

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	05/01/2012
Inspector	Clare Davies
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	25/08/2011
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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 progress made by the provider since the last full inspection, identifies any further strengths, any areas for improvement and makes judgements as outlined in the *Inspection of children's homes – framework for inspection (March 2011)*.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Good progress	The children's home has demonstrated continued improvement in quality of care and outcomes for children and young people and where appropriate has addressed all requirements and the large majority of recommendations that were raised at the previous inspection.
Satisfactory progress	The children's home has maintained quality of care and outcomes for children and young people and where appropriate has addressed all requirements and the majority of recommendations that were raised at the previous inspection.
Inadequate progress	The children's home has failed to address one or more requirements and/or has not met the majority of recommendations and/or the quality of care and outcomes for children and young people have declined since the last full inspection.

Service information

Brief description of the service

This service offers short breaks for up to eight children and young people of either sex between the ages of five and seventeen who have a severe learning and physical disability and/or complex health needs. Generally, short breaks are offered to families twice a month; this can vary according to individual needs.

This service is provided by a local authority and is available to families from across the county.

Progress

Since their previous inspection the service is judged to be making **satisfactory** progress.

The overall effectiveness of this service was judged outstanding at the full inspection in August 2011. No requirements or recommendations were made at the full inspection and this inspection identifies satisfactory progress.

There have been significant changes within the management structure since October 2011 when the Registered Manager and deputy left together. Several experienced staff also left and the service has demonstrated its commitment to the children and young people in their care by maintaining the high standards that were noted in the full inspection. An experienced senior member of staff is deputising to manage the service in the interim whilst waiting for a new manager. This ensures continuity of care for children and young people and leadership from an established member of staff.

With the support of external managers and the staff team, the deputy has maintained the service extremely well, ensuring that children and young people continue to enjoy their short break care. All vacant posts have now been filled and a new manager appointed to commence shortly. Safer recruitment practices are adopted by this provider and there have been no compromises to recruit quickly. Indeed, this provider is very thorough requesting three references to check suitability; this ensures that the safeguarding of vulnerable children and young people is paramount.

New staff report that they are supported well and follow a comprehensive induction. They are able to work alongside experienced staff members, shadowing their activities in the care of the children and young people before taking responsibilities themselves. This ensures that the new staff have the confidence and skills to deliver the care required and are gradually introduced to the children and young people.

There is a thoughtful and attentive approach to planning the short breaks. This

ensures that children and young people with particular needs are matched to the staff with the skills and training to care for them. For example, some staff have received training on managing certain medical conditions. This level of skill ensures that children and young people are cared for safely as directed by medical practitioners thereby re-assuring parents.

Staff report that training is readily available for all aspects of their work and during this inspection many staff were attending training regarding the management of challenging behaviour. Detailed records are made of the types of intervention undertaken ensuring a safe environment for children and young people. The experienced staff know the children and young people very well and can quickly identify what triggers certain behaviours. The emphasis is on distraction to divert attention from negative behaviour to engage in a purposeful activity. Children and young people enjoy their short break experience and benefit from the many resources on site such as; a sensory room, a soft play area and hydrotherapy in the hot tub.

Parents are made aware of the complaints procedure and an advocate visits regularly to ensure children and young people's views are gathered independently. Complaints have been promptly dealt with ensuring a satisfactory outcome. An external manager visits monthly to monitor the service and quality of care. The last report of this visit has not yet been received within the home neither has it been received by Ofsted, therefore a recommendation has been made to this effect.

With the changes to the management of this home, the deputy and staff team have worked hard to ensure that the children and young people continue to experience good outcomes during their short breaks.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- ensure that the registered provider's written report of a visit carried out under Regulation 33 is lodged in the home for the manager and staff to read and to respond. (NMS 21.8)