

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	27/09/2012
Inspector	Janice Hawtin
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	02/05/2012
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The home is operated by a local authority and provides short-break care for up to six children and young people with a learning disability or combined learning and physical disability. The home operates for five nights each week spanning Wednesday through to Monday morning, with a maximum of six places per night.

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**.

At the full inspection in May 2012, the overall rating was judged to be good. Three requirements and one recommendation were made to further improve the quality and standards of care. These have been successfully addressed. One further requirement and three recommendations were made as a result of this inspection.

External monitoring of the quality of care is now taking place at least once a month and reports are provided to Ofsted for quality assurance purposes. In the absence of the responsible individual, managers from other services have been completing these reports. This has led to sharing practice development ideas. In particular, the improvement of children's files which now provide for easier access to information and closer monitoring of access to information and improved confidentiality.

Records of restraint have improved and include sufficient detail to demonstrate the appropriateness of any physical intervention, its duration and effectiveness. Managers have effectively monitored incidents. Reflective practice demonstrates a

proactive approach to implementing behaviour management measures which further protect children and reduce the need for physical interventions.

Complaints are rare and none have been made since the last inspection. Discussion with staff and documentation evidence that staff are aware of what constitutes a complaint. The quality of detail in records is also appropriate, demonstrating that effective action has been taken.

There are some improvements in allowing children to take age appropriate risk (subject to assessment) as part of growing up. This is evident from the variety of activities and new experiences afforded to children and the changes made to the care provided following a review of risk. Some restrictive practice unsupported by individual risk assessment still applies. Children cannot open the door to the enclosed rear garden play area and the kitchen door was routinely locked. Access was also limited by a child safety gate when the area was being used by staff. Consequently children do not have what would be considered normal movement within the home.

Routine monitoring of children by staff at hourly intervals throughout the night without detailed assessment of how this promotes their safety and welfare may compromise privacy and the dignity. This practice is not detailed in the Statement of Purpose or supported by written policy documents to ensure its appropriateness.

The Statement of Purpose has been reviewed and updated since the last inspection and is readily available. However, it does not currently contain all of the required information. Omissions include: full detail of the services provided, the name and address of the registered provider, detail of arrangements for supervision and staffing details. Consequently, key information is currently missing.

A detailed development plan is in place which is focused on improving all aspects of the care provided. In addition the staff are proactive in undertaking additional training and developing skills. Notably several staff have attended 'intensive interaction training'. In practice this is developing the non-speech communication ability of children and encouraging them to interact more with others and feel more secure in their environment. Moving and handling training has led to improvements in assessment and inclusion of positive handling techniques in plans for children to ensure their safety. Some of these techniques have been shared with other service providers and this resulted in safer transport arrangements for a child. Despite assurance from providers, one member of agency staff had not undertaken the essential training expected for workers in children's homes. As a result, the quality of training for all staff working with young people is inconsistent.

Improved consultation with children and work in partnership with their parents has increased the information available to staff. Taking greater account of children's likes dislikes and preferences ensures they feel valued and enjoy their time in short-break care. Feedback from parents continues to be positive with one reporting that the staff have a positive regard for children, understand their needs and advocate on their behalf'. Children's enthusiasm for staying in this home, including a race to get in the front door was evident.

Other improvements include the development of recruitment processes to fill skills gaps rather as well as filling vacant posts. A new format for supervision has been introduced with clear expectations for both parties and an emphasis on reflective practice to improve individual skills and the sharing of effective practice techniques.

Several areas identified for development have yet to be implemented and/or embedded in practice. However, the manager and her team demonstrate a commitment to continuous improvement for the benefit of children and their families.

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
4 (2001)	update the Statement of Purpose to detail of all matters as listed in Schedule 1 and provide a copy of this Statement to Ofsted. (Regulation 4 (1) & (2))	31/10/2012

Recommendations

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

- ensure physical restrictions on normal movement within and from the home are not used unless this is necessary to safeguard children and promote their welfare and development. Such restrictions for one child do not impose similar restrictions on others (NMS 10.4)
- ensure there is a written policy that sets out specific measures used to monitor children at night, how these should be used, how they promote the welfare of children, how children will be informed of their use, how legitimate privacy for children will be protected and how children will be protected from potential abuse of such measures (NMS 10.5)
- ensure all staff working at the home including agency staff are trained and equipped with the necessary skills to meet children's needs. (NMS 18.1)

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)*.