

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Caroline Jones
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This is a short-break children's home operated by a local authority. It provides care and accommodation for up to 10 young people with physical and learning 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 is a good home that provides high quality care to young people on a short break basis. Young people stay for short breaks in a safe, caring and structured environment that supports them in making progress in their lives. They achieve improved outcomes in their emotional and social development, their self-care skills and independence. Young people enjoy their stay at the home and parents and carers are very complimentary about the service. They comment: 'She runs down the corridor and is so happy to stay; they are like an extension of the family.' Communication between staff and young people's families is excellent and regular consultation is undertaken with them and partner agencies to gain feedback for the improvement and development of the service.

Young people are the focus of care planning and detailed placement plans ensure they are cared for consistently according to their individual needs. The committed staff team work exceptionally well together and with families and partner agencies to ensure young people gain the help and support they need to achieve their potential. Staff have high aspirations for young people and are passionate in ensuring they have the best care and opportunities to participate in society irrespective of disability. Parents and carers comment: 'Staff are excellent and always have a smile, they are so welcoming and don't have airs and graces.'

The home is effectively managed with a strong emphasis on providing a high standard of individualised care. Good monitoring scrutinises the quality of care and plans are in place for continual improvement. The children's guide is available in differing formats; however it requires updating to include details of the Children's Rights Director to promote young people's access to independent advice.

Additionally, the views of young people are not sought during the appraisal process which means that opportunities to learn and improve can be missed.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- ensure that the children's guide includes information on how to contact the Children's Rights Director (NMS 13.5)
- ensure that appraisals take into account any views of young people the service is providing for. (NMS 19.6)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people continue to make good progress in particular to their social development, self-care and independence skills. Staff have built up very good relationships with young people and their families which facilitates an enjoyable and trusting stay for the whole family. Staff understand each young person's individual mannerisms and communication style and use various methods, including pictorial exchange and Makaton to enhance communication further. Parent's and carers are actively encouraged to comment on the service and make suggestions for change and improvement. Excellent communication and partnerships working with young people's families supports the progress young people make.

Staff are proactive in ensuring young people lead a healthy lifestyle irrespective of disability. Young people take part in numerous activities including swimming, walking and day trips. They also attend residential activity holidays with staff, taking part in rock climbing and caving. Young people have individual health plans and risk assessments to ensure a consistent approach to their health needs. This, coupled with consistent liaison with young people's families, ensures that they receive the right support and care they need. Medication is stored safely and records are maintained on the administration of medication. All staff have first aid training and receive training specific to young people's needs arising from disability; this ensures safe caring of young people.

Young people are supported to maintain their individual routine and attend school during their stay. Parents and carers remain in charge of young people's education. Excellent communication between staff, young people's families and school ensures the effective transfer of young people's information and the continuity of care. Young people are assisted to learn during their stay through leisure activities, computer access and sensory experiences. Staff have recently developed a recognition scheme where young people receive certificates to celebrate their achievements.

Young people live with their families and attend the home for planned short-break stays. Young people have their regular bedrooms that they personalise for comfort and familiarity. Staff maintain excellent communication with young people's families through, face-to-face meetings, information booklets, news letters and telephone conversations to facilitate relationships in the best interest of young people.

Quality of care

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

Young people continue to grow in a stable, nurturing and supportive short-break environment. Staff are committed to young people which is evident in the warm, positive relationships they have forged with them. Staff have a thorough understanding of young people's individual needs and know them very well. Young people have individual short-break placement plans that are tailored to meet their individual needs. Regular liaison with young people's families and partner agencies ensures that staff receive the correct guidance to maximise the potential of young people. Clear and detailed information about young people's cultural needs and faith traditions are highlighted within plans to ensure their beliefs are respected and attended to.

Staff hold high aspirations for the young people and challenge barriers to participation, for example, young people take part in inclusion footballs days with the local professional football teams, outward bound activity holidays and circus skills consultation events. These practices promote equality of opportunity for young people during their stay and help to build their confidence and experience of achievement.

Young people and their families receive introductory information about the service, which includes the complaints process. The young people's guide is available in differing communications formats and languages to maximise its usefulness. However, this does not include the information on how to contact the Children's Rights Director for independent advice and guidance. The excellent relationships between staff, young people and their families create an open culture where any dissatisfaction is shared and resolved promptly.

Young people live in a healthy environment where their physical, emotional and social well-being is promoted. They engage in physical and social activities and have access to health care services to meet their individual needs. Young people's needs arising from faith belief are fully addressed and implemented into daily living. Young people continue to attend school during their stay and staff work constructively with educational providers to promote young people's attendance and achievement. They attend meetings and reviews to share information and develop young people's plans for the future. Young people's personal care needs are fully considered to ensure their rights to dignity and privacy are respected.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Staff receive safeguarding training including child protection for disabled young people. Staff have a good understanding of their duties in promoting young people's welfare. Staff policies and procedures are in place to ensure a robust response to any allegation of abuse. Additionally, young people have risk assessments that are reviewed to manage and identify risks to them. Close supervision of young people ensures that their personal safety is maintained and that they do not take part in risk taking behaviours. These practices ensure that young people are effectively safeguarded and protected from harm.

Staff know young people very well and have developed strategies to manage behaviour successfully; as a result physical interventions are minimal and for a short duration. Staff focus on de-escalation and re-direction techniques and engage with young people in order to assist them in working through their frustration. This practice ensures that young people's behaviour is managed in a calm, caring and supportive manner. Staff confirm that bullying is not tolerated and an anti-bullying ethos is maintained within the home.

Young people live in a physically safe environment in which health and safety issues are well managed. The Registered Manager confirms that staff carry out routine health and safety checks around the home. Safety and insurance certificates are up-to-date and regular fire drills take place to ensure young people and staff are aware of an emergency evacuation route in the event of a fire. Young people benefit from a staff team that are recruited through robust procedures. This includes a thorough recruitment process, Criminal Records Bureau and reference checks, before any appointment of staff is made, to protect young people from unsafe persons.

Leadership and management

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

The short-break home is managed very well by a committed Registered Manager who has a wealth of experience within the area of service. The Registered Manager and two senior workers work closely with young people and staff to rigorously monitor their welfare, which ensures the good standards of care and the safety of young people. They provide leadership and accountability; therefore staff fully understand the roles and responsibilities delegated to them. The home meets the aims and objectives of its Statement of Purpose, and a clear vision of child-focused and anti-discriminatory practice is prevalent within the home's ethos.

There are internal and external systems in place to scrutinise the quality of care which include monthly visits by a designated person in accordance with regulation. The Registered Manager is clear about the strengths and weaknesses of the home and plans for development of the service are in place and influenced currently by the modernisation agenda of the local authority. Effective communication and consultation with young people, their families and partner agencies provides the

basis for continual feedback and improvement in the service to young people.

Staff have comprehensive written guidance, policies and procedures to support their practice. They confirm that they are fully supported and the organisation demonstrates a commitment to professional development. Staff are subject to an induction, probation period of work and appraisals to further ensure their competence in caring for young people. Although appraisals take place at least annually these do not include the opportunity for young people to contribute their views within the process to ensure their opinions count. All staff are suitably qualified and have a wealth of experience of working with young people with disabilities. The numbers of staff on duty are sufficient to meet the needs of young people and the home has recently recruited casual staff for additional work over the holiday period. Staff report that they 'love' their work and that the Registered Manager and senior workers are approachable and available to them.

The home's written records are generally good and provide a picture of young people's daily living during their stay. Young people's information is securely stored and shared confidentially to protect their safety and privacy. Staff fully understand young people's individual, diverse needs and have high aspirations for young people in achieving their potential.

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.