

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Liz Daniels
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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.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for the service.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding:	this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality
Good:	this aspect of the provision is strong
Satisfactory:	this aspect of the provision is sound
Inadequate:	this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Service information

Brief description of the service

This home is situated in a residential part of a town. It is run by the local authority and provides respite care for up to seven young people with learning disabilities, some of whom also have a physical disability. It is self-contained, but is located within a resource centre which also houses the social work team for children with learning disabilities. All areas within the home are wheelchair accessible and there is ceiling tracking for hoisting throughout. There is a lounge and dining area, a kitchen, and a separate room with some sensory equipment. All young people are provided with their own bedrooms and specialist equipment is available throughout. The home has a garden to the rear which is enclosed.

The home has its own adapted transport, enabling young people to access activities and education in the local community.

Currently, extensive building works are being undertaken to improve the access and facilities for the resource centre. The unit is continuing to provide respite throughout; at the time of the inspection six young people were staying, all of whom were present for part of the inspection.

Summary

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

This is an overview of what the inspector found during the inspection.

This unannounced interim inspection was the second visit to the setting for the year April 2010 to March 2011. The service was judged as outstanding at the key inspection, undertaken in November 2010. The aim of this inspection was to inspect those standards that ensure young people are safe and to inspect the progress made in implementing the recommendation previously made. The visit was facilitated by the manager and provided the opportunity to meet with young people and staff.

Excellent arrangements continue, to keep young people safe. Staff recognise that many are vulnerable and are diligent in ensuring they are protected. Meeting each young person's needs is an integral part of how the home runs and staff are keen to enable them to achieve their full potential. Robust quality assurance processes ensure the provision is being very well monitored.

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last inspection, staff have arranged for a copy of the report from each young person's review to be sent to them. This, in discussion with their family and social worker, will confirm that the care given is up to date and consistent for each young person.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is not judged.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Staff respect young people's privacy and maintain their confidentiality when handling information about them. They assist young people with their personal care, while ensuring that their privacy, dignity and safety are promoted and protected. Good sized bedrooms and bathrooms provide space for personal care and a mixed staff team enables sensitivity to gender issues. Staff follow clear guidelines to ensure a correct balance between allowing a young person to spend some time alone while making sure they are safe if unsupervised.

Staff are alert to signs that young people may be concerned or unhappy and explore their anxiety through a variety of communication methods. Each young person has a family member, or responsible adult, who can advocate for them; they can also spend time with the representative from an independent advocacy service who visits the unit weekly. Similarly, staff regularly seeks parent's views to ensure the home continues to meet their needs. They can access a robust complaints process within the local authority, although no complaints have been received since 2007.

The home's procedures are aimed at promoting young people's welfare and protecting them from abuse. Staff are trained in child protection and know the action to take in response to any concerns; they keep good records of any marks or bruises and discuss any queries with the relevant professionals. Staff have each been provided with a copy of the local safeguarding procedures, for reference in the event of any safeguarding allegations. Robust recruitment procedures require that all staff have an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) disclosure before employment, to protect young people.

The cognitive disabilities of most of the young people accommodated mean that they do not fully understand bullying as a concept. Staff who work in the home are aware of the group dynamics, as well as which triggers can lead to behaviour that causes distress or conflict between young people. Good staffing ratios, close supervision and excellent support ensures that incidents are kept to a minimum. Similarly, staff guide young people as to what is socially acceptable behaviour, discouraging them when their behaviour is inappropriate. Staff are consistent in their approach, underpinning their practice with the detailed care plans and risk assessments that outline the expectations and management for each young person. They use distraction and de-escalation techniques in the event of any tensions that develop; these positive strategies have resulted in no sanctions or physical interventions being needed since June 2010. Staff are also very alert to those young people who are at risk of leaving

the unit without permission. Again, excellent supervision minimises the risk whereby there has been no incidence of absence.

Staff undertake risk assessments for the premises and activities young people are involved in. The excellent preparation by staff for the current building works has ensured risks have been identified, action taken and suitable arrangements made to maintain young people's safety. Individual risk assessments are also completed on young people; these balance their behaviour, their susceptibility to falls or accidents and their potential vulnerability, in situations such as sleeping, bathing and eating. Positive steps are taken to protect against the risk of fire and other hazards. All the required checks of fire equipment continue. Staff also undertake regular fire drills throughout the 24-hour period. Good records are kept and these are well monitored; this ensures that as all staff are included in a fire evacuation at least once a year, they understand the fire plan and can keep young people safe in the event of a fire.

Visitors and contractors are well vetted; they are required to show evidence of identification, to sign the visitors' book and are supervised while on site. Equally, robust recruitment processes protect young people; all the necessary information is received prior to employment and the required checks are made. Staff recruitment is co-ordinated centrally through the local authority. The manager is included in the process and keeps sufficient information at the home to confirm all the required checks are made and all staff have updated CRB disclosures.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is not judged.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is not judged.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is not judged.

Organisation

The organisation is not judged.

