

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC034849
Inspector	Chris Scully
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Cheshire West and Chester Council
Registered person address	4th Floor HQ 58 St Nicholas Street Chester CH1 1NP
Responsible individual	Jean Miller
Registered manager	Julie Harwood
Date of last inspection	25/03/2014

Inspection date	30/09/2014
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Previous inspection	good progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	There has been no enforcement action since the last inspection.

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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This home provides a generally safe, supportive environment. Young people are usually protected from harm, because appropriate mechanisms are in place to keep them safe. There are a number of maintenance issues which have not been identified, which impact upon the homeliness of the environment and present some potential risks to young people. Young people feel safe living here. Staff are aware of the home's safeguarding procedures, and these are implemented well.

Young people are making good progress across all areas of development, as they live in a supportive, caring and nurturing environment. Young people enjoy positive, trusting relationships with staff. This is confirmed by social workers, who comment upon the progress young people make and how they enjoy their time here. They say the service makes a positive difference to the young people's and families' lives.

Young people's views are valued by staff. They use a variety of ways to get young people's views, and act upon these where possible. For example, young people's request for new games consoles was acted on. New recording formats for care planning have been initiated and are still being embedded. This has improved the recording in some areas.

The home is well managed. The Registered Manager and staff have addressed most of the issues from the previous inspection. Monitoring of the home is not sufficiently robust and means some issues identified at this inspection had not been identified and acted upon previously. There are some shortfalls relating to records and procedures such as medication and behaviour management, staff training, maintenance, and young people's access to the internet. These matters are already being addressed by the home.

Full report

Information about this children's home

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 physical disabilities, learning disabilities and sensory impairment. It is appropriately adapted to address the needs of these children and young people.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
25/03/2014	Interim	good progress
11/12/2013	Full	adequate
19/02/2013	Interim	good progress
26/06/2012	Full	good

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
31 (2001)	ensure all parts of the children's home used by children are kept clean and are reasonably decorated and maintained and have particular regard for their need for privacy when in their bedrooms (Regulation 31(2)(e)(5)(a))	28/11/2014
17B (2001)	ensure a policy is implemented which sets out the measures of control, restraint and discipline to be promoted in the home which is kept under review and, where appropriate, revised, and that the duration of any restraint is accurately recorded (Regulation 17B(1)(a)(2)(a)(4)(a))	28/11/2014

34 (2001)	ensure the registered person establishes and maintains a system for the monitoring of the matters set out in schedule 6 at least every 3 months, with particular regard to the maintenance of the building, the building's risk assessments, and the carrying out of fire drills as per the home's policy (Regulation 34(1)(a))	29/11/2014
21 (2001)	ensure suitable arrangements are in place for the recording of medication, in particular the recording of controlled medication in line with the Royal Pharmaceutical Society's guidance. (Regulation 21(1))	29/11/2014

Recommendations

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

- ensure children have access to a range of education resources to support their learning beyond the school day, particularly access to the internet (NMS 8.2)
- ensure young people's health is promoted in line with their placement plan, particularly that plans are sufficiently detailed with regards to specific health care conditions and do not conflict with information in epilepsy care plans (NMS 6.5)
- enhance further the systems in place to monitor the quality and accuracy of record keeping, with particular regard to the use of the word 'absconding', ensuring all entries are correctly dated and ensuring records do not contain conflicting information (NMS 22.1)
- ensure there is a good quality learning and development programme for staff. In particular that this includes refresher training in child protection, the particular vulnerabilities of children with disabilities, and the range of communication needs of children with disabilities. (NMS 18.1)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Children and young people are making good progress as a result of their short breaks at the home. They really enjoy coming to the home and make the most of their stay. They feel emotionally secure, confident and settled in their time away from their family. Young people understand how long they are staying for and happily count down the 'sleeps' until they return home. This offers them comfort and provides reassurance for them. Consequently, they are able to enjoy their time here.

Young people enjoy positive relationships with staff which are built upon trust. Social workers say young people are making good progress, are much more self-reliant, and are gaining in independence skills. As a result, they are growing in confidence and self-esteem and are more able to engage with staff and the opportunities around them.

Children feel happy and settled because of the well-planned introductions to the home, which are carefully tailored to young people's individual needs. This means they feel confident and secure in their time away from their family. Consequently, they are becoming more communicative and sociable.

Children and young people enjoy making friends and having the same experiences as their peers. Young people's attendance at school is good. All young people are taken to and from school by their transport providers. Young people's attendance and smooth transition to school is further supported by the individualised clear routines in place, which enable them to prepare for the school day.

Young people take opportunities to become more independent that are appropriate to their age, level of understanding and disability. Social workers comment that as a result of their stays some young people can now shower or bathe independently at home, with little reminder from family. They enjoy spending time with their friends in the garden and playing in local parks, eating out at their favourite restaurants, and other activities within the local community.

Young people take increasing responsibility for their personal care needs and health. For example, they make healthier choices about the food they eat, enjoying a more varied diet. Young people's dietary needs are managed well. This means young people enjoy a variety of healthy food options which support their health and well-being. Staff respect young people's dignity and are sensitive to their need for privacy when delivering personal care.

Parents and social workers are kept well informed of young people's time at the service. Staff also keep in regular contact with them when young people are not in attendance. This means staff are well informed about any issues which may impact

upon a young person's stay.

Quality of care

good

Staff provide good care to ensure young people enjoy their time at the home. Relationships are well established, and young people express their confidence and contentment by their settled behaviour and the progress they make. Social workers and independent visitors are complimentary about the positive impact the service has on the lives of young people. Young people enjoy spending time with other young people in the home, for example, going out on activities with them and celebrating special events.

Consultation with young people is improving. Staff are keen to secure the views of young people and see this as an important part of the care and support provided. This means young people have a voice, are listened to, and that their wishes and feelings are acted upon where possible. Young people have recently been consulted on the purchase of a new climbing frame and are eagerly anticipating its arrival.

Staff are knowledgeable about individual children's levels of understanding and comprehension associated with their disability. As a result, staff engage appropriately to provide the support and reassurance young people need to reduce their anxieties. Staff are skilled at helping all young people feel safe and relaxed. Consequently they are able to engage in a range of fun, stimulating activities of their choice.

Care plans are improving. Care plans take into account the diverse and complex needs of each young person. On a small number of occasions young people's health plans are not as robust. This is because some information is not effectively recorded with regards to specific health needs. The effect of this is minimised because of staff's understanding of each young person's needs. This is supported by staff's commitment to working in partnership with health care professionals such as child and adolescent mental health teams, physiotherapists and occupational therapists to ensure young people receive the support that they need.

Staff are actively involved and contribute to the reviews of young people's short break plans. Social workers say the reports presented at young people's reviews are informative and personalised to each young person. They also comment upon the enhanced communication with the home due to the introduction of an on-line system. This means they and parents are quickly notified of any concerns and also if the young person has enjoyed their stay.

The arrangements for dealing with medication are safe and effective. Staff are suitably trained in first aid and the management of medication. Recording about

medication is generally good. However recording about controlled medication does not follow the guidance set out by the Royal Pharmaceutical Society. This is a recording issue and does not impact upon the care provided to young people.

Staff have consistently high aspirations for young people's education. They work in partnership with the organisation's school to ensure they consistently deliver the same message to young people. For example, they use the same communication programmes to support their thinking, choices and learning. Staff are proactive in speaking to new teachers and visiting young people in class to see how they can continue to support their educational progress while at the home. However, young people's ability to use electronic devices, such as computer tablets, to further support their learning is limited due to the lack of internet access within the home.

The home is welcoming to young people. Their bedrooms are prepared in advance for their stay and are personalised, which helps them to feel at home. However, the lack of sufficient curtains on young people's bedroom windows does not help to maintain their privacy. Young people have access to a large garden where they can access a range of swings, trikes and other outdoor games and equipment.

Keeping children and young people safe adequate

Young people are safeguarded because staff have a sound knowledge and understanding of the home's child protection and safeguarding procedures. This means that if staff have any concerns about a young person's safety or well-being they are able to take effective action.

Young people's individual plans identify any risks they may face and outline appropriate strategies to ensure their welfare is promoted and protected. The plans for young people's safety are consistently put into practice and fully address their needs and circumstances.

Young people do not go missing. This is due to the staffing ratios which mean young people are effectively supervised at all times. Appropriate risk assessments are in place to help keep young people safe. These effectively balance the need to keep young people safe with allowing them to take safe risks, such as learning to use road crossings safely, which enhances their growth and development.

Staff are aware of each young people's behaviour and how this may impact upon them and other people around them. This means they are able to act quickly to help diffuse any anxieties the young person may be facing. Staff are aware that not all behaviours are as a result of their disability, but because they are teenagers and are experiencing all the bodily changes and emotions that any teenager experiences.

Physical interventions are rare and involve minimal contact, such as escorting a young person away from a situation to enable them to calm and reengage in their

activities. However, there is a lack of clarity regarding staff's use of specific interventions within young people's individual behaviour support plans and plans for the use of restrictive physical interventions. This is because they are not reviewed on a regular basis.

The home has a range of health and safety risk assessments which are carried out on a regular basis. However, these have not identified a number of issues within the home. These include the positioning of bolts on the doors in the soft play area, peeling paint on some walls and doors, and a damaged skylight in a bathroom. Remedial work to plasterwork has not been completed, and some ceiling tiles are damaged. Some of these issues present a health and safety risk to young people and detract from the homely environment staff are trying to maintain.

Fire safety checks are carried out weekly and staff know how to evacuate the young people quickly and safely in an emergency. However, fire drills are not carried out in line with the homes policy.

The recruitment and selection of people working at the home is very thorough to make sure young people are protected. The manager ensures that staff have the skills and competencies to meet the needs of individual children. There are also suitable systems in place to ensure that visitors to the home are checked and supervised to protect young people.

Leadership and management

adequate

The Registered Manager has been in post since 2013. She is suitably qualified to undertake her responsibilities, with a Level Five qualification in management. She has many years' experience as a manager in residential care. Together with the staff she demonstrates a commitment to delivering good childcare, tailored to the diverse, personal needs of the young people. This is reflected in positive comments from social workers and independent review officers.

The home's Statement of Purpose is detailed and provides insight into the care and support offered to young people. Young people have access to a suitable young person's guide which explains what they can expect to happen during their stay.

Records and documentation are mostly maintained appropriately. However, there are some shortfalls in the recording of young people's risk assessments and risk assessments for the building works, some records contain conflicting information, and not all entries are correctly dated. In addition, the use of the word 'absconding' in records is not appropriate given the needs of the young people being cared for. Overall, there has been an improvement in record keeping with the introduction of new recording formats, though these need to be fully embedded into practice.

Monitoring of the home by an independent person is generally sound. However,

monitoring by the Registered Manager is not sufficiently robust, as it has failed to identify some issues such as the maintenance and décor of the building. Feedback from stakeholders is now included within the reports and is appropriately considered when evaluating the effectiveness of the service.

Young people are looked after by skilled and compassionate people. They provide young people with consistent, good quality care. They are caring and work well together to promote young people's welfare. They are proactive in sourcing solutions to barriers to young people's engagement such as working with parents and school to help young people as they transition between the different settings. A training and development programme has been created, however it has not yet been implemented. This issue was raised at the last inspection and has not yet been fully addressed.

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.