

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC036186
Inspection date	28/06/2012
Inspector	Catherine Ross
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	16/02/2012
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The home is a children's respite service registered to a local authority. It provides respite and overnight care for up to eight children and young people with learning and/or physical disabilities.

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**.

This home provides exceptionally good care for the young people who use the service. Staff know young people very well and maximise opportunities for young people to develop and reach their full potential. Young people have access to a large range of activities. Staff are extremely responsive to young people's needs and young people are encouraged to be independent in every way possible. Young people have the opportunity to try new things in a protected and nurturing way. Young people are kept safe at the home and are supported by a well-trained and supervised team.

Two minor shortfalls were identified at this inspection in relation to the recording of physical restraint and making telephone enquiries when a written reference has been received. These weaknesses have not affected the welfare and safety of young people.

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
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17B (2001)	ensure that where a measure of restraint is used on a child the record includes details of any methods used to avoid the need to use that measure. (Regulation 17B (4) (b))	31/07/2012
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Recommendations

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

- ensure telephone enquiries are made as well as obtaining written references for new employees. (NMS 16.1)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people benefit from individualised support and make considerable progress in their development and in achieving goals. Young people are fully involved in their own care and staff make every effort to enable young people to make choices thus enabling young people to develop their skills. Staff work closely with young people, their parents and carers, and other people significant to their lives to achieve excellent outcomes for children and young people.

Young people are provided with a wide range of stimulating activities and opportunities both within the home and the community to widen their experiences. Staff take time to understand the likes and dislikes of individuals and work hard to positively engage young people in activities they enjoy. Staff have the time to support young people who use a variety of ways of communicating to choose their own activities. An example of this is by using video clips from the computer to help a young person to understand and choose the types of activities he would like to participate in while staying at the home. Staff also enable young people to be as independent as possible. This can be in very small but significant ways. For example, allowing a young person with limited movement in their hands the time to find a specific page in a book. This allows young people to feel independent, proud of their achievements and valued as a young person.

Young people develop various independent living skills. Some young people cook simple meals or bake under staff supervision. Young people are encouraged to take part in the running of the home for example, by helping clear the tables and pushing the refreshment trolley back to the kitchen after lunch or dinner. Young people achieve individual goals such as brushing teeth unaided. Young people receive support to lead a healthy lifestyle. Staff promote healthy eating and also support young people to plan and choose the menus. Staff are continuously developing resources of symbols and pictures of different foods so that young people can communicate their needs and choices.

Young people maintain their attendance at their local schools during their stays. At

the home, young people have various opportunities for learning. This includes reading books and playing educational games. Computers are available for educational and recreational purposes. Specialist equipment is made available to young people so they can use these facilities independently. Young people are able to study with a member of staff if needed thus improving their educational outcomes.

A parent commented, 'There are no negatives. It's all positive. [Name of child] absolutely loves it there. He likes it that much that he doesn't want to come home.'

Quality of care

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

Staff provide an exceptional level of care to young people. Young people are treated as individuals and every aspect of their care is underpinned by staff encouraging young people to grow and develop. Young people who attend the service often have very complex needs. Staff are skilled and dedicated to the care of young people. A social worker commented 'They see tiny, tiny changes in young people and are able to respond to them.' Young people enjoy warm and caring relationships with staff who have a comprehensive knowledge of their needs. A social worker commented that staff were forthcoming in asking for advice when young people's care plans change or there is another significant change. Staff are willing to receive feedback or suggestions for improvement in practice thus improving outcomes for young people. Strong links are maintained with people significant to the lives of young people such as parent, carers and schools which promotes the well-being and development of young people.

Young people's health is promoted in accordance with their care and placement plans. Detailed individual care plans and risk assessments as well as guidance from other professionals such as physiotherapists ensure young people's needs are appropriately met. Young people live in a healthy environment where their assessed health care needs are promoted. Staff respond to any health issues that arise whilst young people are staying at the home. Individual dietary needs are met and care is taken to respond to individual choices of young people at mealtimes. Since the last inspection, arrangements for the administration of medication have changed with the cabinet being moved in to a new room which is cooler. Medication training has been provided. Staff are confident and knowledgeable in relation to the administration of medication.

Young people participate in a full range of opportunities within the home which helps them achieve their maximum potential, and make informed choices. The home has a communal area where young people can enjoy the facilities provided while interacting with staff and other young people. The area has a soft play and a ball pool area which young people enjoy using. There are a range of bikes and tricycles available in the garden as well as lots of toys and books for all ages and abilities. Young people enjoy free access to these areas. Having opportunities to use resources such as these helps young people to develop social skills and their

confidence.

Staff are imaginative in the activities available to young people and staff also take the lead from young people. During the inspection, a young person was enjoying a relaxing foot massage. Another young person indicated they would also like a foot massage and staff were able to provide this. Young people have access to varied resources in the home. They particularly enjoy playing with a small tablet style computer which responds to touch. Staff have found programmes on the computer which allow all young people, regardless of their different type of needs, to use it. For example, a programme which repeats sound or a programme which creates shapes and patterns from touch. Practice such as this allows young people individualised care and maximises their opportunities to grow and develop. Young people are encouraged to make personal choices at all times through choices in activities, food, care, bedding and personal care. Young people are allowed freedom to move about the home as they please and are observed from a far by staff to maintain their safety. Young people's bedrooms are kept open for them to come and go as they please. This gives young people opportunities to have time alone and be independent from adults.

A social worker commented in relation to staff, 'They want the best for young people.'

Safeguarding children and young people

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

The home ensures that children and young people feel safe and are protected from significant harm. The home has recently put together a resource pack for young people to use regarding anti-bullying. The scrapbook shows pictures of young people and staff involved in activities with each other and helps young people understand how positive behaviour can have a positive impact on young people and staff. Parents, carers and professionals are confident in the home's ability to keep young people safe.

The home uses safe care plans to assess different risks for young people. These plans are regularly updated to show current risks. The groups of young people who stay at the home are planned carefully so as to match young people's likes, interests and behaviours together as much as possible. Staff carefully balance allowing young people freedom and time to interact with each other and are close by to step in if any positive behaviour management techniques are needed to help keep young people safe. Staff are trained in managing behaviours in a safe, non-threatening way that uses de-escalation and positive interaction with young people. Restraint is very rarely used and is only used in accordance with the legislative framework. However, records do not reflect any methods used to avoid the use of the measure of restraint. This oversight has not affected the safety and welfare of young people.

There are regular checks on fire alarms, smoke detectors and emergency lighting. Staff carry out fire alarm testing and fire drills to keep young people safe. Personal

emergency evacuation plans provide staff with clear guidance on how to assist each young person to evacuate the building in case of emergency. At night-time a specific fire risk assessment is carried out by members of staff on duty overnight to ensure there are plans in place for the swift evacuation of young people in the event of a fire.

Staff working in the home are subject to recruitment and vetting procedures to ensure their suitability to work with young people however, written references received for new employees are not always followed up with a telephone enquiry.

Young people's safety and welfare are actively promoted both in the home and the community. Staff fully understand their role and responsibilities in relation to safeguarding matters and recognise the particular vulnerabilities of the young people placed in their care. The environment is physically safe and appropriately secure, taking account of the individual needs and characteristics of the young people accessing the service. Specialist equipment, including hoists, slings and specialist beds support the safe moving and handling of young people.

Leadership and management

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

An acting manager has been running the home during a period of absence of the Registered Manager. Management arrangements in the interim have been appropriate and senior managers have been able to offer extra support where necessary. The service is effectively managed by a management team and operates to the aims and objectives set out in its Statement of Purpose. Staff, parents, carers and placing social workers are clear about the provision's aims and the services and facilities it provides.

A recommendation raised at the previous inspection regarding the frequency of staff supervision has been addressed. A new recording format is being used which shows more clearly any gaps in supervisions. Further improvements made to service provision since the last inspection include a redesign and refurbishment of some parts of the building turning the home in to two units with a communal play area between the two. Staff and parents comment that this has given more flexibility over dates for bookings.

Young people receive the care they need from a dedicated staff team who are sufficient in number, experience and training to meet their needs. New staff are provided with a comprehensive induction programme, feel well supported in their roles and feel able to access support from senior staff at any time. An ongoing programme of mandatory and refresher training ensures care practice is kept up to date. This means that young people receive the care they need from informed and competent staff. Daily handover and regular staff meetings take place which promotes communication between the staff team. Staff meetings are used to discuss the care of individual young people and allow staff time to discuss their practice and learn from each other. Parents and other people involved in the lives of young people

comment on the positive approach staff at the home has to receiving feedback. A social worker commented, 'They are always quick to react to anything parents aren't happy about or learn from anything they could have done better.' Another commented, 'Staff are always looking to share information or learn best practice from professionals and parents who know that young person well.'

Staff are enthusiastic and motivated and enjoy bringing new ideas in to the home. There are effective systems in place to monitor the quality of care and achieving best outcomes for children and young people living in the home. Regulation 33 visits take place on a monthly basis, reports are compiled and matters raised are acted upon to improve the quality of care provided and outcomes for young people.

Records are clear and securely stored. Case files examined reflect the individuality of young people and contribute well to an understanding of the care packages provided and young people's experiences while staying at the home.

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.