

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Chris Scully
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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 with physical and learning disabilities, who are aged from 7 years to 17 years.

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 **good**.

The home provides children and young people with disabilities and complex needs with enjoyable short breaks in a caring, stimulating environment. The support and opportunities that they receive enables them to have fun, become more independent and make good progress in all aspects of their lives. They are safe and are protected from significant harm.

Staff are committed to their task and have a good understanding of each young person's needs. Care planning is personalised well. Staff have high, but realistic, aspirations for children and young people and work effectively to promote social and emotional development. Consequently, they feel safe and are able to effectively handle difficult situations.

Children and young people's views are central to everything that the home does. Their views are effectively actively sought by staff through various formats such as discussion with young people, their parents and through various communication systems. Parents say that the staff really listen to them and their children and go out of their way to ensure their needs are met.

The home is effectively led and managed by a dedicated Registered Manager and deputy. They are very clear on the strengths and areas for improvement of the home. They are working collaboratively with staff to ensure identified improvements are implemented. Records and documentation are generally well maintained.

However, recording in some areas such as monitoring reports, staff details, health care plans and risk assessments are not always sufficiently detailed.

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
29 (2001)	ensure that the records specified in Schedule 4 are kept up to date; in particular, staff members' date of birth, home address, qualifications and experience of work with children and whether they work full or part time (Regulation 29 (1) & Schedule 4 (2) (c) (d) (e) (f))	30/11/2013
33 (2001)	ensure that the registered provider visits the home at least once a month and interviews with their consent and in private, parents and other relatives in order to form an opinion of the standard of care provided in the home. (Regulation 33 (4)(a))	30/11/2013

Recommendations

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

- ensure that young people's health is promoted in accordance with their placement plan in particular their health care plan is sufficiently detailed (NMS 6.5)
- ensure that there is a system in place to monitor the quality and adequacy of record keeping and take action where needed, with particular regard for young people's risk assessments including missing from care risk assessments and young people's comments sheets (NMS 22.1)
- ensure that all new staff hold the level 3 Children and Young People's Work Force Diploma or be working towards the Diploma within 6 months of the confirmation of employment (NMS 18.5)
- ensure that there are clear and effective procedure for the monitoring and controlling of activities in the home in particular monitoring reports by the Registered Manager and independent person are sufficiently detailed to help bring about change. (NMS 21.1)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

Children and young people are very happy and settled in the home. They enjoy extremely positive relationships with staff which are built upon trust. Social workers say that young people receive very good care and support, which enables them to feel settled and to engage with staff. Parents are extremely complimentary about the progress their children have made since attending the setting. They say, 'the opportunities they give the children are excellent,' and 'staff are totally committed and provide a safe and happy environment and treat my child with dignity and respect.' As a result, children and young people grow in confidence and self-esteem. This means that they are more able to engage with staff and the opportunities around them.

Children and young people develop a good awareness of healthy lifestyles. They are enabled to make informed choices about what they wish to eat. They are consulted about the meals provided through various consultation methods, such as discussion and alternative communication systems. Staff are very attentive to the specific dietary needs of young people. They purchase specific branded items for individual young people as they will only eat these. Children and young people are encouraged to try new foods to broaden their dietary repertoire.

Young people's attendance at school is excellent. They are collected each morning by their transport providers and taken to school. This effective and smooth transition is achieved because of the clear routines in place, which enable young people to prepare for the school day. Schools are complimentary about the home and the support that they give to the young people's education.

Children and young people are consulted on all aspects of their care and the activities provided, for example, in the purchase of computer tablets and new bedroom furniture. They are pleased with the new beds, as they do not make a noise and so they get better night's sleep.

Children and young people respond positively to the opportunities to become more independent in ways appropriate to their age, level of understanding and disability. As a result, they take more responsibility for their personal care and shop for personal items. Children and young people are active in the local community and take pleasure in attending local youth clubs where they can meet with their friends.

Contact with families is supported extremely well. Families enjoy positive relationships with staff and they are confident that they can contact them to discuss their child. Parents and carers are carefully consulted and included in all aspects of their child's care. Their views are respected and valued and are as far as possible acted upon. Social workers say the home provides good support to families; they keep in regular contact which means families are reassured that their child is safe and well. Families enjoy the opportunities to attend events at the home and have recently created group to further support the home.

Quality of care

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

Children and young people thrive because they live in a stable, nurturing and supportive environment. Staff are very good at building positive relationships with them. Staff say, 'we have a person-centred approach that ensures that all children and young people's needs are met.' As a result, children and young people enjoy their time here.

The ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic diversity of all children and young people is fully recognised, valued and promoted. Imaginative and creative steps ensure that they do not experience any barriers in being able to participate in activities within the home or community.

Highly personalised care plans are in place and these are adapted, when necessary, to meet changing needs. New care planning forms are being introduced for all children and young people. During this transition period some of this documentation is not sufficiently detailed, such as some health care plans. However, health care needs are very well supported because staff have a very good understanding of each child and young person and their individual needs. Staff work well with partner agencies such as health care professionals and social workers to develop care packages that effectively meet the individual needs of children and young people.

Staff who carry out specialist health tasks are always competent and suitably trained for example, first aid and the management and administration of medication. Staff closely monitor those children and young people with chronic illnesses. 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 understand how best to communicate with individual children and young people in ways that they easily understand. As a result, children and young people express their wishes and feelings and make choices. Staff have developed innovative ideas, such as designing individual consultation forms in a young person's favourite characters or items, to help them to choose what they would like to do. Children and young people's views are valued as they are listened to and know that any complaints would be taken seriously. There have been no complaints from children and young people or parents for some considerable time.

Children and young people's education is well supported in the home. Staff attend school reviews and keep in regular contact with schools so that they can support children and young people's education within the home. This commitment is valued by parents who say that staff use the same communication systems as they do at home and in school. This provides consistency for children and young people and ensures that they can communicate their wishes and feelings to staff.

Children and young people enjoy a variety of stimulating activities and new experiences in the home and out in the community that otherwise may not be

available to them. This includes using sensory equipment, trips on public transport to Blackpool, visits to the cinema and going on holiday. They enjoy spending times with their friends.

Other children and young people enjoy the opportunities to show visitors their photograph albums and talk about their people who are important to them. Parents say, 'this is a home from home, X cannot wait to get here when it's their turn, X benefits so much from their respite stays.' Social workers say, 'children benefit greatly from this service as they are able to engage in fun activities with their friends.'

The home is warm, welcoming and designed to meet the children and young people's needs. It is well maintained, equipped and decorated to a good standard. Bedrooms are well designed and furnished to promote children's privacy and meet their specific needs. The layout of the house promotes the privacy of children and young people and enables them to get around easily. Staff ensure that bedrooms are prepared before children and young people arrive so their personalities and tastes are reflected. Consequently children and young people feel at home here.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Staff consistently ensure the welfare of children and young people is paramount. They effectively enable them to overcome any difficulties they may face so they have an opportunity to lead happy and fulfilling lives. They live in a safe environment where they are protected from harm and have a strong sense of safety and well-being. Parents say that they are reassured as they know their children are happy and safe here.

Children and young people are safeguarded because staff have a secure understanding of the home's safeguarding and child protection procedures. This means they are clear on the action to take should they have any concerns. They are committed to preserving the confidentiality, dignity and privacy of children and young people. Positive relationships with social workers mean staff are fully aware of any issues which may impact upon young people's safety or well-being. Therefore they are able to take appropriate action when necessary.

Children and young people do not go missing from care as they are effectively supervised at all times. Comprehensive procedures are in place if a child or young person goes missing, which are clearly understood by staff. However, the risk assessments that are completed as part of this procedure are not sufficiently detailed.

Positive behaviour is consistently and effectively promoted. This is supported by the good understanding of staff about each young person's behaviours and their potential triggers. Staff are vigilant and respond quickly and efficiently to the young people's ever changing needs. Staff effectively address difficult situations which

avoids the behaviour escalating.

Children and young people live in a safe environment. They are protected from any hazards by a 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 continually assess the environment to ensure young people are safe for example, adapting activities when building work is taking place in the garden. Parents say, 'I know 100% that if the staff thought my child was in the slightest bit of danger they would remove my child immediately from the situation, assess what happened, how and how to stop it happening again.'

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. Staff records within the home do not always contain information pertaining to the staff's personal information, qualifications and if they are employed full or part time. However, the impact of this is minimised because, this information is available through the head office of the provider. Young people are protected by the effective arrangements for vetting and supervising visitors.

Leadership and management

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

The home is led by a qualified, committed, enthusiastic and competent Registered Manager. Staff are well supported and have an excellent understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They demonstrate a very strong commitment to delivering good childcare practice tailored to each young person's needs. Staff feel empowered as they are actively involved in the planning and organisation of the home. The effectiveness of this approach is evident in the good progress young people are making.

Staff are held accountable for their performance and their individual development needs are identified through regular professional supervision. This means they are able to reflect upon their performance and consider ways of further enhancing this. Staff say they work well together as a team. They receive good quality training to help them develop their individual skills and knowledge relevant to the young people they care for. This includes training on gastrostomy care, enteral feeding and dealing with challenging behaviour.

The Statement of Purpose and young person's guide are shared with young people, their families and placing authorities. These are well written and accessible and offer a clear picture of the home's aims and objectives. This means placing authorities, young people and their families are aware of the care and support young people can expect to receive.

Records and documentation are generally appropriately maintained. However some,

such as young people's individual risk assessments and daily comments sheets, lack detail. Therefore they do not always provide a clear picture of the young person's time at the home. The Registered Manager and deputy are aware of this issue and are continually working with staff to improve the quality of the record keeping. This has resulted in the introduction of the new records and documentation to simplify the formats.

Appropriate action has been taken to address the issues from the last inspection. At the last inspection, not all care staff held a level 3 childcare qualification. These members of staff are in the process of completing their courses. However, more recently appointed staff who do not hold an appropriate qualification, have yet to be placed on a training course.

Staff and young people are regularly consulted about the home; however consultation with parents can be sporadic. Therefore this part of the requirement has been reissued. Monitoring of the home is appropriate although report by the Registered Manager and the independent person lack detail. However this is a recording issue and the effect of this is counterbalanced as the Registered Manager is very aware of the strengths and areas for improvement within the home.

The Registered Manager and deputy have taken great strides since the last inspection to improve upon the organisation of the home and outcomes for young people. Achievements include the employment of casual staff to cover staff holidays, the purchase of computer tablets, and improving in the facilities and the access to the garden for wheelchair users. The comprehensive business plan clearly outlines the future development for the home. Young people are pleased with the improvements thus far and say 'I like using the computer tablet before I go to bed.'

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.