

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Caroline Wilson
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This is a local authority service. It provides short breaks for up to five children who have learning and/or physical 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 adults' services. Staff also work across both provisions. The adult service is inspected separately by the Care Quality Commission.

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 make good progress and are kept safe during their stay at this short-breaks service. Young people enjoy a wide range of activities and learn skills in order to promote their independence.

There is good quality support from staff. There is a locum manager in post who provides strong direction and leadership of the service. She has made a number of improvements and has an action plan in place to address shortfalls that have been identified. The staff team is experienced and committed to ensuring that there is effective care planning in place which is personalised to the individual needs of each young person.

Staff in the home demonstrate a good understanding of safe working practice. Young people confirm that potentially unsafe situations and behaviour are well managed by staff and boundaries and expectations about group living are consistently followed. Leadership and management arrangements are strong and leaders and managers are effective at tackling weaknesses and securing improvement.

Shortfalls Are identified in relation to the Statement of Purpose, which has not been updated and not all staff receive supervision at regular intervals. Statutory

requirements have been made in relation to these. Recommendations have been made to ensure that the training matrix is kept up-to-date, for staff to attend training as identified in their learning and development plans and for the service to provide internet access.

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
5 (2001)	ensure that the Statement of Purpose is kept under review (Regulation 5 (a))	30/09/2013
27 (2001)	ensure that all staff receive appropriate supervision. (Regulation 27 (4) (a))	30/09/2013

Recommendations

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

- ensure that staff are able to attend training as identified as part of their personal development, for instance becoming Team Teach instructors, and that the staff training schedule is kept up-to-date (NMS 18.1)
- ensure that young people are provided with facilities, such as internet access, which helps them to achieve their educational goals. (NMS 8.4)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

Young people are involved in regular activities which meet their social, emotional and physical needs during the summer holidays, both inside and outside of the unit. These combine their sensory and physical needs with fun and relaxation. One young person indicated that they enjoyed listening to music while they were there. Young people strengthen their social skills, have new experiences, and develop friendships with each other and their neighbours through various social events, such as annual fetes.

Young people's diverse needs are met, for example in choosing which gender of staff they prefer to be involved in their personal care. Young people eat foods that meet their dietary requirements, for instance, their vegetarian or cultural requirements.

Young people are supported to gain skills that will help them to become more independent. They are encouraged to participate in tasks in accordance with their age and level of understanding, for instance, putting on their shoes and coat before they go out.

Young people achieve their maximum potential, mobility and independence as a result of the progress they make during their time in the home. They experience different activities and use specialised equipment.

The majority of young people attend school during their stays at the short-break and they have good attendance at schools.

Quality of care

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

Young people are provided with good quality care in which their holistic needs are met. Young people benefit from a child centred, stimulating, and safe environment which enable them to feel secure and meet their individualised needs. Staff are sensitive and responsive to the individual young person's needs, feelings and interests. Staff support young people to develop a positive sense of their own identities and culture through the assessment process and care planning systems. Staff enjoy positive relationships with young people, based on a mutual respect which is central and integral to every aspect of care that they give.

Care planning takes into account how families care for their child and the routine at home. They also allow young people to take risk appropriate to their age and level of understanding. Young people benefit from continuity of care during their time at the short-break. They enjoy positive relationships with each other. Care is taken to ensure that young people are placed with others of similar age and abilities so that they can develop good relationships with each other. Staff actively encourage and support young people in the day-to-day running of the home and in the decision making process. Staff use various communication methods to seek views of young people including those who are non-verbal or have very limited vocabularies. Interaction between staff and young people is genuinely warm and relationships are valued.

Parents retain overall responsibility for health care and education while their child enjoys their short break. Staff work well in partnership with families using the service to ensure that young people receive good, continuous health care. Staff have knowledge of young people's complex needs that may result as part of a disability, working closely with health professionals for advice and support. The equipment facilities such as hoists enable staff to provide quality personal care. Staff encourage and support young people to attend school during their short break at the home. The home closely liaises with the schools regarding the care of young people and strives to support them to achieve and reach their potential. However, no internet access is available in the home, for which young people can make use of to enhance their

educational and leisure needs.

Young people's diverse needs are catered for on a range of issues. Staff are sensitive to matters of religion and, as far as practicable, ensure that every young person placed is offered the support that they need so that they are able to attend services, receive instruction and observe any requirement of their religious persuasion.

The service is decorated to a good standard, and each room provides a homely feel, despite its size. Refurbishment of the building is planned to take place early next year. It is anticipated that this will enable young people to use the service to its full potential and will include the introduction of a sensory room and garden for them to enjoy.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Staff are well trained in child protection and have a good understanding of the wider safeguarding issues. There are good arrangements for the sharing of information between professionals and good communication on a regular basis between staff, parents and schools.

The levels of security and supervision in place help eliminate the risk of young people going missing. However, staff are fully aware of the appropriate procedure to deal with this should occur.

Young people have an individual risk assessment in relation to their behavioural needs and behaviour management plans are in place as part of their short-break care plans. Staff are consistent in setting clear boundaries and they are provided with challenging behaviour training. Restraints are applied as a last resort to protect young people from self-injurious behaviour or to protect others from injuries. Robust risk assessments ensure that young people are safe from any harm at home and during their visit into the community. Informative daily records are maintained that clearly indicate that a young person's experience while staying at the home.

Staff have completed health and safety training. They take necessary action to keep young people and themselves safe from the risk of fire and hazards. Staff carry out regular fire alarm testing and fire drills. A risk assessment of the premises is completed. All safety checks to maintain a safe environment are regularly undertaken.

Leadership and management

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

The leadership and management of this home are good. A locum manager is in post until a permanent manager is appointed. The manager has made significant improvements during the time she has been in post. She has highlighted and made a

number of improvements to the service that is provided to young people. This has been positively commented on by the independent visitor who conducts the monitoring visits to the service. The manager has an action plan and has already made some improvements to the service, which improve outcomes for young people. Some shortfalls identified during the course of this inspection had already been identified by the manager and is part of the service's action plan. For example, no staff training matrix was in place to identify which courses staff have attended and no prompt in place to highlight when the timescales have expired. This task has been delegated to a member of staff which will ensure that staff training is undertaken at appropriate intervals to ensure that staff's skills in promoting and safeguarding the welfare of young people is kept up-to-date.

All staff now have specific areas of responsibility which promote their continuous professional development as well as ensure the smooth running of the home. All staff have or are in the process of completing their NVQ3/CWDC training. Their assessor states that she is very impressed with the standard of work submitted as well as the positive interaction that she observed between staff and young people. There is limited access to the internet and computer network, which can hinder progress in relation to staff's coursework and work related matters. The impact of this is minimised as a new computer system will be installed as part of the service's scheduled programme of works. Some staff were informed that they could enrol on additional courses to promote their personal development, such as being Team Teach instructors, but there had been a delay in a place being allocated.

The Statement of Purpose is not fit for the purpose for which it is intended. It has not been updated for a significant amount of time; it makes reference to a policy which was in place in 1995. The Statement of Purpose is cumbersome; while the relevant headings are in place, the policies are set out in full and have not been adapted to provide an overview of what the service provides. It is highly unlikely that the Statement of Purpose has been made available to any social workers or parents in its current form, due to the impracticality of photocopying and posting a document of this size. The impact of this shortfall is minimised due to the fact that social workers and family members have good relationships with staff and get verbal information about what to expect from the home. The need for the revision of this document had already been identified by the manager as part of her action plan.

Staff speak highly of the support that they receive from the manager in addition to team members. Most staff has supervision within timescales; shortfalls are isolated and affect specific members of staff. The impact of this is minimised as the staff involved are experienced and have a very good knowledge of the needs of young people. They can also access ad-hoc supervision sessions, where appropriate. Staff state that supervision provides them with a platform to case discussion as well as to discuss house-keeping and other related matters. Team meetings also provide a forum which provides rich discussions about how to meet young people's needs from which staff gain a lot. The manager is keen to stimulate the enthusiasm of staff and channel their efforts effectively. Areas of expertise, such as methods of communicating with young people, are shared between the staff group as a whole to ensure that all staff are supported to provide each young person with good quality

care. Staff have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities and they have high expectations of what young people can achieve.

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.