

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	25/09/2012
Inspector	Pete Hylton
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	22/02/2012
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This children's home is operated by an independent provider. The provider organisation is a registered charity and is a major provider of services for adults and children with learning disabilities and mental health issues.

This home provides respite care for more than 40 children and young people with learning and physical difficulties, and often complex health care needs, accommodating a maximum of four at any one time. The children and young people are aged between six and 19 years.

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 **adequate**.

Relationships between young people and staff are excellent. Young people enjoy using the service and spending time with staff and their friends. All young people are making good progress as a result of staying at the home and the views of parents, carers and social workers are complimentary. The physical environment is well maintained, decorated and appropriately resourced to meet the needs of young people.

Young people are cared for by a committed and enthusiastic staff team. Their often complex individual needs are met through detailed and regularly-reviewed care plans. Complaints about the service are rare. When they do occur, they are not always appropriately recorded although the acting manager ensures that all complaints are swiftly resolved. The home is meeting the aims and objectives of its Statement of Purpose. However, the experience and qualifications of the staff team are missing from this document. Similarly, the young person's guide is missing the contact details for the Children's Rights Director and Ofsted.

The management of the home is not wholly effective. The training needs of staff are not fully met and not all staff are appropriately trained in physical intervention. There have been no restraints since the last inspection so this shortfall has not negatively impacted on young people. However, there is the potential for harm to young people

should they display challenging or unsafe behaviours. Staff recruitment is appropriately conducted. The acting manager ensures that steps are taken to safeguard young people. However, not all concerns relating to child protection have been notified (in line with regulation) to the local authority or to Ofsted.

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
4 (2001)	compile in relation to the children's home a written statement (in these Regulations referred to as "the statement of purpose") which shall consist of a statement as to the matters listed in Schedule 1 (Regulation 4(1))	26/10/2012
16 (2001)	ensure that the paragraph under paragraph (1)(b) shall in particular provide for the prompt referral to the local authority in whose area the children's home is situated, of any allegation of abuse or neglect affecting any child accommodated in the children's home (Regulation 16(2)(b))	26/10/2012
24 (2001)	ensure that a written record is made of any complaint, the action taken in response, and the outcome of the investigation (Regulation 24(5))	26/10/2012
27 (2001)	ensure that all persons employed receive appropriate training (Regulation 27(4)(a))	26/10/2012
30 (2001)	ensure that if, in relation to a children's home, any of the events listed in column 1 of the table in Schedule 5 takes place, the registered person shall without delay notify the persons indicated in respect of the event in column 2 of the table. (Regulation 30(1))	26/10/2012

Recommendations

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

- ensure that the guide includes the contact details for the Children's Rights Director and Ofsted (NMS 13.5)
- ensure that there is an emergency escape plan that all staff and children are familiar with and have practised so they know what to do in an emergency. (NMS 10.9)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people are encouraged to develop their social skills and they make good progress in this regard. A parent commented that their child was, 'able to socialise with other young people.' Young people enjoy spending time with their friends. Regular trips out ensure that all young people are able to participate in a broad range of activities and that they are actively involved in the local community. All young people using the service are engaged in educational activities and maintain excellent attendance. Regular communication between schools, parents, carers and social workers ensures that the progress is discussed and any concerns are acted upon. A parent commented that their child was, 'definitely making progress as a result of staying at the service.' Another parent commented that, 'I have been gobsmacked with the good progress she has made with her eating.'

Where young people are able to share their views, they are fully supported in doing so. Regular consultation with young people, their parents, carers and social workers ensures that care plans reflect the needs, preferences and wishes of young people. A social worker commented that, 'children's rights and views are sought.' Young people are encouraged to develop an understanding of their life history and photographs are used to help young people reflect on their experiences at the home and the progress that they are making. The staff team ensure that young people, parents, carers and social workers are able to recognise and celebrate the good progress that young people are making.

Young people are encouraged to develop their independence skills in line with their age, understanding and ability. For example, specially adapted equipment means that young people are able to take part in cooking and other domestic tasks. Young people benefit from an environment that is fully adapted to their needs. A bathroom used by young people has sensory equipment installed. Young people are able to complete their personal care routines in a calm, safe and well designed environment. The health needs of young people are carefully identified and met. All young people receive appropriate support for their varying needs, and concerns are quickly shared and resolved. Young people are encouraged to follow healthy lifestyles and no young people engage in risk taking or dangerous behaviour.

Quality of care

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

Young people are cared for by an enthusiastic and caring staff team. They enjoy staying at the home and spending time with staff and their peers. The needs of the young people are fully considered when planning respite stays. For example, where young people have formed friendship groups, stays are coordinated and planned in advance. This ensures that young people are able to sustain and develop their friendships with their peers. Parents and carers are welcome to contact their child at any time and the staff team ensure that regular contact is maintained.

Highly personalised care plans ensure that the individual and often complex needs of young people are fully identified and met. Young people are, where appropriate to do so, fully involved in identifying their personal care needs. Where young people are unable to share their views or wishes, the staff team liaise closely with parents, carers and placing authorities. Young people receive appropriate care at all times and care plans are continually reviewed. A social worker commented that the, 'staff are very capable in meeting complex needs.'

Young people are encouraged and supported to maintain their faiths and beliefs whilst at the home. Highly effective support from the staff ensures that young people are able to regularly attend places of worship, maintain their prayer routines and follow specific cultural diets. A social worker commented that, 'staff are good at respecting different cultures and religions.'

Young people using the service have a range of medical needs and the staff are well trained in the safe handling and administration of medicines. All medication is regularly audited and securely stored. A parent commented that, 'medication arrangements are rigorous.' Meals provided for young people are healthy, balanced and nutritious. The individual tastes and preferences of young people are fully considered in planning menus. Young people are encouraged to develop their social skills at mealtimes in the home and where appropriate, are encouraged to eat together. A parent commented that, 'staff work hard to encourage my child to eat with other young people.'

Young people are encouraged to complain if they wish to. The home has a complaints policy for young people and an appropriately designed guide is available for young people to access. A young person's guide gives further information about how to complain and the services that the home offers. However, this guide does not include the contact details for the Children's Rights Director or Ofsted.

The home is pleasantly decorated and well appointed. Young people enjoy playing in the garden and spending time in the light sensory room. The preferences of young people are fully considered when preparing their bedrooms. The staff team ensure that young people's favourite toys, pictures and other personal items are ready for their stay. This helps to settle young people in the environment and ensures that they feel comfortable, relaxed and happy in their surroundings. The staff team provide a variety of engaging and purposeful activities for young people. A social worker commented that the staff are, 'excellent at providing social opportunities, such as ice skating and outwards bound type activities.' A parent commented that the service is, 'very active, they do lots of trips out.'

Safeguarding children and young people

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

All young people have clear and detailed risk assessments and this ensures that individual vulnerabilities are identified and planned for. The home does not use

restraint or sanctions to manage the behaviour of young people. Incidents of challenging behaviour are extremely rare. The recording systems used by the home are appropriate and allow for detailed recording of incidents, should they occur. Similarly, young people do not experience any form of bullying in the home and high staffing ratios ensure that young people are appropriately supervised at all times. The physical environment is appropriately secure and young people do not go missing from the home. All staff are trained in safeguarding and know how to respond to concerns about the safety or welfare of young people.

Safe and appropriate recruitment practice means that all prospective staff are subject to appropriate checks before employment. The acting manager ensures that staff files are up to date and contain all required information. This ensures that young people are cared for by adults who are suitable and do not pose risks to their welfare. Where concerns over staff arise, the organisation takes immediate actions to minimise the potential risks to young people. However, a failure to notify relevant parties means that the local authority and Ofsted have been unable to monitor and review all incidents of concern in the home.

All required checks on electrical and gas installations are completed regularly. Young people live in an environment that is safe and meets their often complex needs. Mobility equipment, such as hoists, are regularly serviced and checked. This ensures that the safety of young people is promoted at all times. The risk of fire is minimised through regular checking and testing of all fire fighting and detection equipment. Several fire drills have taken place since the last inspection. However, these drills have all taken place during the day. This means that young people and staff are not fully practiced in safe evacuation at different times, for example in early morning and evening. A recommendation has therefore been made

Leadership and management

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

At the last inspection in February 2012, one requirement and one recommendation were made. The acting manager is currently in the process of applying for registration with Ofsted and the monitoring systems in the home have improved. The requirement and recommendation from the last inspection are therefore met.

The home is meeting its aims and objectives in the Statement of Purpose. However, the experience and qualifications of the staff team are missing from this document. This shortfall does not impact on young people. The acting manager's development plan ensures that planned changes to the service are clearly identified and regularly reviewed. The acting manager demonstrates awareness of the home's strengths and weaknesses. Quality assurance systems have improved in the home and regular reviews of the quality of care are evaluated by the acting manager. Young people's care plans are regularly audited by the management team and this ensures that information is accurately recorded and up to date. All records relating to young people are securely stored and kept safe from unauthorised access. The home is regularly visited by the organisation and reports from these visits are used to further

improve the service.

The acting manager is in the process of developing a more robust system for monitoring the training needs of staff. However, not all staff are up to date with restraint training. This means that young people are cared for by staff who may not be appropriately skilled in managing challenging behaviour. There have been no incidents of restraint in the home since the last inspection. This has not negatively impacted on young people. However, there is the potential for young people to be at risk if they display challenging or unsafe behaviour.

Complaints from young people, parents, carers and placing authorities are rare. Where they do occur, the acting manager ensures that action is taken to address any shortfalls in the home's service. A parent commented, 'if you have concerns, the manager will sort them out.' However, written records of complaints are often incomplete and missing required information. The actions taken in response and outcome of the complaint are not always recorded on the home's written record. Furthermore, where parents and carers raise concerns, these are not always recorded. The acting manager is therefore unable to effectively review complaints and demonstrate full compliance with the regulations. Notifications to appropriate bodies regarding safeguarding concerns do not always take place. This is a further weakness in the home's management.

Regular checks by the acting manager ensure that the home is well maintained. The home is well presented and adequately resourced for the often complex needs of young people. Relationships with partner agencies are positive and the home is actively engaged in the local community. The acting manager has developed positive relationships with the police, neighbours and placing authorities.

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.