

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Trevor Hall
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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.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcome for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and relevant National Minimum Standards for the establishment.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding:	this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality
Good:	this aspect of the provision is strong
Satisfactory:	this aspect of the provision is sound
Inadequate:	this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Service information

Brief description of the service

This home is operated by a local authority as part of its residential provision for children with disabilities. The home is registered as a children's home for up to six young people at any one time and offers respite care only for children and young people with severe learning and/or physical disabilities. Young people of either gender, between the ages of five and 18 years can use this respite care facility. Periods of respite vary according to individually assessed needs and only apply for 43 weekends a year and for five weeks scattered through the school holidays. Currently there are over 20 children and young people using the service throughout the year. When inspected the home was fully occupied, with six young people in residence, none of which were able to take an active part in the inspection process.

The unit is on the ground floor of a two-storey, detached building which was purpose-built originally as a children's home. The upstairs accommodation is used by an area social worker team attached to the Disability Services Team.

The centre is situated within a short bus ride of local amenities and has a large, soft floored outside garden and a play area suitable for those who use a wheelchair. The rear of the centre has views over open land and is not overlooked. There are off road car parking facilities at the front of the building.

Summary

This announced full inspection concentrated on key national minimum standards focusing on all outcome areas. How staffing and management arrangements support the operation of the home and the capacity of the home to ensure all children and young people have equal access to services and equality of opportunity is also considered.

The home is judged as good. Young people are receiving an excellent level of care and support because staff are enthusiastic and well informed about their needs and circumstances. The home demonstrates a strong commitment to ensuring the young people are able to enjoy their lives and achieve their potential. Young people, receive high quality respite care, where good individual support is available and their health and well-being is seen as paramount.

The overall quality rating is good.

This is an overview of what the inspector found during the inspection.

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the home was last inspected the number of staff holding a National Vocational Qualification in Caring for Children and Young People at level 3 or above has risen to over the 80% required by the national minimum standards.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Staff ensure young people are healthy through providing a good diet, ensuring their personal hygiene needs are met and through appropriate infection controls being in place. Prior to every period of respite care staff engage with young people, their parents or carers about a range of

issues to ensure that they are aware of the individual health needs of each young person and how these needs can be best met.

Young people enjoy healthy, nutritious meals that meet their dietary and health needs. The home employs specialist catering staff who have appropriate qualifications and experience in providing the variety of specialist diets required by the young people. Many staff have undertaken specialist training in assisting young people at mealtimes and great emphasis is placed on making mealtimes an enjoyable activity.

Menu records confirm that each young person is provided with a balanced diet based upon their own preferences and in line with their particular medical needs. These records demonstrate that staff have a clear understanding of what constitutes a healthy and nutritious diet.

All staff complete training in basic food hygiene as part of the core training. Health issues that relate to ethnicity, race, sexuality, faith and belief are fully assessed in respect of each young person and are respected by the staff team.

Good systems are in place to receive medication from and update medical history's with parents or carers at the start of each episode of respite care. Equally good systems are in place to enable the safe return of medication and to inform parents and carers of any medical issues that have arisen during the young people's stay at the home. All young people are registered with the required health professionals and staff are proactive in gathering health information if the need should arise.

Relevant information is obtained from a range of sources to ensure the home is fully informed about the health and emotional needs of young people. Young people are able to access appropriate services because staff are quick to respond to changing needs and circumstances. Young people's health needs are being well promoted through the range of medical services that have been accessed.

Communication systems in the home are strong; this ensures that key information is used and shared to shape the delivery of the care provided. Young people benefit from these arrangements because they experience a service that is entirely focused on their needs. The home's Registered Manager is passionate about the service that she and her team provide and ensures that each young person's needs are the focus of the care that is delivered.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

The home provides an environment that is safe and secure and which provides good arrangements for the promotion, protection and care of children and young people. Staff implement procedures to keep information confidential and respect children and young people's right to privacy.

Information held on behalf of all young people is correctly stored in lockable facilities. Staff are aware of their responsibilities to promote privacy and confidentiality and their practice is consistent with the local authorities policies and procedures. The facilities and arrangements for showering and bathing ensure the young people's privacy and dignity is not unnecessarily compromised. The home has good policies in respect of staff entering young people's bedrooms and for conducting searches of these rooms if it is necessary to do so.

Due to the level of staffing, supervision of the young people and their disabilities, bullying behaviour is not an issue within the home. Staff provide regular and specific feedback to young people about their behaviour with a clear focus on setting fair and reasonable boundaries. Young people are assisted to understand what is expected of them and they are rewarded for good behaviour. Very few formal sanctions or physical interventions are used in the home's behaviour management strategies. Staff focus on the positives; young people are given many chances to adjust and improve inappropriate behaviours, staff are patient and listen to young people. Young people spend limited time together, they are well supervised, their days are well planned giving them opportunities to take part in a variety of activities.

None of the young people currently using the service have a history of going missing. Due to their individual needs and vulnerability young people do not go off the premises alone. There are, however, appropriate policies and procedures in place to ensure staff know what to do if such a situation did arise.

The welfare of young people is promoted by a clear robust complaints policy. There is an effective system in place to record any concerns made known by young people, their families or carers. The organisation ensures staff are equipped and trained with the knowledge and understanding to fulfil their role and responsibilities regarding protection and safeguarding. The procedures in the home fully comply with the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures.

Young people live in a home that provides for their physical safety and security. Close supervision of young people is an important and a prominent feature in the way staff manage perceived risks and the young people's vulnerability. A strong focus is also given to management of their health and safety. There are appropriate risk assessments for all aspects of the safety of the premises and grounds.

The records kept in the home show that robust procedures are in place to protect young people from fire. All the fire systems are tested regularly. Staff and young people undertake fire drills as required. Relevant certificates show that regular servicing and maintenance is completed on all equipment. Certificates of Public and Employer liability are displayed as required.

The home's manager ensures that utilities, domestic equipment are checked to ensure they are safe to use. The safety and welfare of the residents is taken seriously and young people live in a home which is generally both physically safe and secure.

The home has robust procedures in place for the monitoring of visitors to the home. Staff personnel files were not available on the inspection date, as they are held centrally at the human resources department. The local authority has a clearly defined recruitment process. This protects young people by ensuring that all of the national minimum standards are met, prior to any staff member being deployed into any of their homes. A written record of this process is maintained for inspection and is followed in respect of all staff currently employed.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people receive an excellent level of individual support that meets their specific and diverse needs. A range of detailed plans are in place, so that staff can make sure that young people's needs are being met. There is good communication within the team and all staff are

kept informed of each individual's progress through care planning and staff team meetings. This ensures that young people receive consistency in the care and support they are given.

The home is well supplied with specialist equipment to ensure that all young people have their needs met safely. Staff know young people well and are able to respond to them in a way that considers and respects them as individuals. External services are requested as necessary to meet the needs of individual young people.

As this home, provides very short-term respite care, weekends and three day stays during some school holidays, it does not need to reflect the degree of educational support and planning one would expect in a facility that replaces a young person's home. All young people who attend this home for respite do have appropriate education placements, however, these are supported by the young people's parents and carers and as such fall outside of the remit of the home.

Whilst enjoying respite at the home the young people are encouraged to make use of the centres specialist equipment and to undertake interesting and enjoyable activities. These activities are based around young peoples interests and specific abilities. They are appropriately risk assessed and staff have specific policies and procedures, particularly in respect of medication and safety, in respect of taking the young people out on visits or activities.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Each young person, prior to their first respite stay, has a respite care plan agreed, that identifies the needs of the young person and how the care for that young person will be implemented. Young people are allocated a key worker, who is responsible for liaising with parents and carers ensuring that the young person's needs are met. This helps young people to build a positive and rewarding relationship with their carers and promote their individual needs. It also ensures that young people have their needs planned for and reviewed effectively. Written in-house information about them is current, informative and clear.

Staff work in partnership with parents or those with parental responsibility to provide care that meets the needs of their child. Staff are alert and responsive to the different ways that the young people communicate. The home produces detailed information about the progress and development of each young person, this is sent to social workers and parents regularly contributes to formal review meetings. Young people (where able) are involved in contributing to their reviews, this enables young people to influence plans for their future. Staff actively encourage and support contact to people significant in young people's lives, that matches the placing authority's agreement.

Staff respect and value equality and diversity, this is clearly shown throughout the young people's in-house placement plans that their individual needs are identified and addressed. Staff have a proactive approach to working with parents, external agencies, social workers and other professionals. Consequently, all young people receive the individualised care they need.

Significant time is taken to build relationships between the staff and the young people. The interactions between staff and young people reveal that the home continues to provide a relaxed setting where the involvement of children is used to positively shape the nature of the care provided.

Staff meeting minutes demonstrate that issues with young people are dealt with using a consistent, safety conscious approach within clearly agreed parameters. The home's general records continue to support the view that staff are enabled to offer realistic boundaries, be consistent in practice and promote the welfare of each young person in a positive manner.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

The home is a purpose built, large modern unit with a small front area which provides car parking for several cars. There is also a parking area to the side of the centre, however, this is fenced off and can be used as a hard play area by the young people. There is a large, safe rear garden with country views, that includes a newly created sensory garden. This outside play area contains a wide range of young people's games, toys and play areas.

Internally the residential unit occupies the ground floor and has several bright and cheerful communal and quiet areas. Bedrooms are all a good size with televisions fitted to wall brackets for safety. There is wheelchair access and a large recently re-furnished bathroom fitted with mobility aids. Since the last inspection considerable redecoration and refurbishment has taken place; sensory wall plaques and quiet play areas have been introduced.

The location of the home offers access to public transport, good road links and leisure facilities. There are no known outstanding requirements from environmental health or the fire service. The home has an ongoing maintenance plan to ensure that it continues to provide suitable and safe accommodation for the young people living there.

Overall, this is a homely and comfortable care setting which is decorated and furnished to a very good standard which creates a good living environment. The home provides the right environment to ensure the social and personal needs of each young person are being met.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Young people are benefiting from using a service that is outstandingly well managed and well-organised. This level of management oversight directly impacts on the excellent care practice of the home and the good outcomes that both young people and their families experience. The home has guidance and procedures for staff and has established systems in place to monitor the operation of the home and to improve quality of care. These systems include regular visits from representatives of the local authority and elected members through to the manager's own monitoring activities.

Young people, parents, carers and staff have access to a Statement of Purpose and young people's guide, which outlines the principles, practice and the services that they can expect from the home. Both the Statement of Purpose and young people's guide have been reviewed since the last inspection and efforts are in hand to try to make both of these documents more accessible to the young people.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Young people's care records provide detailed information about the support they need for their individual and different needs and this information is reflected in other planning documents. There is a range of examples where young people's individual needs, including cultural needs, are met and where they are supported to

explore their identity. Staff present as positive role models, treating all people with respect, and they welcome difference. Young people are provided with various opportunities to experience and learn about other people's differences in terms of race, religion, culture, sex, age and disability.

There is a clear staffing structure with clear lines of accountability in the home. The Registered Manager provides appropriate leadership to the staff team and young people. She is actively involved in the day to day operation of the home and has clear expectations that the staff team will achieve the best possible outcomes for all young people in their care. The home has clear deputising arrangements in her absence.

Staff confirm they undertake a wide range of training to meet the complex needs of the young people they care for. All staff receive supervision from a senior member of staff each month, which supports them to undertake their roles and increase their knowledge and competence. New members of staff receive fortnightly supervision and are supported through an induction programme. Regular team meetings are held, which ensures that the staff team understand priorities for working with young people and a consistent approach is delivered. The home now meets the requirement for more than 80% of staff to hold a National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in caring for Children and Young People.

There are appropriate systems in place to monitor the daily lives of the young people currently living in the home. Regulation 33 visits are undertaken monthly to monitor the overall care and welfare of the young people. The manager also undertakes quality monitoring of all the files and records as required.

The individual records for the young people in the home are very comprehensive, their needs, development and progress are recorded to reflect their individuality. The promotion of their equality and diversity is outstanding. They contain a range of information about young people's history and progress, which matches the requirements set out in Schedule 3 of the Children's Homes Regulations 2001.

What must be done to secure future improvement?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions, which must be taken so that the registered person meets the Care Standards Act 2000, The Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

Standard	Action	Due date
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Recommendations

There are no recommendations.