

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	16/02/2012
Inspector	Rebecca Sharp
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Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	03/06/2011
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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.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Good progress	The children's home has demonstrated continued improvement in quality of care and outcomes for children and young people and where appropriate has addressed all requirements and the large majority of recommendations that were raised at the previous inspection.
Satisfactory progress	The children's home has maintained quality of care and outcomes for children and young people and where appropriate has addressed all requirements and the majority of recommendations that were raised at the previous inspection.
Inadequate progress	The children's home has failed to address one or more requirements and/or has not met the majority of recommendations and/or the quality of care and outcomes for children and young people have declined since the last full inspection.

Progress

Since their previous inspection the service is judged to be making **satisfactory** progress.

The last full inspection on 3rd June 2011 saw the home's overall effectiveness judged as good. One statutory requirement was made in relation to staff training and two good practice recommendations were made. The purpose of this inspection is to look at how the registered persons have worked towards rectifying the identified shortfalls and what progress has been made in maintaining levels of quality of care and outcomes for children.

The manager was asked to ensure children are provided with healthy choices at mealtimes; to ensure staff are kept up to date with new practice guidance and regulations; and that first aid training is kept up to date for staff. All these shortfalls have now been addressed. Children enjoy a varied menu which is planned on a weekly basis, in consultation with the children, and contains alternative meals if the main meal is not to a child's liking. A good percentage of the meals contain vegetables or are accompanied by salad and a fully stocked fruit bowl is readily available. Some children have a limited diet due to health reasons and this is catered

for by the home. Developments have been made in the creation of a catalogue of photographs of particular meals available, in order to allow children to make their own choices based on a visual aid. Children are encouraged to try new foods, especially healthier options in order to introduce new tastes and textures.

All staff now have an awareness of updated practice guidance and contribute to the home's self-evaluation based on this and the inspection framework. This is a new development introduced by the acting manager in response to the recommendation and also as part of staff development. All staff are now up to date with statutory training which supports the safeguarding of the children in their care. The company has streamlined the training system which supports the management of the home in identifying training needs. Staff training and awareness ensures the maintenance of previous levels of quality of care and outcomes for children.

Extensive building work has begun since the last inspection and is ongoing. Once completed, children with more complex health needs and behaviours will be able to access the service due to the revised layout of the home. There are comprehensive health and safety plans in place relating to the construction work, and extensive risk assessments are in place to ensure the safety of the children and staff. Necessary alterations have been made in the interim to ensure that children are not affected by the work and that they have the opportunity to access a consistent level of service. This has meant, however, that the home has had to reduce the number of children accessing the service at one time in order to ensure their safety. Due to the focus of the building work, and coupled with staff shortages as a result of sickness including the Registered Manager, the formal supervision of staff has suffered. Staff are not receiving regular supervision and, therefore, are not meeting standards in this area. However, staff meetings are held regularly, with good attendance, which provide a level of support from management for the staff team. The acting manager also receives positive support from the senior management team.

Periodic consultations are completed with parents and children. These are used by the home as a developmental tool in order to improve the service and also provide highly-valued feedback for staff and management. One parent stated, '(my child) has attended the home for just over a year, at first reluctantly, but the patience, skill, and professionalism, and above all kindness of the staff, has changed this from a frightening experience to one they look forward to.' Children are also consulted regularly regarding the menu choices and what activities they would like to take part in. Most importantly, they are consulted as part of their 'person-centred meetings' which the home has evolved in place of review meetings. This is a particular strength of the service as children are given the opportunity to have a positive influence regarding their care.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- ensure staff have access to support and advice, and are provided with regular supervision. (NMS 19.4)

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 progress made by the provider since the last full inspection, identifies any further strengths, any areas for improvement and makes judgements as outlined in the *Inspection of children's homes – framework for inspection (March 2011)*.