

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Stephen Graham
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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 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.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: a service that significantly exceeds minimum requirements

Good: a service that exceeds minimum requirements

Satisfactory: a service that only meets minimum requirements

Inadequate: a service that does not meet minimum requirements

Service information

Brief description of the service

This children's home provides short-break care and accommodation for seven children with a disability and sensory impairments, from nine years old up to 17 years old.

Overall effectiveness

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

The outcomes for young people visiting the home are outstanding. They benefit from good levels of close individual support and receive good help with their personal health care needs. They also receive outstanding support and encouragement from staff to participate positively in leisure activities in the community, to attend their education and to celebrate their achievements. They are encouraged to practice and develop independent life skills where possible and receive outstanding support in their transition from children's to adult care services. However, the criteria used for admission to the home is not clear or clearly recorded. Young people and their carers enjoy very positive supportive relationships with staff at the home. They are encouraged to discuss their care needs and to contribute to their care plans very regularly. The home and its garden provide a very homely, comfortable and stimulating environment for young people to live and play in.

Young people are looked after by a very experienced and stable staff team. They provide young people with good support to help keep them safe. However, some of the records used to demonstrate this are not always completed in sufficient detail. Also, some of the recommended safety checks are not completed at the agreed regularity. The staff team receive good training and support. The home is well led and managed. However, the arrangements in place to monitor the service do not report fully on all of the matters required and thus do not accurately demonstrate the quality of care provided to young people.

Areas for improvementStatutory 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
4 (2001)	ensure that the home is at all times conducted in a manner which is consistent with its statement of purpose (Regulation 4(6))	30/11/2011

17B (2001)	ensure that the written record of any measure of control or discipline used at the home is completed in full detail (Regulation 17B(3)(e)(h)(i))	30/11/2011
33 (2001)	ensure that visits to the home completed on behalf of the registered provider monitor and report on all required matters. (Regulation 33 (4)(a))	30/11/2011

Recommendations

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

- complete all safety checks with the regularity recommended to help ensure that any avoidable hazards at the home are removed (NMS 10.3)
- ensure that the records of the checks carried out on any new staff are completed in sufficient detail (NMS 16.2)
- ensure that young people receive written guidance describing how they can contact their Independent Reviewing Officer. (NMS 13.5)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people visiting the home make exceptional progress in all areas of their life. They are encouraged to talk with staff about their care needs. The staff team liaise very closely with parents, carers and social workers to further ensure that the outcomes agreed in care plans for young people are achieved. The support they receive during each visit to the home is carefully planned and closely monitored and adjusted by the manager and senior staff to ensure that it is effective in providing outstanding outcomes for young people. The staff keep very good records which clearly demonstrate the outstanding outcomes enjoyed by young people visiting the home. The staff are committed to anti-discriminatory practice and are effective in providing support which meets the cultural needs of the young people using the service.

Young people participate fully in a wide range of activities. A parent wrote: 'I am happy that my son looks forward to going. He always has the choice but never wants to cancel a visit. He is well cared for and gets to spend time with his peers doing what he enjoys.' The staff team have a good knowledge of local community facilities and resources. They use this knowledge to ensure that young people receive regular opportunities to participate fully in a broad range of recreational activities. A parent describes how their child was taken out 'for a game of badminton and even went out with a whole group for ice cream'.

Young people visiting the home enjoy a very healthy and active lifestyle. The home

works in close partnership with carers, social workers and a broad range of health professionals to help ensure that young people continue to access the services that they need. Care records demonstrate how the health needs of young people are met and further improved. Young people describe how staff, 'always look after them if they feel unwell'. Their parents also believe that young people's health needs are met during each visit to the home.

Young people make exceptional transitions to adult respite care services because they and their parents receive outstanding support in this area. Young people describe how they are helped to practice self-care skills in cooking and budgeting. Their overall progress as they move toward adulthood is regularly reviewed at care team meetings.

Young people also participate positively in their education. The staff team work effectively with carers, placing social workers and specialist education staff to support the regular attendance of young people and the necessary transport arrangements. The home has good facilities and educational resources to help young people to practice their skills and achieve. Young people and their parents describe very positively how staff, 'always make sure that they get to school and help them with their school work'.

Quality of care

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

Young people and their parents and carers describe very positively how they are encouraged to regularly discuss their care plans with the staff at the home. Their care needs are agreed with themselves and their social workers and are recorded in good detail. This recording helps to demonstrate how agreed plans are used by the staff team to achieve outstanding outcomes for young people. Care needs are reviewed very regularly and plans are amended and further improved where necessary. The staff team do this in partnership with young people, their carers and their placing social workers. Care plans are also monitored by the manager and senior staff at the home; this helps to further ensure that they are implemented effectively.

The quality of the care provided to young people is also reviewed regularly at care team and review meetings. Young people and their carers are encouraged and supported to attend in person. Parents and carers said that they are always encouraged to attend reviews and talk to staff. The staff team provide detailed reports to help inform these meetings. Young people commented that they can look at things written about them and feel that they can make their own decisions. One parent described in detail how in their view: 'It is like home from home, my child loves going there and the staff are fantastic. They cannot do anything better, it is 100% perfect'. A parent also comments regarding their child that: 'The staff make sure they are happy and well looked after'.

The staff team complete detailed risk assessments in partnership with carers and

social workers. These help to ensure that young people are admitted safely and are helped to settle in quickly on each occasion that they visit the service. The Statement of Purpose describes the criteria for admission to the home. However, the admission criteria are not always applied clearly with each young person. Although this is a short-break service, the staff team help young people to maintain regular contact with their family and friends during each visit. They have good access to a telephone to make and receive calls.

The home is well established within the local community and has good access to local public transport. Children benefit from staying in accommodation which is well decorated, furnished and equipped. The building presents as a comfortable family home. Each young person coming to visit enjoys the privacy of their own bedroom. They also benefit from kitchen, dining and lounge areas which are well presented and furnished. There are more than sufficient bathroom facilities to meet the needs of young people. The staff team monitor the physical condition of the building and work closely with the dedicated maintenance person to ensure that it remains homely and comfortable for the young people living there.

The staff team are trained in first aid, administration of medication and treatment and safe food hygiene. Any medication needed by young people during their visits is administered safely. Additional specialist training to meet the health needs of young people is provided where this is necessary. A range of specialist equipment is provided at the home and this is regularly checked to ensure it is safe and properly maintained.

The individual food preferences and any special dietary needs young people have are met. Young people are actively involved in menu choice and contribute their ideas to menu planning. The menus are prepared with the help and advice of the cook and their assistant. Young people receive food which includes a range of healthy choices and examples of food from different cultures. The meals provided are varied and ensure that young people enjoy a suitable and healthy diet. One placing social worker described positively how the staff team liaise with dieticians to plan and encourage healthy eating for the benefit of young people.

Young people enjoy positive supportive relationships with staff at the home. They talk very regularly with the staff and are encouraged to give their views on how the home is run. Their views are recorded. The manager regularly reads and reviews these with the staff team and works to incorporate them into the future planning at the home. Young people can talk to someone if they ever feel sad. Their parents and carers also confirmed that they were confident that any concerns, issues or complaints would be taken seriously by staff at the home.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

There are good arrangements in place at the home which help the staff team to safeguard young people very effectively. Young people confirm that they always feel

safe when staying at the home. The staff team have access to detailed safeguarding guidance and reporting procedures and are trained to help protect young people from abuse and to keep them safe. Very thorough risk assessments are completed for each young person and these are reviewed very regularly with their carers and placing social workers.

There are clear procedures in place which are used to help ensure that if young people go missing they are found and kept safe, as quickly as possible. The procedures used at the home have been discussed and agreed with the local police and local authority safeguarding staff. The staff team also have clear guidance to follow which they use to help reduce the risk of bullying to any young person staying at the home.

The staff team maintain very positive relationships with young people staying at the home and their carers. They are trained in the appropriate use of physical restraint where this is ever necessary to help keep young people safe. There is also detailed guidance for staff to follow regarding the use of agreed sanctions. However, the record of sanctions applied does not always include all of the information required.

There are detailed risk assessments in place which are regularly reviewed by staff to help ensure the home is a safe place for young people to live in. Checks are also completed on the safety equipment used to help protect young people. However, these checks do not always occur at the required regularity. The staff team know what to do in an emergency and practice this very regularly with all of the young people who come to stay at the home.

The young people who use the service benefit from a very stable staff team. Arrangements are in place to complete checks on any new staff team members to ensure they are suitable to work with children. However, a clear record is not maintained of all the checks that have been completed. Any visitors to the home are supervised by the staff team to help ensure that children are kept safe when visitors are present.

Leadership and management

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

The leadership and management arrangements at the home are good. The Statement of Purpose gives clear information about the service provided. Young people and their carers receive their own guide to the home. It is presented to a very high standard and contains very good information about how the service is provided and informs young people who they should speak to if they need any further advice. However, the current version does not describe to young people how they can contact their own independent reviewing officer should they wish to.

The staff team are very well qualified and are very experienced in working with children and young people. They receive regular supervision from the manager. They also access additional training opportunities regularly. The manager closely monitors

and adjusts staffing levels to ensure that young people are always given the support they need.

There are good systems in place to consult with young people and their carers, to monitor the home's records and to create monthly reports regarding the quality of the service provided to young people. The manager uses these systems very effectively to monitor the strengths and weaknesses of the home. There are also regular monitoring visits to the home, completed on behalf of the registered provider. However, reports from these visits do not always report on each of the matters required. Very positively, the one action and one recommendation made regarding the complaints procedures at the home and the information to be provided to young people and their carers have each been implemented fully.

Equality and diversity practice is **good**.