay. This gives them a sense of belonging and ownership, having chosen the décor. Young people further show their involvement in the home through participation in meal preparation and arranging specialist nights such as for Halloween.

Young people who previously have been unable to manage their own personal hygiene make good progress. They respond well to consistent routines and regular prompting from dedicated staff. Some young people who were reliant on others for all their personal needs gain improved self-reliance. Young people have an enhanced quality of life and increased privacy because they are able to manage their own self-care.

Young people acquire independence skills as a result of this short- break service. This supports successful transitions to adulthood. Young people achieve realistic goals, completing domestic tasks and assisting in the preparation of food. All young people who use the provision have special needs and experience varying degrees of difficulty. However, they all make fruitful progression from their starting point.

Quality of care

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

Young people receive good quality care from competent staff. They benefit from high staffing levels with many young people receiving individual attention. Furthermore, the care they receive reflects their comprehensive person-centred care plans. Staff regularly review plans to acknowledge young people's changing needs. Staff consistently execute care provision for young people in line with their assessed needs. This practice promotes care provision that most appropriately meets young people's needs.

Young people regularly utilise a variety of different forums to give their views. These include residents' meetings, individual time with staff and young people's forums. Staff consistently consult with young people and encourage them to make decisions in the running of the home. This demonstrates that young people's opinions are valued by staff.

Staff demonstrate competence when communicating with young people with severe communication difficulties. They use a range of pictorial systems to promote interaction. In addition, staff seek advice from other professionals to communicate with young people who have specialist needs, for example hearing impairments. This empowers young people to be heard and understood. Positive dialogue with young

people promotes effective relationship building.

Staff provide young people with good health care when they visit the home. They undertake training to administer medication in accordance with the home's medication policy. Staff undertake additional training to assist young people with complex health issues. This supports all young people including those with additional needs, to have healthcare that meets their needs efficiently.

Young people know how to make a complaint and benefit from having information in formats to meet their specialist needs. The manager ensures that complaints are dealt with in line with procedures and are recorded appropriately.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people are kept safe from harm from the high levels of supervision. They have one-to-one care provided by proficient staff who are trained to support young people to stay safe. Staff demonstrate a robust knowledge of child protection procedures. In addition, vigorous staff recruitment procedures safeguard young people. This shows a commitment to the safety of young people and to ensuring that employees are appropriately trained and vetted.

Fire safety is a priority at this home and young people are kept safe through regular fire drills and checks on emergency fire equipment in the home. Young people accessing this service have a range of disabilities; this may increase the risks to them in the event of fire. However, managers have considered the additional risks and taken appropriate action. Each young person has an individual emergency escape plan on file to support their safe removal should an evacuation be required.

Regular safety checks take place to support a safe environment. These include fridge temperatures and water testing for legionnaires. Potential hazards are generally reduced, for example, chemicals and dangerous utensils are stored securely. The television is situated in a raised position and the electrical wires are visible. However, staffing levels are high to supervise young people. Therefore, the potential danger of young people accessing them is minimal.

Young people do not go missing from this home. There are missing from home procedures in place, clearly displayed on walls. This supports staff to follow the service's procedures should a young person leave the home without permission. The home has not adopted the local authority missing from home protocol. However, high levels of supervision from competent staff ensure young people do not leave the home unsupervised. Therefore, this shortfall does not impact on the safety of young people and safeguarding remains good.

Leadership and management

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

The Registered Manager efficiently manages the home in partnership with an experienced deputy manager, assistant management team and senior staff. Monitoring is good with regular visits undertaken by independent visitors to review the quality of the care provided in the home. This monitoring has been improved since the last inspection because independent visitor reports now show checks on disciplinary actions and missing from home records have been made. This meets a recommendation made at the last inspection.

In addition, the Registered Manager undertakes internal checks monthly. The manager has not submitted a report to Ofsted of her findings following the internal monitoring. This shortfall does not affect children and young people's outcomes, which remain good. Monitoring does take place consistently and managers address any shortfalls identified through quality monitoring in a timely manner. In addition, annual development plans demonstrate capacity for continued improvements. Therefore, the failure to submit Regulation 34 reports has minimal impact on the outcomes for young people.

Young people benefit from effective care provision executed by experienced staff. Many have worked at the home for extended periods. This promotes consistency of care and stability for young people. Staff embrace the numerous opportunities available in the annual training programme. This includes training to meet young people's specialist needs; this means young people's care provision is improved because they are cared for by a proficient staff team.

Staff say they are well supported by the management team. They receive regular supervision and annual appraisals from competent individuals. Staff attend monthly staff meetings and daily handover meetings. These forums are used to discuss the individual needs of young people. Staff say these give them opportunities to seek guidance from managers and colleagues to support their role.

The home is closing for one week in the New Year to enable refurbishment of some communal areas of the home. Contractors are booked to complete the work on the building, to enhance the living environment for young people. There are areas of the home not scheduled for improvement. For example, repairs to a cracked bathroom ceiling, damaged because of faulty pipework. However, the Registered Manager is aware of the shortfall and further home improvements are scheduled in the annual development plan. This demonstrates that managers believe a pleasant home environment to be important to 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* and the evaluation schedule for the inspection of children's homes.