

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Sonya Robinson
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Date of last inspection	22/02/2012
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The home provides short-term breaks and some respite care for children and young people, from the ages of seven years to 17 years, with physical and learning disabilities.

The home is owned and run by 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 **adequate**.

Young people receive short breaks and respite in a caring environment. They make steady progress, in relation to their starting points, across all aspects of their welfare, development and education. This view is shared by social workers.

Staff are aware of the individual needs of the young people and young people respond positively because of the quality of the care that they receive. Care is enhanced by the commitment that the staff demonstrate to principles of equality and diversity.

Professionals report a strong sense of safety in this home and say that emerging issues are dealt with quickly. Staff demonstrate sound knowledge about safeguarding and keep young people safe. They also work sensitively with young people to encourage and help them to understand socially acceptable behaviour. This helps prepare young people for adulthood and taking their place in the community.

The newly Registered Manager creates an environment where young people are able to make positive changes. Managers effectively tackle weaknesses with a view to securing improvement. However, this inspection has identified several issues that require attention. These relate to ensuring that additional staff complete an appropriate childcare qualification; staff appraisals being updated; identifying who is in charge of each shift; staff refresher training in medication; better recording of the medication administered to young people; updating young people's files and

completing consistent effective consultation with young people. There are also some general maintenance issues.

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
12 (2001)	ensure that there is an up to date placement plan for each child or young person accommodated at the home (Regulation 12(1)(a) and (b) and Regulation 12(2))	28/02/2013
21 (2001)	ensure there are suitable arrangements for the recording, handling, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of any medicine received into the children's home (Regulation 21 (1))	31/12/2012
27 (2001)	ensure that all staff receive appropriate training, such as, regular refresher training, appropriate to the work they perform (Regulation 27(4)(a) (b))	31/01/2013
17B (2001)	ensure that where a measure of restraint is used on a child the record must include details of any method used to avoid the need of that measure. (Regulation 17B (4)(b))	31/12/2012

Recommendations

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

- ensure the home provides a comfortable and homely environment and is well-maintained and decorated to a reasonable standard throughout, including the immediate outdoor space (NMS 10.3)
- ensure that all children communicate their views on all aspects of their care and support, for example through key workers sessions and young people's meetings and that these are recorded (NMS 1.3)
- ensure that all staff have their performance individually and formally appraised at least annually and this appraisal takes into account any views of children the service is providing for (NMS 19.6)
- ensure that staff members who are placed in charge of the home and other staff at particular times (e.g. shift leaders) have substantial relevant experience and in particular are identified on the staff rotas as being in charge for that shift (NMS 17.5)
- ensure that all existing care staff have attained a minimum level 3 qualification.

This was previously the National Vocational Qualification in Caring for Children and Young People and from September 2010 is the Children and Young People's Workforce Diploma. (NMS 18.5)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people's enjoyment of school is reflected in their continued attendance while they stay at this home. They have a sense of pride over their achievements which is equally recognised and celebrated by the staff. For example, comments from young people about school work completed, such as colouring-in, were met with praise and encouragement by staff at the tea table. Young people develop confidence and self-worth through having their achievements recognised.

The staff support young people, according to their age, ability and understanding, to develop their personal and social skills. They encourage them to take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing. For example, they develop personal care skills and positive social interaction. This level of support better prepares young people for adult life. Young people also make a positive contribution by learning about budgeting, shopping and undertaking simple household chores, for example, putting toys away as part of tidying up.

Young people spend time with their keyworkers which provides them with opportunities to contribute to the running of the home during their stay; however these are not consistently documented and neither are young people's meetings. Recognition is given to young people's identity and diverse needs and the home is able to demonstrate how cultural needs are met on a day-to-day basis. Photographs throughout the home show young people enjoying a range of activities, outings and expressing feelings.

Individual needs are assessed and addressed in a way that promotes dignity and privacy. Young people are supported by staff as detailed within their placement plan. As a result their needs are acknowledged and young people feel included and valued. Parents are also fully involved. Staff are very knowledgeable about young people's individual needs and are able to discuss these fully, however placement plans and other documentation within young people's files is not consistently updated in all respects.

Quality of care

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

Young people experience a caring and secure relationship with staff. This is validated by the positive regard that young people show towards the staff supporting them.

Staff ensure that meals reflect the heritage and personal preferences of young people. Young people are supported to choose the meals they want from a daily

menu.

Care planning embraces equality and diversity issues. Staff recognise young people's identity within care planning and delivery. Staff help young people to respect the identity and culture of others in a fun environment. For example, during the summer, the home celebrated as the Olympic torch passed by their door; a garden party was held for the Jubilee and a variety of themed nights have taken place. Other activities have included swimming, playing in the sensory room and pampering sessions, all of which have been enjoyed by the young people.

Health plans, are tailored to individual needs of young people. The home has positive relationships with parents and carers. Young people's health and wellbeing is promoted as a result of effective information-sharing.

There are arrangements in place for dealing with medication. However, there have been recent medication errors and staff have not undertaken refresher training in medication for some time. The Registered Manager has taken swift action to address the issues raised and plans for refresher training to take place.

The learning and development opportunities offered to young people assist them in developing their self-esteem. For example, young people have a positive self-image by learning how to complete personal care tasks. Staff also have positive links with the schools attended by young people. Their contribution to meetings, when appropriate, promotes continuity of care.

The rapport between staff and young people is caring. This means young people's feelings are respected and they can influence decisions over the running of the home. There are systems to enable young people to make a complaint which includes information about how to contact Ofsted as well as other helping agencies.

The home is appropriately located and this helps young people develop social networks that promote a sense of belonging and identity. Young people's care plans reflect their need for stability and protection while still ensuring they have the opportunity to sustain attachments and relationships important to them.

Young people stay in an environment that promotes their wellbeing. This includes regular safety checks being carried out in relation to fire; hot water temperatures and electrical and gas appliances. Some areas of the home have been refurbished with some communal areas yet to be addressed. A recent health and safety audit identifies some work to be undertaken. The local authority plans to undertake this in the near future. This has not impacted on the wellbeing or safety of the young people who access this service.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people's welfare is always the most important consideration in the day-to-day

care provided. Care plans identify risks and protective factors for individual young people. Staff respond promptly to concerns about a child or young person's safety and welfare in line with the written procedures and guidance available to them. The contact details of the local child protection services are known by staff.

Staff understand that young people are vulnerable due to age, disability and a lack of understanding of danger. The staff are aware of the risks that children and young people can face in the community and help young people understand these. Staff access information that is in an appropriate format and language to match the age and understanding of the child or young person. This extends to understanding about gentle touch, 'kind hands' and staying safe. This helps young people to feel safe.

Low levels of physical intervention are required as a result of effective behaviour management strategies. However, strategies that have been used to avoid the need for physical restraint are not noted within records, which is a requirement in law.

Due to the complex needs and levels of understanding of the young people, sanctions are not used in this home. Instead young people are distracted and other forms of positive intervention are successfully used to promote acceptable behaviour.

There are security systems in place on the external doors to keep young people safe. Young people have free access around the house and garden. There are protocols in place to protect young people should they go missing, such as, working closely with the police and other professionals to fully acknowledge the vulnerability of young people.

There are procedures that enable young people to make informal as well as formal complaints. Young people are protected from bullying and any behaviour whereby one young person may be targeted by another. Strategies include redirection and distraction along with undertaking individual work to help support young people gain appropriate levels of understanding.

Young people live in a home that is appropriately maintained. Regular health and safety checks of the premises, such as those in relation to gas, electrical appliances and fire, are undertaken. Young people are aware of the fire evacuation procedures which means they are able leave the premises safely in an emergency.

Safe recruitment processes are applied prior to any member of staff commencing employment and ensure all staff are vetted for their suitability to work with children. All visitors to the home are required to sign in and are appropriately supervised during their visit.

Leadership and management

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

The positive relationship between young people and staff is evident within their

everyday interaction. The nice rapport enables young people to experience fun and develop their social skills during their short break.

There is a clear and accessible Statement of Purpose that sets out the aims and objectives of the home. These objectives are translated into everyday practice ensuring that children stay safe, feel safe and are cared for during their stay. Since the last inspection the home has introduced a parents and children's guide which provide important day-to-day information in an improved and accessible format.

There were two requirements and one recommendation made at the last inspection and these have been addressed. As a result, the home has a new Registered Manager who is undertaking a level 5 Diploma in Leadership and Management and the young people's bedrooms have now been completely refurbished. This means that the home is making steady progress.

A representative on behalf of the organisation undertakes regular monthly visits to look at the overall effectiveness of the home and copies of the reports completed are regularly sent to Ofsted. The Registered Manager also monitors the home's records. This process identifies some of the strengths and weaknesses within the service.

Young people's records are securely stored and provide a picture of each child's stay at the home, including their likes and dislikes. Partnerships are forged with the schools and parents by working together in the best interests of the young people. Additionally, there are systems in place to notify relevant people if significant events occur within the home.

Young people are supported by sufficient numbers of staff to meet their needs. However, it is not always clear who is in charge of the shift and not all staff have a relevant qualification in childcare, although there are plans in place for them to complete such training. Staff generally receive regular supervision in which their performance is monitored. However, staff appraisals have lapsed this year. Consequently, performance and training needs are not being sufficiently monitored, identified and planned for.

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 children's homes.