

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Seka Graovac
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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 is a local authority's service. It provides short-term respite care for up to four children who have learning disabilities.

The children's respite service shares the building with a similar service for adults. The services are kept separate by locked doors, but some facilities are shared. One manager is registered for both children's and adult's service. Staff also work across both provisions. The adult service is inspected separately by the Care Quality Commission.

Overall effectiveness

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

Children and young people receive highly personalised short break services. They have their diverse needs fully met in line with their comprehensive individual care plans. Children and young people are safe. They are looked after very well by a committed and stable staff team. Staff have a good understanding of safe working practices that promote positive outcomes for children and young people, exceptionally well. The relationships between staff, children and young people are very positive. Children, young people and their parents are highly appreciative of the service they receive.

However, some of the home's paperwork has not been reviewed for many years. In addition, children and young people spend time in the place that is not decorated to an adequate standard. The identified breaches of regulations are listed below. These shortfalls have no impact or have a minimal impact on children and young people. However, improvements are required to bring all aspects of the service up to date and in line with legislation.

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
5 (2001)	review and revise the Statement of Purpose and children's guide to bring it up to date with the current legislation (Regulation 5)	07/11/2011
17B	ensure that within 24 hours of the use of any measure of	14/10/2011

(2001)	control, restraint or discipline, a written record is made in a volume kept for the purpose that includes all the details as listed in the relevant regulation (Regulation 17B.3)	
24 (2001)	establish a written procedure for considering complains that provide comprehensive information as required and listed in the relevant regulation (Regulation 24.2)	07/11/2011
31 (2001)	ensure that the premises are kept reasonably decorated and maintained. (Regulation 31.2.e)	07/12/2011

Recommendations

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

- refresh staff training in the use of physical intervention techniques on a regular basis (NMS 3.15)
- provide staff supervision on a more regular basis. (NMS 19.4)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Children and young people love coming to this home. They have their health needs and other needs fully met. They have great opportunities to participate in a full range of activities either alone or with other children and young people. They have excellent chances to develop a positive self-view, emotional confidence, social skills, understanding of their background and respect for diversity. They are enabled to make a positive contribution to the home and the wider community. They receive clear information and make their own choices.

The home has exceptionally positive relationships with the parents of children and young people who use the service. Children and young people benefit from this partnership. Through the Ofsted survey, the parents made positive comments, such as 'respite care is so important for me as a carer, for the family and for my son's independence. It is very important to me to know that my son is being cared for well, not only because it is the staff's job, but because they really enjoy what they do and are committed to stretching and encouraging the children towards their full potential' and 'it provides a home away from home and I can relax knowing my son is being expertly cared for whilst being encouraged to be independent. His social skills have improved.'

Children and young people have good attendance at school. They have excellent opportunities to learn about the world around them and to develop their independence in line with their needs and abilities. The continuity of the management and staffing and to the some degree, of the physical environment once

the young person starts receiving adult care from the same home contributes strongly to their smooth transition to adult care service.

Quality of care

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

The home's exceptionally comprehensive care planning process ensures that children and young people receive a highly individualised service that fully addresses all their diverse needs. The home provides a healthy and safe environment where children and young people's physical, emotional and psychological needs are fully met. The arrangements for dealing with medication are safe and effective. This ensures that children and young people continue to receive the treatment as prescribed by their doctors. As some staff are qualified nurses and all staff are certified first aiders, children and young people receive excellent support to maintain their health and adopt healthy life-styles.

Staff skilfully facilitate positive and constructive relationships amongst children and young people and themselves. Staff are competent communicators who are highly committed to listening to children and young people. Staff are sensitive to children and young people's non-verbal behaviour, their feelings and views. Staff are committed to giving the power to children and young people to influence what is happening during their breaks at this home, as much as possible. Forums with parents are regularly held to provide them with the opportunities to strengthen their child's voice and contribute to the development of the service. Parents are very satisfied with the quality of the service. No complaints have been raised with the home. However, the home's complaints procedure does not include all information that is required by legislation. For example, it does not cover how the procedure will be made known to the main stakeholders or the arrangements for dealing with complaints about the registered person. These shortfalls lessen the procedure's effectiveness. No impact of this on children and young people has been observed.

The home works in close and effective partnership with schools. Staff successfully promote children and young people's attendance. In line with its main purpose, the home provides a good range of purposeful and enjoyable activities on the premises and in the community.

The home is appropriately located and designed for the use by children and young people with disabilities. However, the quality of internal decoration in some parts of the building is poor. For example, the walls in communal areas are dirty and damaged in places. Staff themselves describe the place as 'dull' and 'tatty' despite their efforts to make it more pleasant. The physical environment is not welcoming. It does not provide children and young people with a good example on how the premises should be cared for.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Each child or young person has a clear written risk assessment. Staff implement comprehensive strategies to enable children and young people to take part in various activities while remaining safe and protected. Regular health and safety checks ensure that the environment is physically safe. The building security is appropriately high in line with the high levels of vulnerability of children and young people who use the service. Sound activated alarm devices are used at night to ensure that children and young people receive staff support immediately, if they are distressed or have an epileptic seizure. Staff are sensitive towards the needs of children and young people, including their need to have a certain degree of privacy. The system can be switched off and can be adjusted to respond to different levels of noise in line with each child or young person's needs. Children and young people are safe, protected and have their welfare promoted effectively.

Children and young people rarely go missing. When they are missing, staff follow appropriate reporting procedures to provide the missing child or young person with as much protection as possible. Staff have good knowledge of safe working practice and are able to promote children's welfare effectively. Although staff have not had a refresher training on behaviour management and the use of physical interventions for a while, they are able to promote children and young people's constructive behaviour effectively. Children and young people have clear and consistent boundaries and respond well to those. Staff intervene physically only to ensure the safety of children, young people or adults. However, incidents of physical interventions are not always appropriately logged. This has not had a negative impact on children and young people. However, the inconsistent record keeping makes monitoring less effective.

Leadership and management

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

The service was rated as outstanding at the last inspection. No requirements or recommendations were raised. Children and young people use the service that it is reviewed annually with the aim of improving the outcomes for them. However, some previously agreed ambitious initiatives in relation to the improvement of physical environment have been abandoned due to the government cuts. The home is not able to demonstrate that it continues to improve.

Although very experienced and competent in many ways, the management and staff do not have a full working knowledge of the relevant amended legislation that came into force in April 2011. This has not had a negative impact on the outcomes for children and young people. However, the paperwork and record keeping are falling behind the acceptable standard. For example, the Statement of Purpose and some policies and procedures refer to the legislation that stopped being relevant ten years ago. This means that children and young people are being looked after by staff who are not keeping abreast with the professional and legal developments in the field of children's care. Children and young people are looked after by qualified staff, but

many of the staff's qualifications focused on adult care. Children and young people are looked after by a stable and diverse staff team. The team spirit is high and staff report feeling well supported to provide the best outcomes for children and young people. Team meetings are regularly held, but formal individual supervision sessions are sporadic. Good monitoring arrangements are in place and the home is under review process. The service rightly focuses on promoting the best outcomes for children and young people and is effective in achieving those. However, improvements are required to bring the home's paperwork up to date.

Equality and diversity practice is **outstanding**.