

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Thomas Webber
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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 home provides care and accommodation for up to 10 children and young people, aged five to 17 years at any one time who have a learning disability and who may also have a physical disability. The home provides an overnight short breaks service.

The home is divided into two units each catering for a different age group. One unit primarily provides care for five to 12 year olds with the other unit providing care for 12 to 17 year olds. However, there are times where both groups mix together for activities, meals or outings when appropriate.

The home is situated in an urban residential area and has its own transport facilities. These provide opportunities for young people to access the wide range of amenities in the local and wider community.

Overall effectiveness

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

There is a strong and committed management and leadership team who support a caring, highly qualified staff team. Together, they provide a valuable and essential short break service to disabled young people and their families. They promote new life experiences and support young people's progress and development ensuring a successful transition into adult life. The promotion of equality and diversity in this home is outstanding. This is a child focused home where young people are at the centre of key decisions. Staff provide an individualised service for young people which ensures that all their needs are fully promoted. Young people continue to thrive within a warm, nurturing, supportive and caring environment.

Further improvement can be made to the Statement of Purpose and regulation 33 reports. The current premises do not fully meet the needs of wheelchair users when accommodated which is reflected in the overall effectiveness of the provision.

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
31	ensure that the premises used for the purposes of a children's	20/01/2012

(2001)	home is of a physical design and layout which are suitable for the purpose of achieving the aims and objectives set out in the home's Statement of Purpose (Regulation 31(1))	
4 (2001)	ensure that the home's Statement of Purpose comprehensively reflects all matters listed in Schedule 1 and a copy of the revised document is forwarded to Ofsted (Regulation 4(1) and (2))	15/08/2011
33 (2001)	ensure that interviews are routinely held with young people and staff and their views are reflected within the reports in order to form an opinion of the standard of care provided. (Regulation 33 (4)(a))	30/09/2011

Outcomes for children and young people

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

This home provides a valuable and essential short break service to both young people and their parents and carers. A crucial outcome for some young people is that by accessing this short break service, they are able to remain in the family home. Young people are fully supported to maintain contact with their parents/carers whilst accessing this service. Good communication exists between the staff and young people's parents/carers and respective social workers. This ensures that they are kept informed and up to date about any matters relating to young people.

Young people enjoy the opportunities provided by the home which enables them to thrive. Young people are enabled to develop socially with their peer group and to engage in a range of life experiences. They are encouraged to enhance their social and independent skills as part of their successful transition into adult life.

Young people are assisted to maintain a healthy lifestyle. A variety of communication methods are used to enable young people to express their views and make choices. They receive a high level of care and support from a very dedicated staff team, based on their individual needs. This enables them to make significant progress.

Staff actively support young people to attend their educational placements each day. Clear routines are well established to achieve excellent school attendance. Transport to and from school is divided between the home and the various schools attended by young people.

Quality of care

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

Young people benefit from living in an environment where warm, caring and supportive relationships exist between themselves and staff. The dedicated staff team undertake their duties in a warm, supportive, respectful and professional manner. Young people are relaxed and at ease in the company of staff and each

other as well as within their environment.

Comprehensive care plans are well established which ensure that the individual needs of young people are fully understood by staff. Staff enable young people to express their views and feelings through the knowledge and understanding they have of them. These are achieved by using a range of communication aids such as signs, symbols and photographs. The way individual young people communicate is clearly understood by staff. Staff are also knowledgeable about the cultural and religious needs of young people and ensure they provide care that is sensitive to those needs.

Young people are supported to eat a healthy and balanced diet. The likes and dislikes of young people are well catered for as well as any specific cultural and special dietary needs. Young people are also provided with opportunities to try meals from a variety of cultures. Pictures of the meals provided are on display in the dining rooms together with the Makaton symbols to assist young people who require a visual aid. Young people are also encouraged to participate in a wide range of activities both within the home and in the wider community. This enables young people to achieve an active lifestyle which helps to keep them healthy.

The parents/carers of young people maintain responsibility for ensuring that the young people's health care needs are met. However, the home does maintain policies and procedures to ensure that young people can access any health care services in an emergency. Appropriate systems are well established for the safe storage, receipt, administration and disposal of unwanted medication for the protection of young people.

Clear policies and procedures are established for dealing with complaints. These are produced in user-friendly formats understandable to young people. Parents/carers are also encouraged to raise any concerns or make comment about the care provided. These are used to inform and improve the home's practice. All complaints are responded to and addressed without delay. A number of compliments continue to be received. These reflect the excellent care and support provided to young people and in some cases to their parents/carers.

The educational needs of young people are primarily overseen by their parents/carers. Although, staff also attend young people's school reviews wherever possible. Staff also visit prospective children and young people at their school to obtain all relevant information to assist them to settle into the home once a place is offered.

The home is divided into two units. Young people live in a caring environment which is suitably maintained, however parts of the home are poorly decorated. Young people are provided with their own bedrooms and reasonable communal space. In addition there are sufficient bath and toilet facilities with aids and adaptations. These include specialist bathing facilities to meet the specific needs of young people accommodated. However, the current premises do not fully meet the needs of wheelchair users when accommodated. Action is being taken by the authority to

upgrade the premises.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people who access this service are kept safe. Staff are trained and competent in their knowledge of safeguarding young people by ensuring they are fully protected from harm. Children and young people live in a safe environment where their welfare is promoted. Staff have an excellent understanding of their needs and how to safeguard them. Management ensure that all allegations or suspicions of harm are promptly responded to so young people are protected. Staff, as part of this process, maintain an open and supportive dialogue with young people, their respective placing social workers, and the local safeguarding team.

A clear reporting and recording system is well established in the event that a young person should go missing. This is to ensure the safe return of young people at the earliest opportunity. There have been no incidents where young people have gone missing. The high staffing levels, based on their individual needs, positively contribute to this area of practice.

Effective measures are in place to minimise any incidents of bullying. The high levels of staff supervision contribute to this area of practice. Staff take prompt and positive action to deal with any incidents of bullying for the continued protection of young people.

Young people live in an environment where they are supported to develop positive behaviour. Comprehensive individual behaviour management plans and various risk assessments are well established. These provide staff with clear guidance and strategies for effectively supporting and managing the behaviours of young people. These also ensure that young people receive a consistent approach in a calm and professional manner. Staff and young people have developed good relationships where there is positive interaction between them which assists young people to behave appropriately.

Robust staff recruitment practices are established to ensure the protection of young people. These practices ensure that new staff are suitably vetted and do not commence employment in the home until all the relevant checks have been carried out.

Health and safety policy and practice guidelines are well established to ensure that staff and young people are appropriately safeguarded. No specific health and safety issues were identified from a tour of the building. Young people and staff regularly practise fire evacuation procedures and the various health and fire safety records are accurate and up to date. These ensure that the living environment for young people is physically safe and secure.

Leadership and management

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

Young people benefit from living at a home which is effectively and efficiently managed. The management team provide staff with strong leadership and clear and consistent guidance. Management within the home are extremely approachable and supportive which is very much appreciated by the staff.

The management team ensure that any requirements and recommendations that are within their control are complied with. However, the requirement, raised at the last inspection, remains unmet. This is due to the work needed to be undertaken to achieve compliance. The management team have also successfully addressed three of the four recommendations. The unmet recommendation relates to regulation 33 reports completed by the organisation. These still do not routinely reflect a summary of any discussions held with staff.

Young people, staff and the placing authority are clear about the aims and objectives of the home. These are set out within the home's Statement of Purpose. This document also describes the level of service young people can expect to receive and how they will be cared for. This information is readily available to all interested parties. However, the current Statement of Purpose does not fully comply with the relevant regulation. Although this does not have any direct impact on young people it does not reflect the full service provided. A young people's guide is also produced. A copy of this document is provided to them and their parents. This also provides them with clear information they need to know about the home.

Effective quality assurance systems are established which monitor and ensure that a high quality of service is delivered to young people and their families. The annual report produced by the home provides an overview of the work achieved and the impact on young people. The results of young people's parents/carers' completed surveys are largely extremely positive about the care and support provided. The organisation's monitoring reports, about the welfare and care provided to young people, do not routinely reflect a summary of any discussions with staff and young people. This does not have any impact on young people but should be recorded to provide a full account of the conduct of the home.

Young people benefit from living at a home where excellent staffing levels are maintained to meet their individual and collective needs. They are cared for by a dedicated and stable staff team who have a variety of experience in the care of young people. Staff undertake a multi-purpose role in carrying out most aspects of care to young people. This ensures that young people receive stability and consistency of care.

Young people are looked after by a staff team who are themselves properly managed and supported in safeguarding and promoting their welfare. Staff feel well supported and various practices are well established. These ensure that staff are kept up to date with regard to any issues relating to the home and young people. The

performance of staff is also continually monitored to ensure that young people are well cared for.

Young people are looked after by a staff team who are trained and competent to meet their individual and collective needs. Most staff are trained to the required qualification. The organisation fully supports staff training to develop their knowledge, expertise and competence. This is reflected in the care delivered and positive outcomes achieved for young people.

Young people's records are complete and are stored securely. Young people's placement plans also reflect their individual histories and needs. This information enables staff to effectively care for young people. Any significant events relating to the protection of young people are routinely notified to all relevant parties. Staff ensure that placing social workers are kept well informed and are regularly updated about the progress and well-being of young people.

Equality and diversity practice is **outstanding**.