

Inspection report for children's home

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|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Unique reference number</b> | SC030967        |
| <b>Inspector</b>               | Ann-Marie Born  |
| <b>Type of inspection</b>      | Full            |
| <b>Provision subtype</b>       | Children's home |

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|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Registered person</b>         | Hartlepool Borough Council                                  |
| <b>Registered person address</b> | Civic Centre Victoria Road HARTLEPOOL<br>Cleveland TS24 8AY |
| <b>Responsible individual</b>    | Sally Robinson                                              |
| <b>Registered manager</b>        | Sylvia Anne Lowe                                            |
| <b>Date of last inspection</b>   | 25/03/2014                                                  |

|                        |            |
|------------------------|------------|
| <b>Inspection date</b> | 27/11/2014 |
|------------------------|------------|

|                                          |               |
|------------------------------------------|---------------|
| Previous inspection                      | good progress |
| Enforcement action since last inspection | None          |

|                                        |             |
|----------------------------------------|-------------|
| <b>This inspection</b>                 |             |
| <b>Overall effectiveness</b>           | <b>good</b> |
| Outcomes for children and young people | outstanding |
| Quality of care                        | outstanding |
| Keeping children and young people safe | good        |
| Leadership and management              | good        |

## Overall effectiveness

|                   |             |
|-------------------|-------------|
| Judgement outcome | <b>good</b> |
|-------------------|-------------|

This is a good home overall. Exceptional care planning ensures that young people's individual and diverse needs are identified, well planned and fully met. Young people are making outstanding progress in a number of areas of their lives. In particular, communication and enjoying new life experiences as well as learning self-care and appropriate behaviour management skills. Social workers said, 'They are evidencing her social skills progress' and 'He thanked staff and said this was the best thing that had ever happened to him.'

Young people, their parents and professionals all report extremely positively about the level of individual care and nurturing young people receive. The exceptional relationships between staff and young people promote a sense of belonging and security. Young people are thriving within a nurturing, stimulating and inclusive environment which allows their individual personalities to blossom and be celebrated. A parent stated, 'I can't fault them at all. I would say they are outstanding in everything they do.'

Young people are safe in this home. Stringent safeguarding procedures, coupled with high staffing levels and a thorough understanding of young people's individual vulnerabilities ensure that they are able to take age appropriate risks while being protected. One social worker commented, 'He is calm and relaxed. He has a

fantastic relationship with staff' and another said, 'She is absolutely 100% safe there, I have no concerns at all.'

The proactive, committed manager is continually striving to improve young people's care and empower them to achieve to the best of their ability from their starting points. She is an excellent role model for her staff team. The resultant improvements have led to the judgement grades of outstanding in quality of care and outcomes for young people. However, although all records meet with legislation the manager is still in the process of using the information she captures to fully inform her monitoring processes. There is one recommendation as a result of this inspection; that is for staff performance to be formally appraised at least annually.

## Full report

### Information about this children's home

The home provides accommodation for up to eight children who have learning disabilities. It is operated by a local authority. Most children come for short breaks under shared care arrangements, although some live here permanently.

### Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement |
|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| 25/03/2014      | Interim         | good progress        |
| 14/08/2013      | Full            | good                 |
| 11/01/2013      | Interim         | good progress        |
| 18/09/2012      | Full            | good                 |

### What does the children's home need to do to improve further?

#### Recommendations

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

- ensure that all staff have their performance individually and formally appraised at least annually. (NMS 19.6)

## Inspection judgements

### Outcomes for children and young people **outstanding**

Young people make exceptional progress in building sustainable relationships with staff. Young people's trust in staff and the staff's comprehensive knowledge of their likes, dislikes and abilities empower them to try new things. As a result young people's confidence in their abilities to make friendships and relationships is enhanced. A parent said, 'I notice how much more he participates in things now and that makes him and me very happy.'

Young people all attend a suitable education provision where they are achieving to the best of their ability from their starting points. Strong partnership working between the home and schools ensure that young people receive consistent care and behavioural management messages. This enables them to make the most of learning opportunities. A parent said, 'Both the school and I have seen a significant change for the better since he's been coming here.'

Exceptional individual communication methods enable young people to express their wishes and feelings. As a result they are able to contribute to planning activities and interests in the home for themselves and each other. In addition, they share the results of new skills with others in the community. For example, taking cakes they have baked to the old people's complex next door. In addition, young people take great pride in being involved in recruitment processes in the home. This provides young people with the opportunity to be positive members of their home and community, building a sense of inclusion and improving self-esteem.

Young people are fully supported to maintain important familial relationships. Parents report very positively about the support they receive both whilst their child is receiving respite care and during those times in the family home where there may be a crisis. Young people's heritage is celebrated within the home and their cultural traditions are understood and maintained. As a result young people are enabled to understand and trust their place in the home and with their families. A social worker commented, 'Mam was massively struggling with him but she didn't really trust anyone. We got a tight team around the family, psychologist, me and school and started with day care and built up to two overnights. Progress is massively positive; I can only speak really highly of his time at (name).'

Young people develop important life and social skills in preparation for transition to other provisions or adult services as a result of the intensive, planned support they receive. For example, eating their meals without assistance, helping to clear up after meals, keeping their bedrooms tidy or being able to toilet themselves. A staff member said, 'Children do make progress, things like (name) always used a spoon. Then one day she used the fork. I wanted to take a picture, I was so proud of her.'

Young people make exceptional progress in developing the confidence and social skills which empower them to fully participate in new events. Enabling young people to access community provision and go on activities such as a holiday to 'Euro Disney' has had a major impact on young people's development. This inclusive approach to allowing young people to experience new adventures broadens their horizons and allows young people to explore the world while building life and social skills. A social worker said, 'They even took him away to Euro Disney which is no mean feat. He was able to have that experience because (name) knew how to motivate him, keep him interested and protect him.'

### **Quality of care**

### **outstanding**

The skilled and nurturing staff team know the young people in their care extremely well. They work patiently and tirelessly to build relationships utilising each young person's individual communication method. As a result young people and staff evidently enjoy excellent, trusting relationships. In addition young people learn from these positive relationships how to form friendships with each other and for the majority of the time behave appropriately. A parent said, 'He's happy, he enjoys coming here, he's very fond of the staff. He has a good relationship with all of the staff.'

Exceptional individual communication methods skilfully administered by the committed staff team ensure all young people are able to share their wishes and feelings. As a result young people feel listened to and valued. Young people's confidence in their ability to communicate substantially increases enabling them to say what they want and learn how to listen to others. For example, young people learnt what a group vote was in a residents meeting enabling them to choose food for their Christmas party and which of Santa's grottos they wish to visit. A parent commented, 'He likes the variety of people around him, the different staff and the other children. It's a lot better environment for him here and it's stopped a lot of his bad behaviours.'

Complaints information is available to young people in a range of methods. The process of making a complaint and what it means is explained to young people on the planning visits before they start to attend for respite. It is then reinforced through information available in the home. In addition young people are supported by the attendance of an independent advocate on a regular basis. There have not been any complaints.

Exceptional care planning ensures that young people's holistic, diverse and unique needs are well understood and met. Care planning commences prior to admission when the motivated staff team visit young people and their families in their homes. During these visits young people's communication skills and cultural backgrounds are assessed so that individual support can be provided immediately. For example, establishing whether a young person needs to have space and time to conduct daily

prayers or have a specific cultural diet. A parent said, 'Staff are fantastic, very good induction, in-depth and informative. Before he started to come here he came for an initial visit to get him acclimatised. He has no speech but when I say to him he's coming here of a morning he gets all excited.'

Care plans are reviewed regularly by key workers and all progress recorded in a separate achievement file, complete with photographs, so that young people can recognise the progress they have made. A social worker stated, 'Me and my senior practitioner were impressed at the level of interaction they have and the information they are able to put across which is very helpful in meetings. It is absolutely the right place for him.'

The knowledgeable and nurturing staff team work closely with generic and specialist health professionals to ensure that young people's holistic health needs are understood and met. Young people who have an identified need, have prompt access to the child and adolescent mental health service (CAMHS) and staff liaise effectively with professionals from this service. Comprehensive medication procedures are effectively applied ensuring young people receive appropriate medication. Young people learn the benefits of a healthy lifestyle. Young people develop life skills which improve their well-being and general health as a result of this proactive approach to their health needs. Another social worker commented, 'In the summertime they were making a lot of progress in taking him out in the community which helped with exercise and diet and losing weight. They follow a specialist diet for him.'

The staff in the home work closely with all of the schools attended by young people. Comprehensive home to school communication books ensure that all young people receive consistent care. For example, the use of a 'safespace' or specific behaviour management techniques. As a result young people feel secure enabling them to thrive and achieve to the best of their ability.

Involvement in inclusive activities both within the home and community is a major strength in this home. Young people are provided with access to a range of activities and opportunities which they would not normally be able to and which broaden their horizons. For example, being taken on trips and on holidays as well as days out locally. Young people's lives are enriched by these experiences. A parent said, 'The good thing for me as well is they get him out, he gets out in the community. I can't think of anything they can improve on.'

The nurturing, enthusiastic and skilled staff team provide young people with a warm, homely environment which is fully equipped to meet their needs. The addition of the new extension enables young people who are resident in the home to have their own space with en-suite bedrooms and a lounge. All young people can easily access the playroom, quiet room, lounge, dining room or garden when they wish. This allows young people choice to spend time together, alone engaging in an activity, or interacting with staff. As a result young people's sense of belonging, acceptance and inclusion are enhanced.

## **Keeping children and young people safe**    **good**

Young people are and feel safe in this home where their individual vulnerabilities are known and well planned for. Young people are fully supported to be able to take part in thoroughly risk assessed inclusive activities in the community; thereby increasing their sense of belonging and self-esteem while maintaining their safety. A parent commented, 'He's safe here, this is one of the only places I don't worry about him.'

The high level of staff supervision and appropriate physical safeguards in the home mean that young people do not go missing from the home. However, two recent incidents with a young person absconding from activities in the community have led to the manager and staff reviewing their missing procedures. The new comprehensive missing person procedures are linked with locally agreed protocols and robust partnership working with the local police. Young people are safeguarded by these measures.

Young people learn the benefits of positive behaviours through the effective implementation of a positive rewards scheme. Young people can earn points towards rewards and treats, for example a DVD or a new toy. The consequences log records both negative and positive consequences and how young people can earn back loss of points or earn more. Young people thrive within this positive rewarding culture and take great pride in achieving successes.

Individual behaviour management plans ensure that young people's triggers are understood and recognised leading to further behavioural improvements. Some young people's special needs mean that their 'crises' or self-harm behaviour need to be managed by way of physical intervention. All such incidents are appropriately recorded and monitored providing further safeguards for young people. A social worker said, 'He is a challenging young man but is calm there. He is very very safe there, the staff know the risks he can pose and the triggers, they are able to monitor that very well and understand.'

Comprehensive local authority recruitment and vetting procedures are effectively followed. Consequently young are not being cared for by people who may pose a risk to them. Young people are safeguarded by these measures.

Robust health and safety procedures ensure young people are cared for in a home that is physically safe to meet their needs. Regular fire evacuation practices ensure young people and staff would know what to do in the event of an emergency. Young people are physically safeguarded as a result.

## **Leadership and management**    **good**



The experienced and committed manager is a qualified social worker, holds a BA Honours Degree in Children and Young People Management and has held Registered Manager status of this home for nine years. She is ambitious for all of the young people in her care to achieve to the best of their ability, while being safe and having fun.

There were no requirements or recommendations made at the last inspection. Nevertheless the inspirational manager has used lessons learnt from incidents and points raised during consultation with parents and professionals to continually improve the care in the home. For example, reviewing and updating the missing person procedures and the introduction of the electronic interactive children's guides. Young people are further safeguarded by these measures and are able to access information about the home in an easily understandable format.

Young people, their parents and family members and other interested parties are provided with excellent information about the home and the care to be provided by way of the Statement of Purpose and Children's Guide. The Children's Guide is available in a range of formats including widget and an electronic and interactive talking method. Young people are supported to understand what will happen before they start to attend for overnight stays. They are able to come on preparatory visits and staff make visits to their family home to introduce themselves. A staff member explained, 'Another thing we talked about is how (name) is able to familiarise himself with coming here. So he will be given a picture of me and a picture of where he is coming. So when they come for the tea-time visit during the week he will know and mum and school can show him these pictures.' This enhances young people's knowledge and expectation increasing the chances that placements will be beneficial and successful.

Excellent external monitoring processes fully contribute to the safety, development and care of young people accessing the respite service and living in the home. The manager's internal auditing systems meet with legislation, safeguard young people and identify areas for improvement. The information gathered is used appropriately to inform the home's development plan. For example, the planning towards the building and opening of the two bedroom extension. The manager is in the process of incorporating information gathered through the young people's achievement folders in to her monitoring processes and development plan to evidence the impact the home is making on young people's lives.

Young people benefit from high staffing levels which ensure that all of their assessed needs are met by a well-trained and supportive staff team. Staff speak enthusiastically about the training they receive to care for young people and empower them to share their wishes and feelings. Staff report that supervision is sufficiently regular and of a high quality to meet their needs. Plus that they feel well supported by the management team. However, records evidence that some annual appraisals are not taking place within appropriate timescales.

Proactive partnership working with social workers, education and health professionals ensure that regular multi-disciplinary meetings take place to complement review meetings. The home fully contribute to those meetings and enable young people, where they are able, to contribute as well. In addition young people are safeguarded by the effective partnership working arrangements that ensure that all significant events are notified appropriately to all relevant agencies. An independent reviewing officer wrote, 'Staff also ensure they attend all relevant meetings and are able to make very helpful contributions.'

The home is maintained to a high physical standard. Young people are cared for in a home which is fully suited to meet their needs. Excellent care plans are complemented by individual achievement folders. These fully contribute to young people's understanding of their lives, their respite experiences and plans for their future. They are stored securely.

## What inspection judgements mean

| Judgement   | Description                                                                       |
|-------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 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.                                |

## Information 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 framework of inspection for children's homes.