

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Janet Hunnam
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Date of last inspection	11/03/2013
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This children's home is operated by the local authority. The service is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to eight young people with learning disabilities and physical disabilities. It provides short break care and some longer term residential placements.

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 **outstanding**.

Young people make excellent progress in the home and thrive as a result of the consistent, supportive and nurturing environment. They receive individualised child-focused care and their needs are central to practice at the home. All children, whether part of a short break package of care, or permanently living at the home make exceptional progress. Staff demonstrate an exceptionally good understanding of young people's personalities, needs, interest and strengths.

Staff are passionate and committed to providing high quality care and providing opportunities for young people to make progress. This promotes positive outcomes, particularly when bearing in mind their individual starting points. Staff receive excellent training, support and guidance and are skilled and competent in caring for young people with complex needs.

Monitoring of the service is robust. A highly effective management team is keen to obtain the views of all stakeholders and use this feedback to contribute to a cycle of continuous improvement. A parent commented, 'Staff are brilliant, management are very understanding and accommodating. The home is welcoming and friendly and nothing is ever too much trouble.'

Young people clearly show they feel safe and well cared for at the home. They have trusting relationships with staff enabling them to build their confidence and self-esteem. Young people are happy and safe at the home and feel valued as individuals. Parents report that young people look forward to and love their short

breaks. Young people who responded to a survey stated they feel safe at the home.

Young people benefit from living in a home where their views, feelings and welfare is central to practice. Staff seek out their opinions in a number of ways, both formally and informally using a variety of communication methods to ensure each young person's needs and views are taken into account.

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **outstanding**.

Many young people benefit from individualised, consistent support, which has helped them grow in confidence and self-esteem. Trusting, nurturing relationships with staff allow young people to feel safe and supported so they are able to accept staff support and achieve progress and development in their daily living skills and personal growth. In a short period of time, the behaviour of young people has improved as a result of clear and effective behaviour management strategies.

Young people develop skills and confidence by accessing a wide range of new experiences. Staff encourage them to take part in positive, enriching activities in the community. Staff give careful and sensitive support to enable young people to access activities and have a choice in participating. Bearing in mind their starting points, some young people have made significant progress in developing their social skills and confidence. For example, where young people have been unable to cope with group activities are now successfully participating in excursions with a number of young people and staff.

Robust health care plans ensure the complex needs of young people are identified. Specific strategies are in place to meet each young person's health needs, allowing them to thrive and begin to manage and understand their personal health needs. The home works closely with specialist health professionals to ensure they provide the highest standards of care for each young person. As a result of in-depth, focused planning and management, young people have shown significant improvement in their specific medical conditions since accessing the home.

Young people have excellent attendance at school and make significant progress with their education. Professionals comment that young people's learning is improved by the care they receive and parents and carers report that young people are given help with school work. Good communication between the home and young people's schools ensures educational outcomes improve, especially when bearing in mind their starting points and disabilities. Shared practice supports consistency in meeting the individual's needs and educational outcomes.

The home welcomes parents and carers to the home and they are fully involved in young people's care. Parents are included in decision making processes and transition plans when young people leave the home and move to an adult placement. Young people benefit from the close liaison with families, enabling them to maintain

and sustain appropriate and meaningful family relationships. A parent commented, 'Staff are brilliant and they are always happy to discuss things.'

Young people make exceptional progress in developing independence and daily living skills. The emphasis is on young people doing as much as they can for themselves. Through small, achievable targets, young people develop skills to look after themselves. Young people have made progress in relation to their personal care and in daily living skills to the extent that some young people can now make their own breakfast.

Quality of care

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

The highly committed and competent staff team ensure young people's well-being is at the centre of their practice. Young people thrive and gain confidence as they develop trusting relationships with staff enabling them to feel safe and secure. Interactions are caring and supportive and young people clearly enjoy spending time with staff. Staff value each young person's views and opinions and they are consistent in promoting choice and support to meet young people's individual needs. Staff know all the young people very well and are sensitive to how each young person communicates so they understand each young person's choices and preferences. An advocate visits the home twice a week to consult with young people and promote their views and opinions. A parent commented in the consultation survey, 'The best part of the service is trusting everyone.' Another commented, 'Staff should be praised very highly for the care they offer.'

Young people's care plans are extremely comprehensive documents. These 'All About Me' care plans provide a distinct picture of the young person as an individual. Each young person's character, personality and specific identity is evident. Equality and diversity is threaded through all aspects of their care provision. The plans show in detail how staff should support a young person and what strategies need to be in place to help young people grow and progress. Staff update these plans regularly. The plans contain short-term targets to focus staff support and allow young people to make progress. These care plans are highly individualised, written from the young person's perspective and provide a clear picture for staff of each young people's specific needs and vulnerabilities.

Care planning takes full account of the health needs of each young person. Detailed strategies, compiled with the expert advice of specialist health professionals where necessary, enable staff to provide highly competent health care to meet young people's, often complex, health needs. Staff encourage young people's understanding of a healthy lifestyle through eating a nutritious diet and enjoying physical activities. Staff are well trained and competent having received comprehensive training in key areas such as moving and handling, first aid, food safety, administration of medication and specific health care related training to meet the individual needs of young people accessing the service. Regular and robust monitoring is in place to ensure staff administer medication safely to protect the

welfare of young people.

Staff fully recognise the value of education. Young people gain from living in an environment where staff promote and celebrate their progress and attendance at school. Education is embedded in the culture of the home with staff fostering excellent communication and liaison with schools to ensure young people experience consistent strategies.

Young people enjoy staying in a home that is welcoming and safe. Spacious areas allow young people to have quiet time and enable staff to provide a range of activities to meet the needs of young people and provide choice. The home is well maintained with an on-going programme of decoration and refurbishment. A well-equipped outside play area provides an additional resource for young people to have fun.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

An excellent culture of safety ensures young people are as safe as possible. Staff implement effective arrangements to protect young people and their safety is of paramount importance. High staff ratios, comprehensive risk assessments and individualised care planning contribute to safeguarding young people. Young people are happy and relaxed within the home and look forward to their stay. Young people observed, clearly trust staff and feel comfortable around them. Parents report that staff make sure young people are safe at the home.

All staff are appropriately trained in safeguarding and child protection procedures and display a sound understanding of key safeguarding issues. Young people do not leave the home without permission.

Staff are aware of and understand each young person's specific vulnerability and plan their care accordingly. Care plans and risk assessments highlight any problematic or challenging behaviour. These plans guide staff to respond sensitively and appropriately to young people in line with their abilities, understanding and needs. Staff are constantly aware of subtle changes in young people's mood and behaviour and react promptly and perceptively to support the young person. Physical intervention is extremely rare though staff receive training to apply intervention techniques safely where necessary.

Excellent health and safety measures protect young people and staff from the risk of harm. All required tests and servicing takes place and maintenance issues are addressed promptly. Appropriate fire safety measures are in place. Staff methodically assess activities to identify potential hazards in relation to individual young people, which may cause harm. A comprehensive recruitment process ensures staff do not work with young people unless all the required checks have been completed.

Leadership and management

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

The home is managed to an outstanding level with a consistently effective management team providing excellent leadership. The Registered Manager successfully manages two homes. Staff report extremely positively on her leadership, support and availability for advice and guidance. The Registered Manager, supported by an experienced and highly competent deputy manager, leads an enthusiastic staff team who are committed to providing excellent standards of care and strive for continuous improvement. No requirements or recommendations were made at the last inspection. Continuous improvement is evident in developments since the last inspection. The home has recruited new staff to ensure there are sufficient staff in place to meet the needs of young people without using agency staff. This ensures young people experience consistency in the staff who work with them thus promoting trusting, positive relationships. The activity programme, during the summer holidays, was well planned and organised enabling young people to benefit from a wide range of new experiences. Areas of the home have been redecorated with new flooring, curtains and furniture. Young people now have more frequent access to an advocate.

The home continually seeks to improve the service. Questionnaires are given to young people, parents, professionals and staff to obtain their views, which inform the Registered Manager's analysis of the home's strengths and weaknesses and the content of the development plan. The objectives in the development plan subsequently provide staff with targets in their annual appraisal, ensuring new initiatives to improve the service are implemented.

The Statement of Purpose accurately reflects the services the home offers and is updated regularly to ensure all information is correct. A parent commented, 'The home has met my expectations and more.' The home has not received any complaints since the last inspection. A parent in the consultation survey commented that, 'Staff are always willing to listen and work with us.'

The home has thorough systems for monitoring and evaluating the service, which enhances the quality of care provided. Senior staff have monthly task sheets that review all aspects of the operation of the home and combine to form a robust quality assurance system. Monthly external reports, which are of a high quality, add further value to the monitoring system. The Registered Manager has improved the six monthly report, which is sent to Ofsted. This is now comprehensive, detailed and evaluative and encourages consideration and reflection of practice.

The stability of the team and staff morale is high. Staff say they are well supported and supervised alongside receiving excellent training which ensures they can skilfully and effectively facilitate the progress of children.

Good quality records are clear, comprehensive and up to date and contribute to a very good understanding of young people's lives. All notifications relating to the

protection of children are reported to the relevant authorities and appropriate action is taken.

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.