

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**.

Young people have short breaks in a homely and nurturing environment where they receive high quality care. This supports them in acquiring skills for life and adulthood. They experience a good range of opportunities to enjoy, achieve and participate in society irrespective of disability. Young people enjoy their stay at the home and parents are extremely complimentary about the service. They comment: 'I am very happy, no complaints at all, staff are brilliant.'

Staff know young people exceptionally well which is evident in the positive and warm relationships they have built with them. This provides the foundation for the success and stability of the short breaks in which young people have been staying for a number of years. Staff work proactively with young people's families and partner agencies which ensures young people receive high quality care. Partnership working is a key strength of the home.

The home is effectively managed and a strong emphasis is placed upon providing high standards of individualised care. Good quality assurance monitoring scrutinises the quality of care and plans are in place for continual improvement. Shortfalls are identified during this inspection in relation to recording information accurately and providing robust detail within young people's care plans. Additionally, trend analysis systems are not yet in place to learn and improve practice further.

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 information is accurately recorded. This relates specifically to recording the duration of restraints (NMS 22.5)
- ensure that monitoring utilises the information on emerging patterns or trends to continually improve practice (NMS 21.2)
- ensure that care plans pay full attention to young people's individual needs, in particular, the cultural and education needs of young people. (Volume 5, Statutory Guidance 2.35)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

Young people

Young people continue to make good progress in particular to their social development self-care and independence skills. Excellent communication and partnership working with young people's families supports young people in making progress. Young people's families are actively encouraged to comment, on the quality of the care and to make suggestions for improvement. Parent's comment: 'I trust them 100%, he has come on so much; they are so caring; I cannot fault the home; he loves staying there.'

Young people lead a healthy lifestyle irrespective of disability. Young people take part in numerous activities in the community including: walking, activity holidays; shopping; trip to parks and seaside resorts. They also attend residential activity holidays with staff, taking part in rock climbing and caving. Young people have individual care plans and risk assessments to ensure a consistent approach to their care planning. 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 its administration.

Staff support young people in developing friendships and social skills. Consequently, they have friends with other young people with whom they enjoy spending short breaks. Moreover, some friendships are enduring with young people living together in adulthood.

Young people engage with the varied range of activities offered and they enjoy baking, arts and crafts; music and dance. A party with a disco was underway during the inspection which young people enjoyed. This person-centred approach assists young people to develop and clearly demonstrates the full engagement of staff with young people during short breaks.

Young people maintain their individual routine and attend school during their stay. Parents and carers remain in overall charge of young people's education. However, excellent levels of communication with young people's families, carers and school

ensures the effective sharing of important information and continuity of care between settings.

During their short break, young people learn through participating in leisure activities; having access to a computer and the provision of sensory experiences. They receive praise and certificates to celebrate their achievements.

Young people live with their families and attend the home for planned short breaks. They 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 and telephone conversations to facilitate partnership relationships. This ensures young people's potential is maximised and remains at the heart of practice.

Quality of care

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

Young people continue to grow in a stable, nurturing and supportive environment. Staff demonstrate a clear commitment to young people and this is evident in the excellent relationships that have been established. Young people and staff have appropriate banter and are clearly relaxed in each other's company. Regular liaison with young people's families and partner agencies ensures that staff receive the correct guidance to maximise the potential of young people. This ensures an enjoyable, safe and trusting stay for the whole family.

Young people have individual short break placement plans that are tailored to meet their needs. These plans are regularly reviewed with young people, their families and partner agencies. Staff know the young people exceptionally well as they have worked with them for many years. These strong relationships and the implementation of strategies within placement plans ensures that young people receive the best possible care during their stay. Although, plans are in place, these do not always reflect the full range of strategies being used by staff. For example, staff actively promote young people's education by attending meetings with school, but this is not detailed within the care plans.

Staff encourage young people to pursue their individual interests and a range of social events and activities are available which promote young people's understanding of diversity. Staff have high aspirations for the young people and challenge barriers to participation; for example, young people take part in activity holidays where they engage in rock- climbing and caving with staff. These practices promote equality of opportunity for young people and help to build their confidence and sense of achievement. They engage in physical and social activities and have access to health care services that meet their individual needs. Young people are encouraged to pursue their individual interests and a range of events are available to promote young people's understanding of diversity. The home provides a varied and balanced diet in-line with young people's culture and faith belief to ensure their choices are supported and respected

Young people and their families and carers know how to complain. Information is provided in differing formats and within the young people's guide. This also includes information on how to contact the Children's Rights Director for independent advice and guidance. Moreover, the excellent relationships between staff, young people and their families create an open culture where any dissatisfaction is shared and resolved promptly. There have been no complaints since the last inspection.

Young people stay in comfortable and welcoming environment. The home is clean, decorated and furnished to a good standard. The home is adapted to meet the needs of young people and they have space for private time alone. Staff ensure that young people stay in the same bedroom on each visit and that it is personalised to reflect their particular tastes. This affords respect and dignity to young people. Young people's personal care needs are fully considered and 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.

A strong emphasis is placed on protecting young people and a strong safeguarding culture and ethos is evident. Families and carers are confident that their children are safe at the home. Staff receive safeguarding training and have a good understanding of their duties in promoting young people's welfare. They have access to organisational policies and procedures and there is a robust response to any allegation of abuse. Additionally, young people have risk assessments to manage and identity risks to them. Close supervision of young people ensures that their personal safety is maintained and protected.

Young people's behaviour is managed individually and care is taken to recognise their emotional well-being. This, along with good planning ensures their behaviour is managed in a caring and supportive way. All staff engage positively with young people and assist them in working through their frustration. They focus on re-direction techniques, as a result, no sanctions are used and only one physical intervention has been used since the last full inspection. This confirms that physical intervention is only used as a very last resort. Where physical intervention has been used, clear records detail any action taken and show that a that debrief has been offered to young people. However, the duration of the restraint is not accurately recorded to ensure clarity.

Young people live in a physically safe environment in which health and safety issues are well managed. Staff carry out routine health and safety checks around the home. Safety and insurance certificates are up-to-date and individual plans are made with young people to ensure they are aware of an emergency evacuation route in the event of a fire. A robust recruitment process is in place and staff take appropriate steps to verify visitors identity to ensure young people are protected.

Leadership and management

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

Young people receive short breaks in a home that is effectively and efficiently managed in their best interests. The home meets the aims and objectives of its Statement of Purpose, and young people, their families and social workers are clear about the services and support the home provides.

The Registered Manager and two senior workers provide leaderships and accountability and the home runs smoothly. The Registered Manager is clear about the strengths and weaknesses of the home and has plans for development of the service. This continues to be influenced by the modernisation agenda of the local authority.

Young people's care is scrutinised through quality assurance systems which include monthly visits by a designated person in accordance with Regulation. The Registered Manager is efficient at responding to any areas identified within the visits to develop care practice. Although, monitoring is of a very good standard; there is no analysis of trends to identify areas for improvement and development of the service further. For example, within young people's participation of activities, or responses from questionnaires. 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. The recommendation from the previous inspection has been addressed and all staff now have an annual appraisal. Additionally, young people's views form part of this process.

Young people are looked after by a competent staff team who have a wide range of skills and experience and deliver excellent care to young people. The organisation demonstrates a commitment to professional development. Training is high on the agenda, and currently being reviewed to improve it further. Staff are suitably qualified and the team remains stable which provides consistency and predictability for young people. They have regular supervision, appraisals and meetings that contribute to their competence in providing quality care to young people. Staff confirm that they are supported and thoroughly enjoy their work with young people. However, they do identify unease with the local authority modernisation agenda and the possibility of job losses. This has not impacted on the care of young people.

Staff fully understand young people's diverse needs and have high aspirations for young people in achieving their individual potential. Recordings of information are generally good and provide a picture of young people's daily lives. Young people's information is securely stored and shared confidentially to protect their safety and privacy.

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.