Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC034849
Inspection date	26/06/2012
Inspector	Karen Forster
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	16/01/2012

Service information

Brief description of the service

The children's home is purpose-built and managed by a local authority. It provides short-break care for up to six children and young people with disabilities. It is appropriately adapted to address the needs of children and young people with physical and learning disabilities.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

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

Overall effectiveness

The overall effectiveness is judged to be **good**.

The home provides highly consistent and well-planned care resulting in positive outcomes for young people. Young people make good progress through their short - break placements, with the young people and staff recognising and celebrating progress and achievement. The young people are comfortable in their placements, and their advocates are complimentary regarding their care and support.
Young people benefit from planned and consistent interactions with staff who care about their welfare. Robust safeguarding practice promotes the safety of young people. Areas for development include the regularity of quality monitoring; incident notification and the management of risk regarding fire safety, and bed sides. Additional areas for development include the sign off and review of short-break care plans; refresher training in intrusive medical activities and the content of internal quality monitoring programmes.

Areas for improvement

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

32 (2001)	ensure that the risk management measures listed within the fire safety risk assessment are implemented and recorded as complete (Regulation 32)	31/08/2012
33 (2001)	ensure that a monitoring visit in line with Regulation 33 is completed at least once a month (Regulation 33)	31/07/2012
30 (2001)	ensure that the events and notifications listed within Schedule 5 are shared with Ofsted where required. (Regulation 30)	31/08/2012

Recommendations

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

- ensure that short-break care plans are signed by all relevant parties (Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Statutory Guidance 2010)
- ensure that the labelling of play material storage promotes open access by both genders of young people (NMS 2.1)
- ensure that short-break care plans are consistently informed by care reviews (NMS 25.8)
- provide risk assessment statements for the provision of bed sides (NMS 10.8)
- ensure that the collected feedback from stakeholders is collated within the internal quality monitoring programme (NMS 21)
- provide regular refresher training in intrusive medical activities. (NMS 18.1)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for children and young people are **good**.

Young people's individual needs, including their specific ones as young people with additional needs, are extremely well identified and met by the home's collaborative, shared approach to care. Parents are consistently involved in the care package, and feel really well involved as partners in the provision of planned care.

Young people enjoy a balanced diet and active lifestyles, which keeps them healthy. Young people consistently access suitable health services, for example, appointments with a specialist dental team. During their stays within the service, young people consistently follow their own personalised healthcare programmes. Young people have very high levels of attendance at school, and make good use of their specialised learning opportunities. Young people make very good progress within these educational programmes and their positive achievements are clearly captured and recognised.

Young people have consistent access to extremely well planned opportunities to

practise and develop life skills at their own personal pace. They manage their personal care, practice social skills and complete domestic tasks which help their plans for adult life.

Quality of care

The quality of the care is **good**.

Equality and diversity is well promoted in the home. The service consistently identifies, and positively meets young people's individual needs relating to their developmental stage and their background. This involves a close liaison with families, who share their established routines and support networks for each young person. This means that individuals receive consistent care and support. The labelling of some isolated play equipment as dedicated to a single gender is not in line with the home's diverse culture and detracts from the otherwise positive practice in this area.

Young people benefit from warm interactions with all workers who know young people well, and understand their strengths and care needs. Social workers and family members feel that staff care about young people's welfare and help them in all areas of their lives. Staff work hard to identify and minimise triggers to young people's anxiety levels. The young people make good use of alternative communication systems to share their views and suggestions for the service. Opportunities include their choice of activity, food or clothing. The home takes good account of complaints, and addresses these concerns consistently.

Young people's short-break care plans clearly reflect their strengths and needs, and effectively address the placement objectives outlined by the placing social worker. The staff are very familiar with the placement's aims and work hard to achieve those ends. However, the plans are not consistently signed by all parties as recommended by statutory guidance. Very suitable, personalised health and education plans are implemented, with young people consistently making good use of these programmes. This means that individuals progress and acquire new skills, which they can practice within their short break. Short-break care plans are regularly and consistently reviewed, to make sure that the placement package remains suitable for the young people. However, not all plans are altered following the six-monthly review forum. This reduces the plan's detail regarding any new objectives provided by the review.

The arrangements for the handling and recording of medication are safe and effective, which means that young people receive their medication in line with their prescription. The home is well maintained and highly domestic in style; young people use it as a 'home from home'. Specialist areas, such as the sensory room, are very appropriate for the young people using the service, who make good use of these facilities.

Safeguarding children and young people

The service is **good** at keeping children and young people safe and feeling safe.

The home has clear and well understood risk management strategies in place that recognise the personal vulnerabilities of young people and manage any associated risks. The majority of risk management measures are well documented to inform staff in the home. However, the provision of bed sides on some young people's beds is not clearly risk assessed. The staff group is proficient at recognising and managing challenging behaviour, and consistently implement the agreed proactive strategies to reduce anxiety for young people.

The home has a clear missing from home procedure that includes agreed protocols with the local police. These procedures provide for effective actions if young people ever went missing and include positive responses when young people return. Positive behaviour is well recognised and suitably rewarded. There is minimum use of physical intervention. Where restraint is used it is promptly recorded and all episodes are followed up by the manager.

Staff are suitably vetted prior to employment, which means that young people are cared for by suitably cleared adults. Investigations into allegations or unexplained injuries are handled quickly and consistently to protect young people. The home maintains an open dialogue with young people, their social worker and the local safeguarding team. This means that all disclosures are suitably referred to statutory agencies to keep young people safe. Health and safety systems are well maintained, and keep the occupants and visitors safe. There is a comprehensive, partially implemented fire risk assessment system. Some counter measures are not fully complete to date, however these gaps do not compromise the safety of the occupants. All regular safety checks on the home's power and heat supplies are complete and in order.

Leadership and management

The leadership and management of the children's home are **good**.

The leadership team honestly self-assesses the home's progress in achieving the service's aims and objectives. Consequently, senior and junior staff have a very clear understanding of the service's strengths and areas for development.

In the main, the home's external quality monitoring programme includes regular, comprehensive visits as required. In one isolated month, the required time scale was outside that required by the regulations. This is an administrative issue, with no impact on young people's outcomes. The service maintains a positive internal quality assurance system, which helps the home to focus on their continual improvement of outcomes for individuals. The home collects the views of young people, their parents and social workers; however, this feedback is not collated within the quality monitoring programme. This shows that, while there are many drivers for improvement which are well used, the quality monitoring records do not capture all of this data.

Induction programmes are clear and comprehensive. Induction programmes include

data specific to the home and a competence assessment for new staff against national standards. This means staff have a clear baseline for their skill development. Staff obviously value training and the content of their ongoing training programmes match the needs of the young people very well. Following training, staff put their newly-acquired knowledge and skills to good use, when caring for young people. In some staff members' cases, their refresher training in intrusive medical activities is nearly two years old. This extended timescale means individuals' competence in this area has not been recently assessed. However, staff do practice these skills regularly, which means their actions closely match clearly written care programmes and keep young people safe.

Communication within the home, and between the setting and the majority of external stakeholders is sound. While all significant events relating to the protection of young people are consistently notified to the appropriate safeguarding authorities, young people's families and placing social workers, in an isolated case, the initiation of protection procedures was not notified to Ofsted as required. The young people's safety was not compromised by this administrative oversight.

Staff feel supported in their roles through their consistent supervision programmes, regular staff meetings and team planning days. Supervision programmes for staff are regularly provided and are of a high quality. They consistently include discussion of young people's care planning and review, team plans, support for staff and the identification of individual strengths and training needs. The staffing levels in the home are good and support young people well in their daily programmes. Young people's records are complete and reflect their individual history and their short-break care plans. This enables young people and key staff to use this information to inform the care provided.

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 *Inspections of children's homes – framework for inspection* (March 2011) and the evaluation schedule for children's homes.