

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC033120
Inspector	Tracy Murty
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Luton Borough Council
Registered person address	Luton Borough Council, Town Hall George Street LUTON LU1 2BQ
Responsible individual	Joanne Fisher
Registered manager	Christine Marie Ali
Date of last inspection	13/02/2014

Inspection date	14/10/2014
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Previous inspection	satisfactory progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	None

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	adequate
Outcomes for children and young people	good
Quality of care	good
Keeping children and young people safe	adequate
Leadership and management	adequate

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	adequate
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At the last interim inspection of this service in February 2014, the home was judged to be making satisfactory progress.

The Registered Manager has ensured that all measures of control and restraints are now fully recorded with all necessary details. She has ensured that copies of management reports have been sent to Ofsted for consideration. She has also put into place a system to monitor and track all incidents of challenging behaviour for each young person accessing the service. This now enables the staff team to reflect and learn to inform future practice. The requirements and recommendation made at the last inspection have been fully met.

Young people receiving short breaks at this home enjoy a wide range of fun and stimulating experiences during their stays. Parents and involved agencies spoken with during this inspection speak very highly of the quality of care and improved outcomes for young people. Parents report high levels of satisfaction at the care provided to their children during their stays and praise the staff team for their dedication and excellent communication skills.

The staff team works hard to ensure that each young person receives personalised and well-planned care. They demonstrate a detailed awareness and understanding

of the complex needs of the young people and how these should be met. This includes meeting their often complex health and communication needs. Young people are consulted on in relation to menus, activities and have also recently been involved in staff recruitment.

A number of shortfalls have been identified as a result of this inspection. Managers have failed to ensure that risk assessments and care plans are regularly updated to reflect the current needs of some young people. Not all records relating to young people are up-to-date. Not all staff have a current first aid qualification and have not received all relevant training to enhance their skills and competence. The Registered Manager does not have a service specific missing child policy in place. There is also no development plan in place for the service. Staff receive regular supervision, but the duration of each supervision session has not been clearly recorded for all members of staff.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This home provides short-break care and accommodation for five young people. A local authority owns and operates this setting.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/02/2014	Interim	satisfactory progress
15/10/2013	Full	good
31/01/2013	Interim	good progress
30/07/2012	Full	adequate

What does the children's home need to do to improve further?

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
23 (2001)	ensure that any activities in which children participate are so far as reasonably practicable free from avoidable risks. This is with specific reference to the need to ensure that risk assessments are up-to-date at all times for all children for community based activities (Regulation 23(b))	08/12/2014
28 (2001)	ensure that records relating to children are kept up to date. This is with specific reference to short break care plans, health care plans and risk assessments (Regulation 28(1)(b))	08/12/2014
27 (2001)	ensure that all persons employed receive appropriate training. This is with specific reference to the need for staff to receive training on sexual	08/12/2014

	exploitation and regular first aid refresher training (Regulation 27(4)(a))	
11 (2001)	ensure that proper provision is made for the safeguarding of children. This is with specific reference to the need to update risk assessments and provide adequate staff support to children, when out in the community (Regulation 11(1)(a))	08/12/2014
16 (2001)	prepare and implement a missing child policy and undertake consultation prior to its implementation. (Regulation 16(4)(b)(5)(i))	08/12/2014

Recommendations

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

- ensure that a written record is kept by the home detailing the length of each supervision held for each member of staff (NMS 19.5)
- ensure that there is a written development plan in place, reviewed annually, for the future of the home. (NMS 15.2)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Young people develop increased confidence as a result of their stays at this home. One parent stated that their child is always happy to come for a short break and that staff have helped them to develop independence skills. The parent stated, 'the staff meet all of his needs and I sometimes think that they know him better than I do.' Young people present as confident and secure in the time they spend at this home and parents report no concerns for their welfare or safety.

Young people's health needs are recorded by the staff team and met during their stays. Not all young people have an up-to-date health care plan in place. This could adversely impact on staff being aware of their current health care needs and how these should be met. Some attempts have been made by the staff team to get health care plans updated, but this has not been consistent for all young people receiving a service. The storage and administration of medication is secure and undertaken by suitably trained and skilled members of staff.

Young people have their wishes and views taken into account by the staff team during their stays. Staff imaginatively seek young people's views on what activities they would like to take part in and what food they would like to eat. Some young people have also been included in discussions about the recruitment of new staff for the home. They were asked to contribute their views as to what makes a good member of staff. Their views have then been used to inform the recruitment and selection processes for new staff members.

Young people continue to attend their educational placements during their short break visits. Good communication exists between schools, education transport providers and the home. This enables young people to access the short break services while continuing to go to school. The staff team communicates regularly with schools, to ensure that relevant information is shared.

Young people have access to a wide range of fun and stimulating activities during their stays at this home. They go out on walks with staff, swimming, ten pin bowling, and access local shops and facilities. Some young people also attend a club run by staff at the home. This focuses on life skills and aims to help young people to develop and learn new skills. Some young people have learned how to prepare basic meals or meet some of their own personal care needs over time. One parent stated how pleased they were with how their child has learned new skills, which has helped them in their own home. Young people have access to resources and activities, which they may not have experienced before. This promotes their development and confidence over time.

A transitions manager stated how well staff work with other agencies to prepare

young people for their eventual move to adult service provisions. They praised managers and staff for ensuring that young people and their families receive the support and information they need in a timely manner about the transition. This has also included parents being invited to the home to meet with adult service providers this year.

Quality of care

good

Young people enjoy positive relationships with the staff team during their short break stays. Staff understand the complex and specific needs of each young person and ensure that they receive highly personalised care at all times. A specialist nurse praised the staff for their responses to the needs of one young person. They were very impressed that staff made a joint home visit to consider the health needs of a young person together with the family members. Staff were felt to be very obliging, helpful and keen to ensure the needs of the young person were consistently met.

Staff ensure that young people have opportunities to communicate their wishes and feelings during their short break stays. Symbols are used with young people to elicit what foods they would like to eat and what activities they would like to take part in. Staff use Widgit symbols around the house, to enable young people to communicate their wishes and feelings. Useful information on such topics as keeping safe are also displayed in symbol form for young people in communal areas of the home.

Information on how to make a complaint is provided to parents in an informative parents' information booklet. This is given to each parent when their child starts using the service. Information is also available for young people in communal areas of the home. Independent visits are made to the home every month, with the visitor considering any complaints and meeting with young people, if appropriate. This provides an independent oversight of any concerns or issues, which young people, parents or others may have. There have been no reported complaints since the last inspection and very few prior to that.

Staff work very closely with parents, schools and other involved agencies to ensure that young people have consistent care. Their health needs are considered and medication procedures clearly followed. The home is equipped with a range of specialist equipment. This enables staff to meet the complex needs of the young people, in relation to their bathing, toileting and sleeping arrangements.

Staff support young people to think about what they would like to do during their stays. Key workers spend time with young people on arrival, to identify activities they would like to participate in and arrange these. This often provides young people with opportunities, which they may not otherwise be able to experience. Staff also work hard to promote and increase life and independence skills for young people. Some young people attend a 'Monday Club'. Staff work with young people on such areas as cooking skills, tidying up and have recently made decorations for Halloween.

The staff team have also recently arranged for some young people to visit a local fire station. This provided them with a fun opportunity to meet fire staff and see the equipment used. It also provided them with a better awareness and understanding of fire safety issues. The staff also ensure that young people develop an understanding of other cultures and religions. Young people learn about festivals such as Diwali and have been involved in activities around Halloween and Easter. Staff make sure that any special dietary needs are considered and met. This includes the provision of halal foods for some young people.

Each young person has a short break care plan in place. Staff also attend and contribute to reviews of all care packages for the young people. Parents report high levels of satisfaction in how the staff provide consistent care for their children during their stays. A social worker praised the staff team for being very supportive of young people and their parents. They stated that staff not only consider the needs of a young person when on a short break stay, but proactively supports them and their families at home. This includes providing practical and emotional support to parents between stays. Some young people come to the home for tea visits only. This also provides those young people with social opportunities they may otherwise not experience.

Staff demonstrate a detailed awareness and understanding of how best to support young people with their behaviours. They understand potential triggers for young people to become agitated or upset and use distraction and other techniques to assist them. Detailed management oversight and tracking of measures of control and use of restraint also provides clear evidence as to how young people's concerning behaviours have reduced over time.

Keeping children and young people safe adequate

Young people present as feeling safe when on their short break visits. Parents spoken with during the inspection reported no concerns about the safety of their children during their stays. They feel that staff know their children well and protect them from harm at all times.

Young people each have an allocated key worker for their stays who oversee all aspects of their care. Staff display a detailed awareness of the specific and complex needs of each young person and have strategies in place to assist them with any concerning or potentially dangerous behaviours. Each young person has a range of risk assessments completed prior to using the services. Some young people's risk assessments have not been regularly updated. This could compromise the staff team's ability to ensure their safety and welfare at all times.

Risk assessments for missing from care for some young people do not contain sufficient details to assist staff in knowing how to respond, in the event that a young

person were to run off or go missing. High staffing ratios and robust security within the home and gardens prevents young people from having the opportunity to go missing within the home. Records for some young people do not reflect the specific actions staff would need to take, in the event that a young person were to run off when out on community based activities. Staff demonstrate a detailed awareness of the joint missing from care protocols. Each young person has a missing person form completed on admission, which includes a photograph of them and key information. Staff take this information out with the young person, when on community based outings and activities.

There is minimum use of physical restraint in this home. Staff use distraction and other techniques to support young people wherever possible. Recording of restraints are clear, detailed and overseen by the Registered Manager. She undertakes regular audits of all measures of control, to ensure that any patterns or trends are considered and action taken as necessary.

The selection and recruitment of staff is very comprehensive and well recorded for each member of staff. All necessary checks are undertaken, prior to new staff being offered a position in the home. This prevents unsuitable people from working in the home or having the opportunity to harm young people using the service.

Investigations into allegations have been dealt with in a timely and professional manner by the Registered Manager. Records reflect that appropriate action has been taken, with referrals being made to the local authority designated officer (LADO). Staff report feeling well supported during any investigations and are fully aware of the procedures and processes to be followed. The LADO reports no concerns in relation to how managers deal with any allegations. They state that appropriate referrals are made by the home to the LADO service and all necessary action is taken and is well recorded.

The home is physically safe and provides a warm and welcoming environment for young people to enjoy during their stays. Security is a key strength of the home, with internal keypad systems in place. This prevents very vulnerable young people from being able to leave the home without staff support and supervision. Parents report having 'peace of mind' with the security the home provides and that their children are very well supported and supervised by the staff team at all times.

Leadership and management

adequate

The Registered Manager has been in post for several years and has the qualifications and experience necessary to perform the role. There have been no reported complaints since the last inspection and the home has a good track record of responding to concerns and complaints. The identified shortfalls from the last inspection have been fully met by the Registered Manager.

The Registered Manager has failed to ensure that there is a specific development plan in place for the home, identifying the home's current operation and resources and any planned changes. The home has a clear and accessible Statement of Purpose in place, which specifies the aims and objectives of the home and what services are provided. Young people receive a guide to the services on admission, which is adapted to their specific communication needs. This clearly sets out the services provided and details of how to make a complaint and who they can contact for support. Parents also receive an information booklet, which clearly sets out the services provided.

Young people receiving a short break have regular reviews undertaken by the placing authority, to consider their care plans and make any necessary changes to them. Young people take part in such meetings with their families, dependent on their abilities. Staff fully support young people to express their wishes and feelings at their reviews. A Transitions Manager praised the staff team for imaginatively and sensitively including young people in the review processes, as well as family members. A communication book system is also in place for young people. This enables parents and staff to record information and relevant events. It is brought in with a young person and sent back to parents at the end of their short stay. Parents state that staff use this and also regularly call them to update on what their child has done during their stays. They find this level of consultation and communication very helpful, particularly for those young people who do not communicate verbally.

The staff team fully consider the diverse and complex needs of each young person receiving a short break. They ensure that special dietary needs are catered for and that the storage and preparation of halal meals is fully taken into consideration. Young people are supported and encouraged to take part in any religious or spiritual activities, which are important to them during their stays. Staff work hard to ensure that there is continuity of care for all young people during their time in the home. They fully consider the expressed wishes and feelings of both parents and young people when planning for each stay. This enables young people to feel at ease during their stays, as well as enabling them to try out new things and learn about other cultures and issues.

The home has monthly visits undertaken by an independent person. They consider all aspects of the care provided to young people and produce detailed reports on their findings. The visitor meets with young people during those visits and elicits their wishes and feelings wherever possible. Reports clearly set out recommendations for how the service could improve. Copies of reports have been sent in to Ofsted within the required timescales.

The home is very well resourced to meet the complex needs of the young people accessing services. Specialist equipment enables staff to safely and competently meet the physical needs of young people at all times. Adaptations to rooms enable young people to enjoy their short break stays and gives peace of mind to parents. One parent stated that the home provides a welcoming environment for their child and is

able to meet their complex needs at all times. They reported total satisfaction at how well the staff are able to meet the physical and emotional needs of their child during their stays. The home is decorated and furnished to a good standard throughout. Photographs of young people engaged in activities are on prominent display throughout the home. Bedrooms are well maintained and welcoming, with young people being able to bring in personal items for each stay.

Staff receive regular supervision and training opportunities and report satisfaction at the support they receive. Some staff do not have a current first aid qualification in place and report delays in being able to access the necessary refresher training. There is always a member of staff on shift who has a relevant first aid qualification and this has not had an adverse impact on the young people staying here. None of the staff team have received training in relation to sexual exploitation. There have been no reported concerns in relation to young people in this area, but it would benefit the staff team to have such training. Not all supervision sessions have the duration recorded for each member of staff.

Some records seen during this inspection are not up-to-date. Some short break and health care plans have not been reviewed or updated regularly. Some risk assessments have also not been regularly reviewed or clearly updated. There has been no adverse impact on any of the young people as a result of this shortfall.

The Registered Manager has formed positive relationships with a range of agencies, including the police and fire and rescue services. Managers have recently set up a visit for young people to the local fire station. They have also asked the local police community support officer to visit the home to meet the young people on a regular basis.

The home does not have a specific missing child policy at present. Risk assessments for some young people in relation to the potential for them going missing are not detailed or specific. Consultation has not taken place with the relevant missing persons or child sexual exploitation (CSE) police teams locally to inform such a policy. There have been no reported incidents of young people going missing or being reported to the police, but the lack of a clear and specific missing child policy and procedures undermines the home's ability to respond effectively to such situations.

What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
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.

Information 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 framework of inspection for children's homes.