

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	09/12/2015
Unique reference number	SC033127
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	North East Lincolnshire Council
Registered person address	Vulnerable Children Management Team, Western Site, Cambridge Road, Grimsby, Lincolnshire, DN34 5TD

Responsible individual	Daren Hale
Registered manager	Karen Stones
Inspector	Ann-Marie Born

Inspection date	09/12/2015
Previous inspection judgement	Improved effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Outstanding
The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceeds the standards of good. The actions of the home contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help, protection and care.	
how well children and young people are helped and protected	Outstanding
the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

SC033127

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is outstanding because:

- The home's excellent care practices ensure that children and young people's communication methods are fully understood and they feel listened to and valued.
- Children and young people have the opportunity to meet up with their friends and participate in inclusive activities in the community.
- Children and young people make outstanding progress in building self-esteem and self-confidence.
- Children and young people feel safe, are safe and are kept safe as a result of the comprehensive procedures effectively applied to protect them.
- Children and young people learn self-care and self-protection skills which safeguard them now and in their future adult lives.
- Exceptional partnership working with parents and professionals ensure children and young people receive consistent boundaries and care.

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

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 (England) Regulations 2015 and the *Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards*. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
45 (5) The system referred to in paragraph (2) must provide for ascertaining and considering the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff. (Regulation 45 (5))	21/01/2016

Recommendations

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

- Staff should be familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, Page 62, Paragraph 14.4) In particular, that behaviour management plans are updated regularly and restraint logs include all information.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This home is part of a local authority's children's disability service. It offers care for up to 11 children with a learning or physical disability.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
26/03/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
30/12/2014	Full	Outstanding
26/03/2014	Interim	Good Progress
29/10/2013	Full	Outstanding

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	outstanding
Children and young people enjoy living and attending their respite stays in a spacious, comfortable home which is fully equipped to meet all of their needs. The home is all on one level and separated in to three interconnecting units. There is easy access to the sensory room, large lounges, activity rooms and outside spaces. This provides all children and young people, whatever their physical ability, with the opportunity to avail themselves of all of the facilities. Children and young people benefit from the sense of freedom and belonging this provides. As a result they thrive within this homely and stimulating setting. A parent said, 'It is wonderful, (Name) just loves coming here. He gets to do so much.' Excellent care planning ensures that all children and young people's cultural and diverse needs are identified and met. Their communication methods are fully understood by staff who ensure they are able to participate in all activities. The sense of belonging and warmth this engenders empowers children and young people to engage fully and build trusting relationships. The genuinely caring relationships they have with staff allows children and young people to thrive. One parent reported, 'All staff treat my son as an individual and give him the care and support just as we do as his parents,' and another said, 'He has made real progress since being there. We are very happy and he trusts the place.' Children and young people make significant progress in all aspects of their lives as a result of the targeted care they receive from the diligent staff team. Close partnership working between the home and education providers allows children and young people to receive consistent messages and take pride in new skills. A social worker said, of a young person resident in the long stay unit, '(Name) has come on leaps and bounds. At home he was just sitting on a cushion, he's attending school now, and the progress he has made has been astounding.' For many children and young people building friendships and growing in social and life skills are major achievements. The consistent, constant engagement they have with staff members allows them to build the confidence and abilities to make relationships outside of their families. A staff member said, 'She has made so much progress. There has been a massive change in her behaviours since she has been here and that is down to her relationships and she idolises (Staff name).' Excellent relationships with health professionals ensures that children and young people's complex medical conditions are well met. A healthy diet and the opportunity to participate in regular physical activity enhances their general health	

and well-being. A health professional reported, 'One of the best experiences of partnership working I have ever encountered. From the greeting at reception to the staff team and children, catering and domestic team. I am unable to find any issue with them, they are exemplary and provide an absolute haven for children.'

The experienced and enthusiastic management and staff team recognise that understanding each child and young person's communication method is the key to empowering them to express their wishes and feelings. They work tirelessly to ensure they are able to do this, whether it be verbal communication, a look, signing or 'taps'. In addition, the manager and link workers will visit young people in their homes. This assists with understanding how communication takes place in the family setting and provides further support to parents. As a result children and young people feel listened to and valued because they know that what they have to say is important. A social worker reported, 'Nothing is too much trouble, I couldn't ask for more at the moment. Their approach to children is first class. All the needs of the child and their family are considered.'

Children and young people make significant progress from their starting points in line with their abilities. These range from acknowledging a visitor without prompting, learning to pour themselves a drink or being able to attend a social event with others. Each of these events are photographed and memory books created so that all can share in the achievement. The home builds successfully on all progress enabling children and young people to aspire for more. A parent wrote, 'My daughter has grown up to become a lovely young lady and most of that has happened because of the care she receives from (Home's name).'

Children, young people and their families are fully aware of the home's complaint procedures and that they can have the services of an independent advocate if they wish. There have not been any internal complaints. Following an incident in the community however a member of the public made a complaint about the behaviour of one of the young people. The management team acted promptly to satisfactorily address the complaint. They then produced information cards to be carried by staff explaining what the home was and who to contact if any such situation arose again. This provides further safeguards for children and young people as well as continuing to allow them to access inclusive activities in the community.

Parents and professionals all report how happy children and young people are to attend for their short breaks. Time is carefully managed to allow for shared mealtimes; participating in activities and being sensitively prepared for a restful night's sleep in their chosen bedroom. Consequently, the time the children and young people spend in the home is productive, rewarding and fun. They have the opportunity to participate in activities they would not be able to do in their daily lives and they make friends. Their lives are enriched as a result. A social worker said, 'They are always taken on lots of activities. It's about going somewhere for a sleepover with friends that they couldn't do otherwise. It's pleasurable.'

The preparation for moving on to other provisions is excellent. The two most

recent children and young people to leave the home did so with their memory books and folders. In addition, every member of staff wrote them a little 'do you remember' note to remind them of a time they had shared together. This increases children and young people's sense of self and well-being and provides them with an emotional foundation to continue to build from. A social worker reported, 'The home has done an exceptional job and are being very supportive with the transition from the home to fostering and helping (name) understand what is happening. They are brilliant.'

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
Parents and professionals report that children and young people are absolutely safe in this home. Proactive safeguarding practices, underpinned by extensive risk assessments ensure that children and young people are protected at all times. Consistent boundaries and careful planning of activities both, within the home and community, ensure children and young people know what is expected of them. As a result they trust staff and feel secure, empowering them to make the most of their stay. A social worker reported, 'They set and implement sensible boundaries to ensure the comfort and safety of all who access the service.' The committed staff team are aware of the potential for bullying behaviours. They match children and young people carefully to reduce the likelihood of such behaviours occurring and promote friendships. In addition, work has been undertaken with children and young people to enable them to understand the impact of bullying and brightly coloured drawings completed by them adorn the activities rooms. Children and young people are protected by these measures and there have not been any bullying episodes. A social worker said, 'They are definitely safe there.' Comprehensive locally agreed missing person policies and recording mechanisms are fully understood by staff. However, the security in the home and high staffing levels mean that children and young people do not go missing. Each young person has a laminated information card, with photograph, which is carried by staff when they are out on activities. Therefore information is immediately available should anyone wander off. This provides robust protection for children and young people at all times. All staff are fully trained in matters relating to child sexual exploitation (CSE). No children and young people in the home are subject to CSE at this time but staff, aware of their potential vulnerabilities, have taken steps to provide them with self-	

protection skills. They have introduced an innovative programme, which was developed by a national charity, and teaches children and young people about safe areas of touch. This knowledge empowers young people and provides excellent safeguards.

Children and young people enjoy exceptional, warm and trusting relationships with staff. Due to their conditions some young people's behaviours can be erratic and unpredictable. A social worker said, 'Staff are insightful in the management of children and have a range of skills to manage challenging behaviours.' Extensive behaviour management plans clearly outline how to address this so that all children and young people can enjoy their stay together safely. The majority of these plans are updated on a regular basis. However, one was not which could have inhibited staff in planning for the young person's growth in size and deterioration in behaviours as he entered puberty.

On occasion physical intervention is necessary to guide and deflect children and young people away from unsafe behaviours. These are very carefully managed thereby protecting children and young people and enabling them to learn more acceptable ways of behaving. Some of the recordings following these events were not as detailed as others but this was not detrimental to young people's care. A parent said, 'I feel he is very safe at (Name).'

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
The skilled and experienced Registered Manager holds a degree in Autism and is in the process of completing a Level 7 qualification in Leadership and Management. She has held Registered Manager status of this home since May 2010. She is part of a strong management team, including the; area and deputy managers and senior care officers, who provide children and young people with outstanding care and the opportunity to make real progress in their lives. There have been some changes in the staff team and working conditions as a result of the local authority's re-structuring programme. Staff report that they found this stressful at the time but that they are now happy and 'comfortable' with the new rotas. They take pride in consistently working together to provide the best possible care and outcomes for children and young people. A social worker reported, 'Staff are committed and passionate about the children they care for. They maintain high standards of care at all times and treat each child as an individual,' and a staff member said, 'I love my job, I couldn't imagine working anywhere else.' Each of the three units within the home have their own informative Statement of	

Purpose. These are complemented by the brightly coloured Children's Guide, which was developed together with children and young people. The progress children and young people make in building self-esteem and sharing their feelings demonstrate that the home is meeting its aim that 'children will be encouraged to make appropriate choices which will enable them to develop their autonomy.'

Robust local authority recruitment procedures ensure children and young people are not cared for by people who may pose a risk to them. Newly appointed staff report on how well they feel they have been welcomed in to the home and the induction process. All staff speak very positively about the training and supervision they receive from their line managers. A staff member said, 'I feel valued and appreciated.'

The excellent external monitoring reports are thorough and evaluative. They contribute towards the protection and well-being of children and young people. The manager's auditing processes ensure that the home's high standard of care is maintained and any areas for development are identified and planned for. However, they do not incorporate the views of staff and parents. This is a breach of legislation.

The proactive management and staff team have worked extremely hard to build productive relationships with all partner agencies which ensure children and young people receive consistent care. Regular newsletters and social events ensure that parents are informed and feel included. They report that they particularly like being kept informed as to who new staff members are. A parent said, 'When they sent me the letter about the new bloke it was really nice that I already knew about him. So when I fetched (name) in here last week I knew who he was. I like that because I like to know who will be looking after my son.'

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of looked after children is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place, however, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, young people and their families. In addition the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This 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 Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the *Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards*.

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