

Inspection report for children's home

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| <b>Unique reference number</b> | SC033919           |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 15 September 2009  |
| <b>Inspector</b>               | Tola Akinde-Hummel |
| <b>Type of Inspection</b>      | Key                |

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| <b>Date of last inspection</b> | 11 March 2009 |
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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**

The children's home is owned and run by a Local Authority and provides short breaks for children and young people aged five to 19 with learning, sensory and physical disabilities. There are five beds available in the home to provide overnight and holiday stays.

The home provides a block booking period that covers week long stays during the summer holidays.

The home is situated on an estate close to transport links. It has local amenities a short distance away. Two children were receiving overnight stays in the home during the inspection. On this occasion the children did not participate.

### **Summary**

This unannounced full inspection looked at the key standards under all the Every Child Matters outcomes. Children and young people have all their needs addressed with a professional and sensitive approach. The staff and managers have an excellent understanding of the health, physical, social, cultural and emotional needs of children and young people. Children and young people are well looked after, stimulated and encouraged to participate in the home during their short break. The staff team work extremely well with all professionals involved with children and young people.

The home is proactive in developing good communication with children and young people using a variety of methods. All children are expected to contribute to decisions made in the home and their views are regularly sought.

The staff team are supported in their role and professional development by a highly committed and competent manager and deputy. The management team is efficient and stable. Staff know that any contribution they make to improve the service is encouraged and valued.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

The manager was asked to explore specialist training for staff. This has been pursued and will be delivered.

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is outstanding.

Children and young people enjoy the food provided by the home. They are consulted about the menu and are able to make choices. A variety of means of communication are used to ensure staff understand what children and young people want. Where appropriate, children are encouraged to assist with the purchase of food via the internet. Consideration is given to religious, cultural and medical needs when planning menus. The visual communication board explains what food is on the menu.

The home has extensive information about children and young people's health needs. This information is provided by parents and carers, medical professionals and school. The home has the support of the community medical team who provide training and advice on complex medical issues. The Children and Adolescent Mental Health team support parents with managing the behaviour of children and young people. Strategies are shared with the home to provide a consistent approach to care. Changes in guidance or intervention are passed by medical professionals to staff at the home. All staff are made aware of any changes. Health professionals said 'staff manage the health needs of children and young people fantastically and are very conscientious.'

The home has a contingency plan for the management of swine flu. In addition, information has been sent to parents advising them of the flu and assuring them about how the home will manage this.

The home continues to keep up to date with medication training. The home has a robust system for managing all medication entering and leaving the home. Staff only administer medication following training and a series of observations that deem them competent to do so.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is outstanding.

The home has good procedures and practice for protecting the privacy of children and young people. Information is securely stored and confidentiality is respected. Staff receive training in moving and handling, and supporting children and young people with intimate personal care. All aspects of personal care are undertaken with sensitivity and in a dignified manner. Children and young people are told what is going to happen and are encouraged to assist staff if they are able to.

The home has a complaints procedure that parents and carers are able to access. All complaints are investigated swiftly. Outcomes of complaints are seen as a learning experience for the staff team and, where appropriate, used to highlight any training need. Children and young people are regularly consulted about areas that they may not be satisfied with. The Listening to You booklet, children's meetings and looked after children's reviews are used as a means of communicating children and young people's views about the service. One parent advised, 'I have never needed to complain in all the years my children have been coming here.'

Children and young people are cared for by staff who are vigilant and knowledgeable about the protection of children. Staff are trained in recognising signs of abuse and reporting any concerns. A safeguarding professional expressed, 'the managers and staff are exceptionally particular about every aspect of safeguarding.' Relationships between the home, social work team and Local Authority Designated Officer are very good, allowing open communication and swift action to be taken where necessary.

Children and young people report that they do not experience bullying in the home. Staff ensure that bookings are carefully organised. The regular consultation also allows children and young people to choose their friendship groups during a short break. Where this is not possible, children are matched with other young people that staff think they may get on with. This helps children and young people enjoy their respite experience and develop new friendships. Children and young are told what behaviour is unacceptable and are supported to develop socially appropriate behaviour.

Children and young people receive a high level of supervision from staff in and outside of the home. There have been no incidents of absence. The home has an absence policy and procedure. Detailed care plans and risk assessments ensure staff are familiar with risks identified and minimise these.

The home keeps appropriate records and provides timely notifications to Ofsted of significant events.

Children and young people are looked after by a staff team that are trained in techniques for managing behaviour. Staff are assisted by a physical intervention specialist who supports the staff to implement appropriate strategies for keeping children safe and managing behaviour. Parents are involved in agreeing these plans. Children and young people read the physical intervention booklet with staff. This explains when and why intervention is used and their rights.

Records of sanctions and restraints are few and demonstrate that the home uses alternative methods to modify behaviour. Staff use diversion techniques, and speak calmly and reassure children if they are agitated or upset.

The home has a number of risk assessments designed to minimise harm to children and young people. All assessments identify potential hazards and how these can be reduced. The home has in place building and fire risk assessments. Children and young people are regularly reminded in children's meetings of the home's fire procedure. All equipment is regularly tested. Whilst staff are keen to minimise risk, they also attempt to address the tension between risk and freedom of exploration and development for the children and young people. The home is supported in this particularly by the independent reviewing officer.

Two new members of staff have recently been recruited to work in the home. Children and young people were consulted about what they would like in a new member of staff. Their views were taken into consideration. Records show that staff have been subject to interviews, Criminal Records Bureau checks and other checks to assess their suitability. The home does not receive visitors who do not have identification, known business on the premises or sign the visitors book on entry.

## **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is outstanding.

Children and young people can be assured that they will be treated as individuals during their short break. Staff take time and make effort to get to know young people and understand their needs. Information provided about children and young people is used to help staff establish relationships. Individual plans outline where extra support is required. Plans also include maintenance or introduction of independent living skills. Children and young people are allocated a key worker. This system does not prevent good relationships developing with other staff. Children and young people take personal concerns to members of staff they feel comfortable with and are treated in a respectful way.

The staff team have developed good relationships with the schools that children and young people attend.

They know that the approach to their care will be consistent. Staff attend school reviews and visit children and young people at school. This is to explore how they are in that environment and meet with school staff to share information on all aspects of care and education. The home works with the school to promote and improve independent living and communication skills. School representatives said, 'The home has the best interest of children at the centre of what they do, they always want back up information from schools and want to know how children spend their leisure time.'

Children and young people are encouraged to take an interest and pursue leisure activities. The home does not limit the opportunities for children and young people. Children celebrate cultural events from many nations. These mirror the cultures represented by children and young people that use the service. Other activities help to give children and young people an awareness of their environment such as Water Awareness and Red Cross day. Leisure interests are incorporated into care plans and followed through during children and young people's short breaks at the home. Children and young people are always given a choice of activities. All activities are risk assessed to ensure safety and maximum pleasure.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is outstanding.

Children and young people enter a service where their needs have been thoroughly assessed and a plan of care is in place. The home ensures that they consult with parents and significant professionals when putting together the plan. Plans address all aspects of children and young people's lives focusing on their abilities and potential whilst assessing risk and triggers. Individualised care plans also address race, culture and religion in a positive and open way. These plans are agreed by parents and carers.

The home has a good relationship with the children with disabilities team and the independent reviewing officer. Staff prepare reports that inform the review of the progress of young people. Review meetings establish if the care plan remains relevant. All parties present at the review agree any changes to the care plan and establish who is responsible for implementing these. The home, independent reviewing officer and participation officer are working towards increasing the number of young people that represent themselves at their reviews.

Children and young people maintain contact with their families due to the nature of the short breaks service. Children and young people are able to contact their parents during their short break if they wish to.

Parents and carers know that their loved ones are properly settled into the home. They are introduced to the service through tea visits. These take place for as long as children and young people need them. In agreement with their parents and carers, children then progress to overnight stays. Children and young people moving on from the short breaks service are supported to understand what is going to happen next. The home plans for young people leaving the service and make sure their departure is celebrated positively.

The home puts a lot of emphasis on communicating with children and young people. The home seeks advice on children and young people's preferred methods of communication. One social worker stated, 'staff use verbal, gestures, visual aids and signing to get into young peoples world and language.' The home consults with children on all matters relating to their health, safety and welfare. Big issues such as staying safe, recruitment, home and garden improvements,

fire procedures and their general opinions about the home are communicated in a variety of ways. Children are confident about making their feelings known to staff. The home record the communication methods they use with all children during the children's meeting and in individual conversations.

## **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is good.

The home supports children and young people to increase their independence living skills. This is made clear in care plans and reassessed at review. Any milestones that children meet in their development of independence are praised. This could be learning to eat independently or to drink using a cup. Children and young people, where possible, are encouraged to help with chores around the house, such as setting the table, making beds, preparing drinks and some cooking skills. One parent stated 'my child has chores at home and she does these during her short break.'

The home is well-maintained and well-equipped. The garden allows children and young people a secure space outdoors. The soft play area enables young people to play safely indoors. The home is free from offensive odours and is welcoming. Due to the number of children using the premises the home is subject to a lot of wear and tear.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is outstanding.

The home's statement of purpose and children's guide is written in an easy to read format. This addresses important questions that parents or carers will need answers to. This enables them to decide if the short breaks service is suitable.

Staff are clear about the lines of responsibility in the home and during a shift. Shift leaders are experienced and have worked in the home for a considerable amount of time. They understand their duties and those of colleagues who work with them. Rotas are organised to take into account the needs of children and young people. Extra staff are provided where high levels of care are required.

Staff say 'we receive a lot of training here and can identify training we need.' Staff undertake National Vocation Qualifications (NVQ) at level 3 training and have the opportunity to pursue additional training relevant to their job and interests in the field. Staff attend team meetings where they are able discuss practice issues, new ideas and service improvement.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. The home has a consistent approach to ensuring that the diverse needs of children and young people they support are met. Consideration is given to all races, cultures, sexuality, physical limitations and religion.

The team state that they feel valued by the manager and deputy. Supervisions are meaningful and regular. Annual appraisals are also undertaken. Staff have specific tasks to carry out in the home such as medication checks, maintenance and festivals and events. In addition to monthly Regulation 33 visits, the manager monitors all records of sanctions, restraints, complaints and accidents. This means that children and young people are supported by a manager that regularly reviews practice. One professional colleague stated, 'the management team in themselves are outstanding, and deliver a great service to very needy children.'



Children and young people's records in the home are detailed and informative. Files are orderly and easy to follow. Records are consistently signed and dated by all relevant parties.

## **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 Childrens 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**

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

- consider redecorating the home due to wear and tear