

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Stephen Trainor
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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 outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for the service.

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 accommodation is a short break home for children and young people with a disability. The home is operated by a local authority social services department. Support and care is provided for up to four young people, both genders, from five years old up to 17 years. The house is single storey, detached and adapted to support residents with a disability. Occupational health are consulted when changes to the building or specialist equipment is required.

The home is situated fairly close to a large town centre. It has sufficient space and rooms, where the young people can pursue their leisure interests and hobbies. There is an enclosed garden at the rear of the home. A cinema and parks, as well as sports and athletics facilities are a short walk or journey away. The home has a specially adapted vehicle and is close to bus routes, that connect it with the local community and the national rail link. Shops and supermarkets are accessible within the surrounding community.

Summary

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

This interim, unannounced inspection comments on the outcome areas staying safe and organisation. Progress against a recommendation made during the last inspection was evaluated.

This is an outstanding service, providing a consistent response to meeting young people's specific needs. Quality assurance systems demonstrate that the management team are reflecting on practice and continually develop the service in line with new initiatives. The responsible local authority is undertaking a major review and redesign of its residential services. There is clear monitoring of new national minimum standards and regulations. The home's manager monitors information on Ofsted web sites to ensure that she has all the relevant information to manage change.

A wide range of equality and diversity matters are addressed and a high quality service is being provided. Staff are experienced. The home's Registered Manager provides effective leadership. Staff remain highly motivated. Staff have established professional as well as supportive relationships with parents. There is excellent communication and effective consultation. Partnership arrangements with families, social workers and different professionals and agencies who support the children are firmly established. Young people are being looked after safely and have the opportunity to develop skills through positive experiences they gain.

This report highlights one advisory recommendation. The home is subject to much change following a restructure by the responsible local authority. The introduction of new national minimum standards and -changes to regulations and the inspection framework will also impact on the home's operation. The extent of change and how this will be managed is not yet captured in the home's development plan.

Improvements since the last inspection

A recommendation made at the last inspection had been suitably addressed. An up to date certificate of public and employee liability insurance was displayed.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is not judged.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Arrangements for complaints and compliments, safeguarding children, bullying and behaviour management are handled well and ensure that young people feel listened to and protected. Safeguarding policies are made clear and staff practice is reflective of the procedural guidance within these policies. Bullying guidance is updated in line with new government guidance. No concerns were highlighted throughout the course of this inspection. No notifications had been made to Ofsted between inspections. There have been no complaints between inspections. The home continues to receive many positive comments on the quality of services and high standards of care being provided. Consultation and communication is effective. Signed agreements underpin all the work undertaken.

The young people's privacy is respected within the routines operated. Due to the nature of some of the young people's needs, intimate care tasks are required and these are done in an appropriate and respectful manner. Appropriate staff training is provided for young people requiring staff help when moving and handling support is needed. Plans clearly outline the methods and techniques to be used. Staff practice incorporates parental wishes on how their children need to be cared for. Preferred handling strategies are discussed. All staff receive training and have suitable skills to respond to presenting matters. The home also has a fully trained representative to support positive handling techniques.

Suitable safeguarding and complaints information is provided for the young people and their parents. Staff utilise picture exchange communication systems as well as picture and word association to help young people's comprehension. Staff receive child protection training, in order that they can respond appropriately to allegations or suspicions of abuse. Policy and procedural guidance established at this home is consistent with local safeguarding team protocols.

A coordinated response is evident to security, health and safety. Servicing schedules are programmed and all relevant certificates relating to fire precautions, electrical and gas installations and appliance testing are held. No hazards were observed to young people's safety. There is a central alerting system set up to receive communications from the Medical Devices Agency. Fire precautions are clearly thought out to cover a 24-hour period of accommodation. Individual night time arrangements are detailed. The public and employee liability insurance certificate is up to date.

No new staff appointments had been made between inspections. Past checks on the quality of staff vetting, recruitment and selection confirmed that a robust system is evident. The Registered Manager is supported very well by administration staff resulting in accurate spreadsheets being maintained on all staff employed at the home. No staff start ahead of being in receipt of an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau check. Suitable vetting of visitors to the home is also undertaken, with identity checks being carried out before access is permitted.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is not judged.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is not judged.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is not judged.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The Registered Manager has been instrumental in shaping many of the services at this home. Staff members are fully aware of their roles. There is clear and effective leadership to ensure high quality service continue to be provided. There are many changes affecting this home as the responsible authority undertakes a comprehensive review of the residential services it provides. Staff anxieties are managed professionally by the Registered Manager. The impact of ongoing change due to the 'residential redesign' is not yet fully outlined within the home's development plan. Communication with Ofsted remains good. The responsible

authority is going through a process to register a new responsible individual for the service. The Registered Manager demonstrates that she is very responsive to change.

Quality assurance systems show that the management team are reflecting on the need to continually develop services. The home provides a safe and stable environment. Checks are in place to monitor the home's operation. Detailed reports are maintained in-house. Reports are also being forwarded to Ofsted. Objective comments support ongoing improvements as well as ensuring records and guidance remain up to date. This type of monitoring provides additional safeguards to assure children's safety.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. Good training programmes are accessed. There is good use of self-evaluation and reflection on practice. Many of the young people have profound disabilities, including communication difficulties. Individualised care planning is characterised by a clear commitment to establishing equality and fairness for everyone receiving a short break at the home. A diverse section of the local community is supported. Parents show great satisfaction in the services being provided. The home has a lengthy history of being managed efficiently. The efficient management of young people's needs has established excellent continuity between life at this children's home, respective schools and the home address.

What must be done to secure future improvement?

Recommendations

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

- ensure the home's development plan is updated if changes are made to the home's operation as a result of any restructuring by the responsible authority. (NMS 33.5)