

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Elaine Cray
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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.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for the service.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding:	this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality
Good:	this aspect of the provision is strong
Satisfactory:	this aspect of the provision is sound
Inadequate:	this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Service information

Brief description of the service

The home provides short breaks for young people with learning disabilities and physical disabilities. It provides short breaks for up to five young people at any time from 5 years to 17 years of age. A total of 43 young people use the service. The home is situated in a busy residential area and is close to shops, parks, cinemas and public transport.

Residential accommodation is provided on the ground floor. There are five single bedrooms for young people and adapted bathing facilities. Communal areas include a dining room, lounge, playroom, and quiet room and can be used for individual or group activities. There is an enclosed grassed garden area with a patio to one side of the house and an enclosed patio garden to the other side. The home has a minibus with tail lift.

Summary

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

This is an overview of what the inspector found during the inspection.

This was an unannounced full inspection in which all key standards were assessed. All outcome areas have been judged as outstanding.

This is an efficiently managed service where young people and families receive an excellent service from committed, energetic and experienced staff. There are excellent arrangements to promote the safety, health and welfare of the young people. Effective and thorough safeguarding systems ensure that young people are closely monitored and are kept safe. The service works closely with parents and involved professionals and greatly values the wishes and feelings of the young people using the service. Young people receive a high degree of individualised support and are encouraged to develop new skills, self confidence to try new activities and to make personal choices.

There is a strong focus on service development, improvement and promoting positive outcomes for children. The quality of care provided is monitored closely by the management team and also by external managers who visit the home.

No actions or recommendations are set as a result of this inspection.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous inspection the service was asked to ensure that all significant events are notified to Ofsted. The Registered Manager has liaised well with Ofsted with

regards to matters arising at the service. There is also improved fire safety procedures with the carrying out and recording of a night time fire drill.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

There are excellent arrangements in place for promoting and maintaining the health of young people. Staff have an excellent understanding of the complex medical needs presented by some young people. There are clear procedures and a clear commitment to working with parents and agencies to support these medical needs and promote young people's good health. Parents are confident in and complimentary about the staff team's ability to meet their children's medical and health needs.

Young people are protected with safe and robust medication procedures and systems. Staff undertake medication training and there are excellent and effective procedures to transfer young people's medication from parents to the service for each respite stay. Medication is stored securely and is administered as directed by the prescribing practitioner. The medication administration system is closely monitored by the management team and training is regularly updated to ensure effective staff practice.

There are comprehensive healthcare plans developed in consultation with parents and supported by health professionals. Young people's healthcare needs are clearly identified and effectively supported by staff who have an excellent understanding of individual health needs. There is meaningful and regular consultation with parents and health professionals to ensure young people's changing health requirements and preferred support strategies are implemented on a day-to-day basis.

Young people benefit from excellent catering arrangements. The service's effective liaison with parents is crucial in understanding and meeting the dietary needs and preferences of young people. Detailed information regarding allergies, likes, dislikes and support for having meals are recorded in care plans. There is consistent and effective communication between the cooks, care staff and young people resulting in meals that are balanced, include young people's preferences and support their medical needs. The kitchen is well organised and the cooks have an in-depth understanding of how best to encourage and support young people to enjoy their food, try new meals and eat healthily.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Young people are protected by excellently planned and effectively implemented safeguarding arrangements. There are robust staff recruitment procedures and young people are kept safe by staff who are well trained in safeguarding children procedures, first aid, behaviour management and health and safety. The home's

records and discussion with the manager and staff demonstrate a good working relationship with the Local Safeguarding Children Board. There are clear and accountable processes for recognising and responding to concerns, including proactive development by the management team of the going missing from care protocols. Young people state they feel safe when they stay at the service. This view is fully supported by the comments made by parents including 'safety is paramount' and 'safety procedures have been made clear to me on visits'.

Young people are cared for in a safe environment. Health and safety monitoring checks and servicing of equipment are undertaken regularly. There are comprehensive risk assessments with clear risk management strategies that are consistently implemented on a day-to-day basis. Staff have an excellent and practical understanding of the known and potential risks for individual young people and know how to safeguard them successfully. These risk management strategies also take into consideration the group needs of the young people using the service. For example, fire evacuation drills and regular potential fire scenarios which look at the complexity of the combinations and needs of young people who come for short stays at the service. A survey of parents clearly identifies their confidence in the risk management procedures that are in place to enable their children to enjoy their stay and keep them safe.

Young people's and the views of the parents are valued with accessible and responsive concerns/complaints processes in place. Information about how to express views, discuss concerns or make a complaint is made known to young people and families when they are first linked to the service and also reinforced by information displayed in the home. Young people at the home have complex communication needs. Staff present an excellent awareness about how the young people may display expressions of dissatisfaction and provide a variety of ways to facilitate young people's communication, including symbols, sign language and photographs. Records show that concerns and more formal complaints are dealt with effectively and are used to develop and improve the service and outcomes for young people.

Young people's rights to privacy are respected and reinforced with clear information in care plans which inform staff about how young people prefer to be supported with personal care. Young people can have their own private space and there is an excellent balance between ensuring young people's personal care needs are met and that they are safe. There is a countering bullying policy. Young people are protected from the actions of others by planning admissions, high levels of staff supervision and by staff having an in-depth awareness of the needs and behaviours presented by the young people.

Both individual and group behaviour is creatively and consistently assessed and managed. Young people's behaviour is assessed in individual behaviour plans with information about challenges, triggers and management strategies. These plans are discussed and drawn up with parents and placing social workers. The combinations of groups of young people coming to stay are closely monitored to ensure that all young people can enjoy their stay, maintain positive relationships with each other

and individual behaviour management plans can be supported. Staff demonstrate an in-depth commitment to understanding behaviour. Young people are enabled to express their individuality and develop social skills. They are supported by staff who are immensely positive and proud about the progress and confidence developed by the young people who use this service.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Young people receive outstanding support that ensures their individual needs are identified and met. The staff team communicate effectively with young people, parents, social workers, school and health agencies to ensure the development, enjoyment and achievements of young people are facilitated and developed. The staff are proactive and committed to ensuring young people's plans and experiences at the service take into account each young person's current needs, as well as their potential.

Young people stay in a vibrant and nurturing environment. They are looked after by staff who seek out and celebrate the individuality of all the young people and look for ways to enable and reassure them to try new opportunities. Young people are encouraged to develop confidence in their personal identities, social relationships and understand and celebrate diversity. This includes identifying young people's individual cultural needs, celebration of different festivals, meeting new friends and a variety of trips out in the community.

The home provides a range of adaptations and equipment which enable young people to fully access the services provided. Young people enjoy a range of activities in the home. Displays currently in the home show them enjoying a trip to the park, story telling, bowling and playing football. There is a well resourced playroom, each young person's room is personalised with their favourite toys for each stay and there is a variety of arts and crafts in the home.

While the primary responsibility for young people's education is planned and supported by parents, the service effectively facilitates all young people's school attendance. Staff liaise with schools and parents on a regular basis to promote continuity of care and education for young people.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

There are outstanding arrangements to support young people to make a positive contribution to their placements and the service. At the point of referral, a visit is made to the family home by key members of staff. The young people and parents are provided with written and pictorial information about the service. There are clear and practical admissions procedures and young people are sensitively supported with their transitions from their family home to the short stay service.

An assessment of need is undertaken in consultation with parents, involved professionals and the young person whenever possible. Individual needs are clearly and concisely set out with practical day-to-day support strategies in young people's placement care plans. Plans are reviewed on a regular basis by key workers and records show that young people, their families and education contribute to the looked after child review processes.

Consultation and communication with young people and families is an integral part of the service's ethos. Themes of communication are promoted at all times with a clear focus on ways to enable young people to express their wishes and feelings. This is enabled with one-to-one staffing levels, displays using symbols, photographs and signs, communication with parents, access to advocates, sign language, home diaries and an in-depth understanding of young people's behaviour.

Parents surveys reinforce the outstanding arrangements for making a positive contribution saying; 'they listen to parents and encourage the happy times' and 'they are in touch with everybody in our daughter's life from us to all the professional bodies who help us to help her'. Young people's surveys confirm they are able to make their own decisions and that the staff are 'great'.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is outstanding.

Young people are cared for in a vibrant, well decorated and stimulating environment. The home is decorated and furnished to a good standard and levels of cleanliness and hygiene are excellent. The accommodation is personalised throughout with information and displays about the young people who use the service. Additionally each bedroom is individually personalised with young people's favourite items, toys and bedding for their arrival. The accommodation also gives scope for young people to spend time together or to be supported one-to-one with an activity. Bedrooms have moving and handling equipment, specialist beds and there are adapted bathing facilities. There is a garden with a play area.

In line with individual needs and abilities, young people receive support to develop areas of independence and to learn new skills. Staff encourage young people to take on as much responsibility as possible for their own personal care. They are encouraged to make choices and try new things. Young people's surveys state they like their bedrooms and they are encouraged to be independent, including helping with cooking when staying at the service.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Young people are looked after by staff who are proactively supported and guided in safeguarding and promoting young people's welfare and meeting their individual

needs. The running of the service is internally monitored and there is a rigorous focus on continuous development and improvement of the services for young people and their families. An external representative from the organisation also carries out monthly monitoring checks.

The service has a Statement of Purpose which is generic to young people being looked after by the local authority's children's residential services. Young people and parents are provided with comprehensive and useful information about the service which helps them to understand what they can expect to receive.

Staffing arrangements are excellently managed and young people receive a minimum of one-to-one support. Rotas are completed in advance and reflect good levels of experience and competence of staff on duty at any one time. There is an effective and varied training programme and this is provided for all staff, including ancillary staff. Refresher training is well organised to ensure staff keep up to date. Internal monitoring processes include regular staff supervision and annual appraisal. The management team promotes praise and acknowledgement of strong practice and shows a clear commitment to addressing shortfalls in staff practice in order to provide improved outcomes for young people. Good staff communication including daily briefings and regular staff meetings contribute to effective and consistent running of the service and this is demonstrated by the positive and excellent comments made in parents', staff and young people's surveys.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. Young people are cared for by staff who have sensitive insight into the diverse needs of the young people. There is a strong commitment to inclusion of all young people balanced with a respect for and celebration of each young person's individuality and background. The service provides young people with opportunities and adapted facilities to try new experiences, develop friendships with other young people and integrate into the local and wider community.

Young people's records are kept securely and reflect each young person's history and progress. Records are well written and up to date.