

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC035954
Inspection date	27/06/2013
Inspector	Chris Scully
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	18/02/2013
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This service provides short-term breaks for seven young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties, physical disabilities and learning disabilities. In addition, two children are able to live at the home. The home is owned and managed by the local authority.

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 young people who have disabilities and complex needs with enjoyable short breaks in an exceptionally caring and stimulating environment. The support and opportunities they receive enables them to have fun, become more independent and make excellent progress in all aspects of their lives. Children and young people are safe and protected from significant harm. Parents and social workers are very happy with the quality of care and the support children receive from the staff. Parents say the home is vital to them. They also say they can enjoy a break knowing their children are being well looked after and is safe.'

Young people receive highly personalised care packed which is explicitly tailored to their individual needs. Staff work in partnership with other agencies to review and adapt plans to ensure young people's needs are met well in day-to-day care planning.

Young people are central to everything the home does. They feel valued as staff listen to them and take their choices into consideration when planning activities. Young people enjoy very positive relationships with staff which enable them to feel safe and secure.

The home is well managed. The Registered Manager and staff have addressed all of their issues from the previous inspection. Monitoring of the home is secure and helps promote continuous improvement. There are some shortfalls arising from this

inspection relating to some records and procedures, development of the garden area and staff training. These matters are already being addressed by the home.

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
30 (2001)	ensure if any of the events listed in column 1 of the table in Schedule 5 takes place, the registered person shall without delay notify the persons indicated in column 2 of the table, in particular events which should be notified to Ofsted. (Regulation 30 (1))	02/08/2013

Recommendations

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

- ensure that staff have appropriate training, supervision and support if they are required to supervise and facilitate contact (NMS 9.2)
- ensure information about the young people is clearly recorded and in a way which will be helpful in the future, in particular, health care passports and records of self harm (NMS 22.5)
- ensure children have access to a range of education resources to support their learning beyond the school day in particular access to the internet (NMS 8.2)
- enhance further children's emotional, intellectual, social, creative and physical skills in particular developing the garden areas (NMS 7.1)
- ensure the disciplinary procedures are clear with particular regard as to whom to contact for advice out of hours (NMS 17.7)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **outstanding**.

Children and young people are making exceptional progress as a result of their short breaks at the home. They really enjoy coming to the home and really make the most of their stay. Parents say, 'Our child has one to one care and they look forward to staying here.' Parents comment on how the home has significantly enhanced young

people's social skills and interaction. A social worker said that parents had told them how their child now sits in the lounge with them whereas before they stayed in their room. They feel this is as a result of them socialising with other children at the home.

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.

Children feel happy and settled because of the well-planned inductions to the home which are carefully tailored to young people's individual needs. Consequently they feel confident and secure in their time away from their family. They are becoming more communicative and sociable. A parent said the staff work really hard to help their child settle, for example they set their room out as requested which helped them feel at home. Young people develop positive and trusting relationships with staff and enjoy the company of their friends.

Their wishes and views are central to the organisation of the setting. Young people make choices about how they want to spend this time, for example, going out with staff or taking part in activities within the home. A young person said, about the staff that they are 'great, that they are happy here and staff look after them after when they are ill.

Young people take increasing responsibility for the personal care needs and health. They make healthier choices about the food they eat, for example, some young people are enjoying a much more varied diet. Young people's dietary needs are very well managed. The cook and staff are very aware of each young person's food preferences, allergies and how they like their food to be served, even down to how their sandwiches should be cut. This means young people enjoy a variety of healthy food options which support their health and well-being.

Young people are more able to manage their emotions such as not becoming distressed when things do not go the way they want them to. Young people respond positively to the challenges that staff provide them with to promote their personal growth, including taking opportunities to become more independent appropriate to their age, level of understanding and disability. They go shopping and help around the house, for example clearing the table and baking with staff. Young people especially enjoy going shopping to spend their money.

Young people are in regular contact with their families throughout their stay. Parents say that staff keep them well informed about their child's time at the home. Contact arrangements for young people residing at the home are managed well by staff who facilitate visits. However, staff have not had any recent training on supervising contact visits. Staff are very aware that contact can be stressful for young people so work in partnerships with other agencies and family members to ensure this goes as smoothly as possible for them.

Quality of care

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

Young people are thriving in the caring and stimulating atmosphere. Staff provide an exceptional standard of care that considerably enhances children and young people's experiences, progress and development. Parents and social workers are very positive about the quality of care provided at the home. They say staff often go above and beyond what is expected of them; they care about our children and treat them like their own. Staff have made 'this feel like it is a home from home, even for the most challenging child.' Young people enjoy spending time with staff, especially when they are engaging in their favourite activities such as posting bean bags through chairs.

Staff are very 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 children need to reduce their anxieties. Staff are skilled at helping all young people feel safe and relaxed. Consequently they are able to enjoy their time here and engage in a range of fun, stimulating activities of their choice.

Staff understand how best to communicate with individuals in ways that children easily understand. Staff's excellent communication skills enable children and young people express their wishes and feelings and make choices. Staff ensure young people's views are listened to and where possible acted upon. Young people have access to independent advocates who can act on their behalf.

Staff always place the well-being of individual children and young people at the centre of their practice. They are very knowledgeable about children and young people's individual needs and plan for each stay exceedingly well. Careful consideration is given to young people's stays to ensure the group is compatible, so friendships are promoted and their diverse needs can be met.

Care planning is highly personalised and allows the uniqueness of each young person to shine. Planning carefully encompasses young people's ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic diversity. Staff work tirelessly to ensure barriers to participation in events within the home and community are eliminated. As a result, young people are able to engage in an extensive range of activities, such as youth clubs, wheelchair dancing and trampoline clubs. Young people are increasing in confidence as they use public transport more to access activities. However, young people's ability to use electronic devices to further support their learning, such as computer tablets, is limited due to the lack of internet access within the home.

Young people's plans are regularly and comprehensively reviewed to ensure their needs continue to be met. Staff contribute effectively to each child's short break care plan review by producing a report that provides a picture of the young person's progress. Staff play a significant role in planning for young people's transition into adult life. Staff work extremely well to prepare young people and their parents for

moving on and receiving support from adult services, including providing them with information about the services and arranging visits to see amenities. Social worker's say, staff provided exceptional support to a young person who has moved on. This support has enabled the young person to move successfully into their new home and remain happy and settled.

Young people enjoy healthy lifestyles, continue to have excellent access to a full range of health services and receive excellent support with any health problems. Staff have an excellent understanding of children and young people's specific health needs to ensure children's needs are met on a daily basis. Staff carrying out specialist health tasks are always competent and suitably trained.

Staff closely monitor young people care, for example the management of individual children's epilepsy. They ensure children and young people always get suitable medical advice and treatment when they are feeling unwell or showing signs of distress. The arrangements for dealing with medication are safe and effective. Staff are suitably trained in first aid and the management of medication.

Young people are flourishing in a warm, welcoming environment. Young people have access to garden areas which have recently been fitted with a swing. The areas are functional but have yet to be developed to further enhance young people's enjoyment of their time outdoors. Young people's bedrooms are well designed and furnished to promote their privacy and meet any specific needs they may have in relation to their health and disability. Their bedrooms are prepared in advance for their stay and are personalised, which helps them to 'feel at home'. The walls of the home are adorned with young people's art work and various picture transfers. Staff work hard to ensure all rooms reflect the uniqueness of the young people staying and meet their diverse individual needs.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people safety and well-being is of paramount importance to staff. They work exceptionally well with social workers and parents to ensure young people are safe and feel safe in the home. Staff fully understand their responsibility to protect children and are well trained in child protection. They are able to recognise the signs and symptoms of abuse, including issues in relation to children's personal circumstances and learning disabilities. This means they are able to take swift, effective action to help protect young people from harm. Staff are aware of the home's whistle blowing system and say they feel confident to act quickly if they have any concerns.

Young people do not go missing. This is due to the high staffing ratios which mean young people are effectively supervised at all times. Comprehensive risk assessments are in place to help keep young people safe. These effectively balance the need to keep young people safe while allowing them to take safe risks, such as endeavouring

to use public transport. Also, staff effectively support young people's understanding and competence in road safety which further enhances their growth and development.

Staff are exceptionally aware of each young people's behaviour and how these impact upon them and other people around them. This means they are able to intercede quickly and help diffuse any anxieties the young person may be facing. Young people are becoming more able to regulate their own behaviour which results in the minimal use of physical intervention to support them. Most interventions involve minimal contact, such as escorting a young person away from a situation to enable them to calm and reengage in their activities.

Staff are very aware of the effect each young person's disability has on their social and emotional development and behaviour. Staff work effectively and sensitively with children and young people to manage their behaviour constructively and reduce their levels of anxiety. This may be as simple as explaining to them what is happening and what they are going to do next, or providing them with regular experiences in the community to help them to feel confident in different surroundings.

Young people live in a physically safe environment. They are protected from any hazards by a comprehensive range of detailed health and safety procedures, risk assessments and checks. Staff carry out regular health and safety checks, including fire drills with children, to ensure the premises are safe and children know what to do in case of an emergency. Staff are extremely proactive in repairing any damage quickly so that the home remains well-maintained.

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

Leadership and management

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

The home is well led by a dedicated, qualified and experienced Registered Manager. The Registered Manager and staff consistently demonstrate a strong commitment to delivering exceptional care practice tailored to the personal needs of the children and young people they look after. The effectiveness of this approach is evident in the excellent progress young people are making.

The Statement of Purpose is shared with young people's families and placing authorities. The Statement of Purpose is well written and provides a clear picture of the home's aims and objectives. This means placing authorities and young people's families are well aware of the care and support young people can expect to receive.

Young people are appropriately informed about their rights and the support

provided. This is achieved through direct discussions with young people and the detailed, fun young people's guide which is provided to them in various formats, for example pictorial communication systems. Consequently all young people have equal access to information and know who to contact with any concerns.

Staff are competent, enthusiastic, caring, and work very well together to promote young people's welfare. The skills within the staff team match young people's needs very well. The numbers of staff on duty are sufficient to meet the needs of children and young people in the best possible way, including the support they need for their personal and health care and opportunities to take part in different activities. All staff receive regular training to refresh their skills in areas such as the administration of medication, child protection, physical interventions and epilepsy care.

The home has demonstrated its commitment to on-going improvement by addressing the statutory requirements and recommendations raised at the last inspection. The Registered Manager and staff have worked tirelessly with placing authorities and social workers to ensure all documentation is in place, is updated and is signed by the appropriate persons. All young people placed as an emergency receive reviews within 72-hours of their placement. Enhanced monitoring systems within the home mean young people's records are regularly reviewed and updated by their key worker, for example their placement plan, contact arrangements and transition plans.

Records and documentation are generally well maintained, though the recording of incidents of self-harm and health-care passports are not as comprehensive as other records. Policies and procedures are regularly reviewed to ensure they remain suitable. However, the disciplinary policy does not make it clear about who to contact out of hours should the Registered Manager have a concern.

Appropriate systems are in place for notifying Ofsted of any incidents, although on one occasion Ofsted was not notified when a young person was taken to hospital. This was an oversight on behalf of the home and did not impact upon the care the young person received.

Monitoring of the home has improved and provides additional insight in to the organisation of the home. Persons carrying out monitoring visits on behalf of the organisation bring to the Registered Managers attention any shortfalls or issues arising from discussions with parents, carers and placing authorities. This enables the Registered Manager to address the issues quickly to the satisfaction of all concerned, for example providing reassurances regarding the booking of stays to ensure the cancellation of these are kept to a minimum. The Registered Manager, deputy and senior staff effectively monitor the systems within the home such as the storage of medication to ensure robust recording systems remain in place.

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* and the evaluation schedule for the inspection of children's homes.