

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Sharron Escott
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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 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.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: a service that significantly exceeds minimum requirements

Good: a service that exceeds minimum requirements

Satisfactory: a service that only meets minimum requirements

Inadequate: a service that does not meet minimum requirements

Service information

Brief description of the service

This home provides short breaks for children and young people who have a learning and/or physical disability, who may require nursing care and are living at home with their family.

The home is jointly funded by a Primary Care Trust and a local authority, and managed by the Children and Young People's Directorate of the local authority. The home is registered to accommodate up to six children and young people, two of whom may be under eight years. Other services offered include day care, after school care and support groups.

Overall effectiveness

The overall effectiveness is judged to be **good**.

Children and young people benefit from a home that provides a safe and structured environment. It has been adapted to meet the individual needs of the children and young people. The home supports children and young people with complex health, communication and behavioural needs and works effectively to ensure that these needs are not seen as barriers to success or development. Children and young people are supported to access a variety of social and leisure opportunities both within the home and the local community.

Staff respond professionally and appropriately to ensure children and young people's needs are met and their dignity is maintained. Children and young people are happy in their environment and by the use of alternative methods of communication, staff offer young people choices in many aspects of their daily life. Positive feedback has been received from parents and the placing authorities in relation to the care and support that is provided at the home.

To further improve, the registered provider should ensure that children and young people are given the opportunity to exercise choice at mealtimes. The home's Statement of Purpose is being reviewed; currently it does not contain all matters listed in schedule 1 and does not describe how the service consults with children, parents and social workers or how the service supports children's complex needs and behaviours. Currently confidential information can be accessed with those who do not have a legitimate need to know the information.

The service has made good progress towards meeting some of the planned aims and objectives.

Areas for improvementStatutory 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)	ensure the Statement of Purpose consist of all matters listed in Schedule 1. (Regulation 4(1))	28/10/2011

Recommendations

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

- ensure children exercise choices in the food that they eat (NMS 2.4)
- ensure that the home's procedures are compatible with and have regard to Runaway and Missing from Home and Care (RMFHC) protocols (NMS 5.6)
- ensure that information about individual children is kept confidential. (NMS 22.3)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Staff work in partnership with parents and professionals to assess children's needs prior to accessing the service. Together they draw up care plans, protocols and agree a package of care.

Children have tailor-made transition arrangements which includes visiting the service to meet staff and joining in with activities before building up to an overnight stay; this helps to develop children's confidence and trust in the staff. The service demonstrates a flexible approach to accommodating requests for specific stays and the staff team ensure a balance of need and appropriate peer group.

Children's diverse health needs are met, and this contributes to children enjoying a healthy lifestyle. Examples include; health intervention protocols, competency training for staff, and the provision of healthy food and positive activities. Children's individual dietary requirements are catered for in addition to the daily menu offering balanced diet at all meals. Mealtimes are a relaxed and social occasion where children are offered appropriate help in a sensitive and discreet manner whilst ensuring that independence. However individual choices is not overly promoted resulting in the children and young people being served food rather than selecting their own preferences. Staff encourage and support children and young people with their personal hygiene and the development of independent skills in dressing, eating

and drinking.

This service has the resources to provide a range of activities in house and the use of a minibus to access the community. There are lots of trips out to local parks, train stations and local places of interest. The team ensures that children experience a wide variety of social and leisure opportunities.

Children benefit from well-established relationships between the service and parents. Key workers support children to maintain contact with parents during their stay and also complete a communication diary to ensure a shared understanding of children's daily lives. Parents speak very positively about the service and comment 'the staff are very friendly and caring' and 'the home has been a great support and help to our family in providing respite care'.

Quality of care

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

Children respond well to staff whose patient and committed approach helps them to build sound and positive relationships. Interactions are observed to be respectful and caring, with children demonstrating warmth and affection toward their carers. Various methods of communication are used by the children and staff have sufficient knowledge to maintain a total communication approach.

Arrangements for dealing with medication are outstanding and are managed by trained and experienced staff. There is a clear audit trail of medication coming into and out of the service. Some children and young people have complex health care needs and these are understood and well managed by staff maintaining respect and dignity at all times. This supports parents and carers in the knowledge that their child is being cared for by competent, medically trained staff.

Children and young people take part in a wide range of activities. The premises have sufficient indoor space. Outdoor areas provide areas for play, exercise and learning opportunities. The secure garden is large with many areas to explore, play and relax. The quality and quantity of toys are outstanding and include toys and play equipment that promotes sensory development. There is a extensive range of resources within the home for arts and craft, music and games and a dedicated quiet area for reading and computer work. In addition the home has a separate sensory room that provides stimulation with light, sound and texture. Within the lounge there is a television and DVD player, with soft seating and safety mats.

Case files are in place for each child, they are personalised and detail individualised care management needs and risks. Parents, key workers and significant others are fully involved in the development and review of care plans. The registered manager and key workers update case files and this is having a positive impact of the quality of information recorded.

The home has a complaints procedure that is presented in an accessible format in an

attempt to ensure that it can be understood by the children. The home has taken account of and acted upon lessons learnt from complaints.

Staff observe non-verbal communication and reassure children when they demonstrate distress or upset through a sensitive approach and a good understanding of their needs.

The property is purpose built, maintained and furnished to a outstanding standard and has overhead tracking installed and specialist equipment to assist in delivering personal care needs. The passenger lift provides access to the second floor of the building and there is plenty of space for wheelchair users. The dining area provides space for the group to sit around the table where children and young people are appropriately supported at mealtimes.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Children and young people are cared for in a physically safe environment. Parents state that they feel that their child's safety is given a high priority. Staff recognise particular vulnerabilities related to diverse needs of children with disabilities and take steps to address these. Care is provided in a respectful way and staff are sensitive to children's privacy and dignity.

Good staffing ratios provide a level of supervision where incidents of any children going missing, or incidents of bullying are negated. Missing from home episodes are rare, however the registered manager has not establish a protocol that will safeguard children and young people in the event they should go missing from home.

Children's safety is promoted by the use of individual and activity risk assessments which identify known and likely risks and how these can be reduced. These are updated on a regular basis and agreed signed by the manager and parents. The home is appropriately secure to take into account the needs of the children. Detailed fire risk assessments, equipment safety checks and regular health and safety audits are undertaken to promote safety and well being.

Staff receive regular training in safeguarding. All staff spoken to are aware that allegations or suspicions of abuse must be reported to senior managers and external agencies. The registered manager is the designated person responsible for handling safeguarding concerns within the organisation and demonstrates a good level of competency.

Children enjoy sound relationships and interact positively with staff and others. The service promotes a positive culture of managing behaviour; sanctions are rarely used and there is a focus on encouragement, praise, and de-escalation. Staff receive regular training in an approved method of physical intervention and it is only used to keep children safe from harm.

There are clear systems in place to recruit new staff and they do not start work until appropriate checks have been carried out.

Leadership and management

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

The home is managed by a suitably qualified and experienced manager who has the support and respect of the staff team. Managers and team leaders keep up-to-date with new information and legislation.

The aims and objectives detailed in the Statement of Purpose do not meet the required detail as outlined regulations. It does not describe how the service consults with children, parents and social workers or how the service supports safeguarding children and young people from bullying.

Staff feel supported by the registered manager and senior staff, they benefit from daily handovers and the opportunity to attend regular team meetings. Annual appraisals are carried out in order to review staff's performance and formal supervisions are frequent. The service provides a detailed induction programme which requires new staff to work shadow shifts and to complete a knowledge and skills booklet, thus evidencing their level of understanding of the service and how to support the children. Mandatory training is delivered and regularly updated. Staff report that health intervention training is good and equips them well with the skills to support children with complex health needs.

Staffing levels are adjusted according to need and the number of children and young people staying for short stays. Staff work well together and there is a good team spirit which impacts positively on children. Managers work in conjunction with other professionals and seek the views of others concerned with the care of children placed.

The home is regularly monitored to ensure compliance with regulations. Quality assurance system are robust and are supported by inviting parents, social workers, siblings, young people and staff views on the service provided. The findings of this has contributed to the home's robust development plan. Young people's privacy is protected by ensuring that confidential records are kept in locked cabinets with restricted access. However the daily living summary sheets for each young person are kept in an open storage unit within the dinning area and can be easily accessible to other young people. Additionally medication summary sheets can be viewed externally due to them being on display near a window. This provides opportunities for individuals to access personal data that compromises confidentiality for children and young people.

The registered manager has been proactive in acting upon the recommendations from the previous inspection. Discussions relating to intimate care are now completed in private and there are individualised sheets identifying communication methods, this has had a positive impact on the service delivered to children and

young people.

Equality and diversity practice is **good**.