

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Catherine Ross
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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

The home is a children's respite service registered to a local authority and located near the centre of town. It provides respite and overnight care for up to eight children and young people with learning and/or physical disabilities who are aged between five and 17 years of age.

There are eight single bedrooms with two lounges, a play area, soft play area and two dining rooms. There is a secure outdoor play area at the back of the property, a playground at the side with a range of equipment, and car parking is at the front. The home is close to local shops and leisure facilities. There is good access to public transport.

Overall effectiveness

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

Children and young people benefit from attending a provision where their individual needs are recognised and their wishes and feelings are listened too. This allows them to make exceptional progress. Staff have consistently high aspirations for young people and place the well-being of each child at the centre of their practice. Children and young people are kept safe and each child's individual communication style is valued and respected and positive styles of behaviour are encouraged. Children, young people and staff benefit from an efficiently and effectively run home where managers understand the strengths and weaknesses of the provision. There are some areas for improvement which relate to staff keeping up to date with first aid qualifications, balanced meals being offered and staff keeping up to date with practice developments.

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
27 (2001)	ensure staff received appropriate training; this is in relation to first aid qualifications. (Regulation 27 (a))	01/08/2011

Recommendations

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

- ensure children are enabled to maintain a healthy lifestyles this in relation to providing young people with healthy choices at mealtimes (NMS 6.2)
- ensure staff are kept up to date with professional, legal and practice developments this is in relation to the National Minimum Standards 2011. (NMS 18.1)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Children and young people benefit from a staff team who have consistently high aspirations for them. Innovative ways are used to gather young people's opinions, wishes and feelings which then influences care reviews and the direct care young people receive. Staff work in conjunction with parents/carers, schools and young people to plan and review care. Staff also take time to help young people to understand why it may not be possible to act upon their wishes in all cases.

Staff consistently and effectively challenge barriers which may affect children with disabilities, for instance, children and young people are able to take part in a variety of trips and outings enabling them to participate fully in society. Although young people only attend the home for short periods of time, parents agree that during their stays young people are able to make significant progress towards goals which include goals towards independence. Staff support and encourage young people to develop independent living skills. They work well in partnership with parents, professionals and other agencies to develop young people's personal and social skills so that they can reach their full potential.

Young people benefit from a staff group who have a well-developed understanding and sensitive approach to their individual needs regarding their health, disability, ethnicity and family backgrounds. Staff are creative in engaging young people in celebration of diverse faith festivals, annual celebrations and community events to enhance children and young people's experience and understanding. Young people's privacy is respected and their personal dignity is well promoted.

Young people enjoy good health, including physical, emotional and psychological health. Young people's health is comprehensively assessed and their identified needs are met through detailed health care plans. This means that individual needs are clearly identified and action plans produced. Staff receive training and support in medical practices to meet particular or specialist health care needs of young people. Young people's health is well promoted and given high priority.

Quality of care

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

Children and young people benefit from the consistent, quality relationships they enjoy with the stable staff team who parents describe as "enthusiastic and caring". Staff demonstrate great enthusiasm and motivation in the continued welfare and progress of individuals.

The home provides a healthy environment where young people are able to access the services and support they need to meet their physical, emotional and psychological health needs. The home has a wide range of different equipment and resources to meet the diverse and complex health care needs of young people. These are regularly reviewed to ensure the appropriate facilities are provided to meet the individual needs of young people currently in placement. Young people are encouraged to engage in exercise, such as cycling and swimming. Staff support children and young people in trying to understand healthy eating and food choices, However, meals do not always reflect a balanced diet and young people do not always offered healthy alternatives.

Young people are provided with information of how to make a complaint and this information is available in a wide range of formats. Very few complaints are made but parents feel if they were ever concerned about anything or made a complaint it would be acted on appropriately. Parents state 'communication is excellent'. Young people's placement and care plans provide a good level of detail to inform staff practice so that the young person's needs are well met. Additional action plans for specific needs and goals, such as health and independence needs, ensure a personalised service is given to meet the complex needs of young people. The management promote an open, inclusive ethos so that carers and professionals work effectively together to meet the needs of the young people.

The home has excellent facilities and arrangements for the safe storage and administration of medication, which means that young people receive their medication in line with their prescription. Staff are trained in the safe administration of medication and staff are able to keep young people safe in the event of a health emergency.

Young people enjoy being outdoors in the garden and using play equipment including the slide and bikes. Staff promote play with young people to engage them in activities with their peers, extend their skills and abilities and provide new experiences. Young people also have access to a computer room and learn to take turns using the facilities. Staff consult young people about how they wish to spend their time and young people are able to engage in their individual choices instead of having choices made for them.

The children's home is a detached property with gardens. It is well maintained and there are good facilities and resources. The home is located in an urban area; this makes for easy access to a range of community facilities and resources for health, education, recreation and leisure. The space, facilities and grounds provide a safe secure environment for young people.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Children and young people are kept safe and feel safe within the home. Parents confirm that young people often excitedly look forward to their periods of short break respite care. Young people benefit from the support provided by their key workers and other staff that they are able to turn to if they feel troubled. Staff receive regular training in safeguarding and are able to recognise the particular vulnerabilities relating to the diverse needs of the children and young people in their care. There are clear safeguarding procedures which staff use appropriately although parents are not always clear about what procedures staff would follow if they are concerned about a young person's safety.

There are systems and processes in place to facilitate communication between parents, schools, health services and the children's home so that they can effectively share the care of the young person and protect them from harm. For example, the individual diary for each young person facilitates communication of any significant changes, events or concerns. The majority of parents find this to be a good method of communication while others feel they would like information recorded more consistently.

There are good levels of staffing to provide sufficient supervision of young people to safeguard their health and welfare. Staff monitor group dynamics and review placements if there is significant potential for bullying amongst peers. Staff have worked with young people to help them understand what bullying is, for example, a display has been created about bullying. There are no recorded incidences of young people going missing from the home. The staff are aware of procedures to follow should an incident occur. Staff would always immediately search the area and alert appropriate persons and agencies to secure the safety of the young person.

Management and staff promote positive management of behaviour. Priority is given to the application of positive reinforcements and rewards rather than extensive use of sanctions. High levels of staff support and supervision of young people enable effective use of distraction, de-escalation and calming strategies that significantly reduce the need to use physical intervention. Management regularly monitor restraint and sanctions records and provide constructive feedback to staff with review. Staff are relaxed and confident when working with young people.

The home has an effective system for the vetting and supervision of visitors. The management has established a thorough comprehensive system for the recruitment of suitable staff to work with young people. The environment is physically safe and appropriately secure and takes account of the needs and characteristics of the young people. Staff are vigilant and remain sensitive to young people's wish to have solitude whilst at other times providing encouragement and support to socialise with their peers.

Leadership and management

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

The management team effectively and efficiently manage the home. The Statement of Purpose is a user-friendly document with information readily available. It provides a clear useful description and accurately reflects the service provided. A child-centred culture is consistently demonstrated by care staff. This means that young people receive suitable support to meet a wide range of complex needs and diverse dependencies.

Regular monthly unannounced monitoring visits and reports of the home are completed by senior management. These provide quality assurance monitoring of the service provision. In addition, the registered manager completes monthly monitoring of systems and processes which informs the quality assurance systems and provides constructive criticism of staff practice in the home. Health and safety requirements are up to date, for example, fire drills are carried out regularly. At the previous inspection one action and two recommendations were raised. All three have been acted upon. Inappropriate bathroom door locks have been replaced, there is now a risk assessment in place regarding access to wiring and cables and there is now regular testing of emergency lighting, fire alarms and fire fighting equipment. These measures ensure children and young people are safeguarded from risks to their health and safety.

The young people benefit from the individual care provided by a sufficient number of permanent staff. Staffing arrangements are well planned to ensure there is an adequate number of staff on each shift to provide consistency of care for young people. Outside professionals who have contact with the home feel team work is a strength of the service. The staff are dedicated to providing continuity and consistent care in a safe, secure, stimulating environment for young people. However, staff have not yet been given the opportunity to use the new National Minimum Standards 2011 in their practice to further secure the quality of care young people receive. Staff are well supported through individual supervision. Staff attend a range of training to achieve and maintain competency in their care practice. However, several staff have out of date first aid qualifications, which management are taking steps to rectify.

Young people's records are well structured and are held secure and confidential. They cover all matters required in the regulations. Young people make good progress because of the effective management systems that are in place.

Equality and diversity practice is **good**.