

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Diana Waters
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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.

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 a warm and welcoming home that provides a safe and structured environment. It has been adapted to meet the individual needs of young people. The home supports children and young people with complex health, communication and behavioural needs and works effectively to provide a quality respite care setting and promote the development of young people. Young people are supported to access a variety of social and leisure opportunities within the home and the local community.

Staff respond professionally and appropriately to ensure that young people's daily needs are met and their health is promoted. Young people are very happy in their environment and parents and other agencies confirm their satisfaction with the service. Staff offer young people choices in several aspects of the daily life.

To further improve, the registered provider should ensure that recruitment processes are consistently robust, that notifications are made promptly to HMCI, that written guidance is available on the use of the nurse call system within some bedrooms and to replace a small area of high wire fencing in the garden area, to maintain the homely atmosphere of the home.

The service sustains a overall good inspection judgement.

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
26 (2001)	ensure that recruitment is consistently robust and includes; full employment history, verification of why employment has ended, as far as reasonably practicable, when a person has worked with children or vulnerable adults and maintain a record of telephone checks undertaken on references (Regulation 26. Schedule 2)	31/12/2013
30 (2001)	ensure that notifications are made promptly to HMCI (Regulation 30)	31/12/2013
4 (2001)	include within the Statement of purpose written guidelines on the use of the nurse call system installed in some bedrooms. (Regulation 4.1)	31/12/2013

Recommendations

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

- provide a comfortable and homely environment, specifically replace high wire fencing in the garden. (NMS10.3)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

Staff work closely with parents and other professionals to assess children's needs prior to accessing the service. Care plans and protocols are agreed to provide an individualised package of care.

Children have individualised admission arrangements, which includes visiting the service for tea time visits to meet staff and other young people and to familiarise them with the home, before staying for overnight visits. This helps to establish trusting relationships and develops children's confidence around the home. The service demonstrates a needs led approach to accommodating children and they

strive to match young people to appropriate peer groups, to promote friendships and appropriate shared activities. When individuals are accommodated singly, the consistency of the staff team is carefully considered to benefit the young person.

Young peoples' individual health needs are met, and this helps them to enjoy a healthy lifestyle. Training is given to staff to provide appropriate care for young people with a range of health needs, healthy food and a range of activities. Balanced meals are carefully constructed and young people's individual diets are well catered for. Staff show sensitivity, offering choices within an appropriate range of options. Staff encourage and support children and young people with personal tasks and promote independent skills in dressing, eating and drinking.

This service has a range of resources to provide a variety of activities in house and transport to access the community. There are lots of day trips out to local parks, shopping venues and local places of interest. The team are well organised and keen to ensure that young people experience a wide variety of social and leisure opportunities.

Children benefit from positive well-established relationships between the service and parents. Key workers support children to maintain contact with parents during their stay if appropriate and communication diaries contribute towards a shared understanding of young people's daily lives. Parents speak very highly about the service and comment 'The home is excellent because it is staffed by trained and compassionate staff who always go the extra mile' and 'My child thoroughly enjoys coming to the home, it is great for building confidence and independence'.

Quality of care

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

Young people are well cared for by staff whose knowledge of them helps to build warm and positive relationships. Staff are well motivated and young people respond well to the good natured and warm encouragement provided. Young people appear comfortable and familiar within the home and interact well with the staff team. A range of communication methods are used by the children and staff have sufficient knowledge to communicate well with them.

Medication arrangements are clear; these 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. This enables parents to feel reassured that their children are cared for by competent, trained staff. Guidelines on the use of a nurse call system installed within some bedrooms are not understood by all staff, this has not compromised the quality of care provided to young people.

Young people participate in a wide range of activities. The premises has sufficient indoor space. Outdoor areas provide space for play, exercise and learning opportunities. The secure garden is large with many areas to explore, play and relax.

External fencing is generally of robust domestic appearance , however an area of unsightly old wire fencing distract from the otherwise pleasant and well kept environment. There is a wide range of toys and play equipment. There are resources within the home for arts and craft, music and games and areas for computer work. The home also 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. The facilities are well used and upgrades to one bathroom and the additional activities in the garden gym are welcome additions for many young people. Staff constantly review and devise ways that young people can further develop or enjoy their time at the home.

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 staff team update files and recent audits are having a positive impact of the quality of information recorded.

The home has a complaints procedure that is presented in an accessible format to ensure that it can be understood by the children. A recent concern was carefully investigated and recorded, it was not perceived as a complaint, therefore whilst all other agencies were kept well informed notification to Ofsted was not received promptly. Staff are vigilant to non-verbal communication and behavioural cues, they provide reassurance to young people with a sensitive approach and a good understanding of their needs.

The property is purpose built, maintained and furnished to a very good standard. Specialist equipment is provided to assist in delivering personal care needs, including hoists and tracking. Access to the second floor includes a lift and a flexible smaller suite of rooms are available for individual care needs or when young people need a quieter environment or more privacy. There is plenty of space for wheelchair users. The dining area provides space for the group to sit around the table with staff for both dining and recreational purposes.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people are cared for in a physically safe environment. Parents report their child's safety is given a high priority.' My child's stay is safe and positive in an age appropriate environment'. Staff recognise the 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.

There are no missing from home incidents reported and a missing person protocol is in place. Good staffing ratios provide a level of supervision where bullying incidents are rare.

Risk assessments are updated regularly and are agreed with parents, these

assessments identify known and possible risks and how these can be reduced. Safety is promoted due to these measures and the knowledge and experience of individual young people by the staff team. The home is appropriately secure and takes into consideration the needs of the young people. 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 have the knowledge and training on reporting allegations or suspicions of abuse. The Registered Manager is the designated person responsible for handling safeguarding concerns within the organisation and demonstrates a good level of competency. The line manager of the service is also the Local Authority Designated Officer and reported incidents have been suitably scrutinised.

Young people enjoy positive and warm relationships and interact well with staff. The service promotes strong behaviour management strategies with a positive culture of managing behaviour. De-escalation and diversionary tactics are employed, sanctions are rarely used and praise and encouragement is evident. Staff receive regular training in physical intervention and it is only used to keep children safe from harm. There have been no reported restraints since the last inspection.

Recruitment processes are in most aspects generally satisfactory however some gaps are identified for example; the records of telephone checks made to verify references; a full employment history on each file; and verification, as far as reasonably practicable, why staff have ended previous employment with vulnerable adults or young people are not applied consistently.

Leadership and management

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

The home is managed by a well-respected, suitably qualified and experienced manager. Managers and staff keep up-to-date with new information and legislation. Increased responsibilities have been placed on the manager to undertake a variety of roles regarding the maintenance of the building. The newly appointed administrator, once fully inducted, will enable the manager to focus on further development of the service.

Staff report satisfaction with their jobs and are well motivated to improve outcomes for young people who use the service. They feel supported by the Registered Manager and senior staff and 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 and informal support are frequent. The service provides a detailed induction programme about the service and how to support the children. Mandatory training is delivered and is regularly updated. Staff report that health intervention training is good and equips them well with the skills to support children with complex health needs.

Adequate staffing levels are provided to meet the need and the number of young people staying in the service. Staff work cooperatively with each other, managers, parents and placing social workers. There is a good rapport between staff and young people and a good team spirit impacts positively on children. Staff are encouraged to participate, innovate and take responsibility with support and encouragement from senior staff. The views of those involved with the service are sought and managers are working to formalise these processes to further enhance the care of young people.

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. External managers and visitors from the authority conduct regular visits and provide written reports.

The Registered Manager is proactive in acting upon the requirement and recommendations from the previous inspection. Restraint records are in place, medication is disposed of appropriately, foodstuffs are dated when stored in the fridge, supervision takes place regularly, file audits routinely identify missing documents which are proactively chased and development plans are in place.

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.