

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Diana Waters
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The home is managed by the local authority. It provides care and accommodation for up to 10 children and young people, aged from five to 17 years at any one time, who have a learning disability and who may also have a physical disability. The home also provides an overnight short breaks service.

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 the recruitment processes ensure fully completed CVs are on staff files; that suitable play equipment for the older young people in the garden area is provided; that the written guidance and clearly evaluated documents are available, when the calming room has been used, for specific young people.

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
17B (2001)	ensure the written records, are made in a volume kept for that purpose and are consistent with Regulation 17B and include the effectiveness and consequences of the use of the calming room and include details of any methods used to avoid the need to use that measure. (Regulation 17B (3) and (4))	31/12/2013
26 (2001)	ensure full and satisfactory information is available in relation to staff employed, specifically a full employment history, together with a satisfactory written explanation of any gaps in employment, are on staff files. (Regulation 26 and Schedule 20))	31/12/2013

Recommendations

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

- provide the necessary facilities, specifically suitable age-appropriate garden play equipment, for the older young people to promote their development.(NMS 10)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

The home clearly recognises the individual needs of each young person. Children and young people benefit from visiting a known and familiar environment where they enjoy their respite stay at the home. Young people make and sustain warm relationships with staff and other young people which enable them to build their confidence and make their stay successful. Participation in the community and in leisure activities promotes self-esteem.

Staff liaise closely with other professionals and parents to ensure young people remain healthy and health conditions are well managed to enable young people to enjoy their time in the home. Healthy meals are provided taking into consideration individual preferences and dietary needs are adhered to carefully.

Multi agency working and close involvement with young people's schools and parents help promote consistent care and understanding young people's choices, for example, meals and preferred feeding methods. Young people develop daily living skills that help promote self-care and independence in small achievable steps. A

parent comments: 'My child has started to clear up after meals', a transition from always expecting parents to complete these tasks.

Quality of care

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

Matching for young people are carefully considered from the initial matching panel to the familiarisation visits to ensure young people are placed safely. A new system to ascertain young peoples' and parents views, in addition to the annual surveys undertaken, indicate parents strongly agree that their views about their children's care are taken into account, and they are pleased with the care provided 'Knowing our child is safe, happy and well cared has meant we have been able to truly relax'. A social worker comments: 'The home continues to manage and provide a really high quality care experience for young people with complex behaviour issues that are hugely challenging'.

Each young person has an individual behaviour plan that help staff to understand and manage behaviour and young people experience competent care. Staff have excellent relationships with children and young people and are skilled at interpreting young people's wishes and behaviour. This enables young people and parents to have confidence in the care provided.

Young people are matched to help ensure compatible young people stay at the home together and this helps build positive peer relationships, for example Monday night is swimming night and some Thursdays are girlie night. Careful consideration for matching is reviewed frequently and incompatibility is reviewed by managers and lessons learnt are taken seriously to ensure the needs of all young people are met.

Positive handling is documented and only the lowest levels are used when necessary. A stable staff team who have cared for children and young people for several years help them understand the needs of young people who use the service and how to divert and distract to benefit young people within a harmonious living environment.

The children and young people and their parents take part in decision making about their care and the running of the home, with key workers consulting individuals to gain views on the care provided. Two low level complaints have been received since the last inspection and were resolved quickly. Staff endeavour to learn from even low level concerns to improve the care offered to young people and frequent contact with parents ensures concerns are addressed quickly and effectively.

Children and young people experience consistent medical care delivered by trained and experienced staff, young people benefit from staff who understand their individual medication needs.

All children and young people attend school and staff maintain contact with both school and parents; goals are shared to ensure young people are cared for consistently and young people are able, with encouragement, to work towards these

targets.

The staff team understands issues relating to equality and diversity well. Staff are enthusiastic about promoting the rights of young people to access community facilities and challenge others' perceptions of learning and physical disability, enabling others to rethink their approach and benefitting young people with disabilities to integrate within the community.

The home has undergone extensive building work to improve the physical environment and provide the space and adaptations needed to meet the needs of young people. This has considerably enhanced the space available for young people to use and the quality of the provision. Children and young people make good use of the external play space and play equipment in one garden space. The other unit has the use of three outside areas, with a large grassed area and space for outdoor play. Currently the only play equipment in this area is a netted trampoline, and young people would benefit from the opportunity to play on additional age-appropriate play equipment.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people's care plans and individual risk assessments contribute to protecting young people from harm. Staff are trained in safeguarding children procedures, including specialist safeguarding disabled children, and are clear about the home's whistle blowing policies. Young people are protected by the good consistent practice employed by the staff team.

Staff encourage positive and appropriate behaviour. As regular visitors, children and young people are familiar with the home, the stable staff team and some other young people and this enables them to feel comfortable and know staff will respond quickly to concerns. The majority of the children and young people rarely receive sanctions or safe handling and a positive atmosphere is prevalent. Difficult behaviour through the summer was addressed with sufficient staffing and management of bookings to ensure the safety of other young people and to promote a planned transfer to benefit all young people. The calming rooms have been the subject of careful consideration and debate. The smaller room is not authorised for use and remains locked. The high door handles have been removed and await blanking plates, enabling young people to exit the room as they wish. However, the internal lower handle remains stiff and does not allow easy access. This room is reported to be unlocked to allow access and availability to young people who have specific behaviour plans. To date, one young person has accessed this room numerous times in the summer to self-calm and the room has been used three times since August with assistance. The monitoring of this room is regularly undertaken by a designated member of staff, within the monthly managers monitoring report and within the external managers report. More specific recording, including a detailed evaluation of the benefit to young people using this room is needed, to fully assess the suitability of its use; records are kept but a coherent picture was not available within one

report.

Parents remain pleased with the home and report children and young people enjoy their visits. Staff are vigilant and small changes in behaviour are noted and discussed to ensure all young people benefit from their stay.

No young people have gone missing from the home; however the home has a missing from home procedure and high levels of vigilance and planning for individual children when on external trips are evident.

The home has undergone extensive refurbishment and continued to provide a reduced respite care service during the disruption. This was greatly valued by parents and essential for young people to maintain consistency and promote their care.

The home has appointed one internal city council applicant since the last inspection. Additional references were sought and verified and the Disclosure and Barring certificate was updated. This helps to ensure up-to-date information is held on staff files. The record held within the home contained some small gaps on the submitted CV; this was addressed and rectified during the inspection. This shortfall does not have a direct impact on the day-to-day care provided to children and young people but records must contain all the relevant information to ensure staff are safe to work with young people.

Leadership and management

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

The home's Statement of Purpose was reviewed in 2013 and provides clear information for interested parties. The children's guide provides information in a simple format appropriate for the children and young people who visit the home. An annual report is compiled by the managers that highlight the work undertaken and actions for the future to improve the service.

The managers demonstrate an excellent understanding of the young people and families who use the service and provide good role models to the staff team, they have a strong desire to continue to improve the service for young people with disabilities and their families. The team has the skills and experience to ensure children and young people with differing needs receive competent care. Staff have experience of addressing equality and diversity issues and are keen to ensure children and young people with disabilities benefit from their stay at the home.

The managers monitor the operation of the home each month, which contributes to the maintenance of good quality care. The external visitor appointed by the registered provider visits regularly and provides written reports. The visitor has line management responsibility for the children's homes and the service has confirmed that from January 2014 these visits will be conducted by an external independent visitor. The home's management is proactive and effective in remedying concerns.

The previous requirement has been addressed; however further detailed information in evaluating the use of the room is required to ensure young people are protected.

The home notifies the appropriate authorities about significant events that occur in children's and young people's lives relating to the protection of children. This ensures appropriate action is taken in response to any incident. This helps to promote children and young people's welfare and keep them safe.

The home's managers are respected by the staff team, who benefit from support and supervision. Staff are experienced and trained to undertake their roles. Staff are competent in delivering care to the differing individual needs of the children and young people they look after. Staffs demonstrate a good understanding of how to help children and young people achieve successful outcomes and celebrate achievements. Managers also recognise the positive input from staff members; one long-serving member of staff was nominated and awarded the city council employee of the year award, recognising the hard work and extra jobs undertaken to make the service homely and welcoming.

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.