

## Inspection report for children's home

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| <b>Unique reference number</b> | SC042994        |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 07/12/2011      |
| <b>Inspector</b>               | Rebecca Sharp   |
| <b>Type of inspection</b>      | Full            |
| <b>Provision subtype</b>       | Children's home |

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| <b>Date of last inspection</b> | 14/03/2011 |
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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 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.

### The inspection judgements and what they mean

**Outstanding:** a service that significantly exceeds minimum requirements

**Good:** a service that exceeds minimum requirements

**Satisfactory:** a service that only meets minimum requirements

**Inadequate:** a service that does not meet minimum requirements

## Service information

### Brief description of the service

The home provides short breaks for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Up to five young people can be accommodated at any one time.

### Overall effectiveness

The overall effectiveness is judged to be **outstanding**.

Young people enjoy their time at the home and feel safe and looked after. Care plans are highly personalised in order to meet the individual needs of each child and all staff are aware of individual plans. Young people are cared for by well trained, highly motivated staff, who are aware of how to manage behaviour, support health needs and maintain a safe environment.

The outcomes achieved by young people are outstanding insofar as their positive experiences of their short break, and also taking into account the bigger picture of family support. Young people's needs and views are central to how the home operates and develops. Their wishes and feelings are taken into account when preparing for reviews and their thoughts and experiences are sought upon leaving the service or following each break.

The manager is ambitious and energetic for continuous improvement and development which is apparent in current annual development plans, improvements already made and plans for the future. The children's guide needs updating to include how a child can contact their independent reviewing officer, the Children's Rights Director and Ofsted.

### 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 how a child can contact their independent reviewing officer, the Children's Rights Director and Ofsted. (NMS 13.5)

### Outcomes for children and young people

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

The home provides a short break service to young people with disabilities and their priority is to provide excellent care. The support in which families receive through the respite is one of the most pertinent outcomes for the young people as in some cases, accessing this respite enables the family unit to remain together with consistent support. This is reinforced by parents positive views of the service and the trusting relationships built with the staff team and management.

Young People have a positive view of their experiences at the home and the care that they receive. The staff team are very child focused and passionate about ensuring excellent outcomes for children during their short break. One parent stated their child 'feels secure and safe and able to play and express their self'. Staff are highly trained and skilled in supporting the often complex health needs of the young people. For those young people who are aware of how to take care of their own health needs, they are fully supported by staff. This promotes their development of a positive self view and emotional resilience in living with their disability. There is excellent consultation with parents to make sure the care the young people receive is consistent with home life.

Young people attend local schools and the home has developed an efficient and effective method of support and communication. This enables a seamless transition between the home, school and parents. Regular visits take place to the schools and positive behaviour management techniques are shared between services, again ensuring consistency for the young people. Education is very much promoted by the staff at the home and young people are well prepared each morning to attend school and their changeover in an evening is well planned.

Young people are supported to make a positive contribution to the home and the local community by accessing local groups and leisure facilities. They are encouraged to help around the home by completing small tasks such as setting and clearing the table, which helps them to develop independence skills. The young people create decorations and displays for the home and their annual Christmas display is then used to create a Christmas card. This is sent out to families and other stakeholders which gives the young people a sense of ownership within the home and belonging within the community. Photographs are on display around the home of the young people taking part in various activities, for example, a trip to the local fire station. One young person stated how much fun they had had taking part in this activity with their 'special friends' whom they met at the home. A parent also stated that the home 'has helped (my child) a lot and improved their confidence.'

The staff work closely with adult services with regards to sharing information in order to support a successful transition from children's services. The young person's care plan and risk assessments are shared to ensure consistency of care. Although the home does not lead the way in independence training due to the short term nature of the service, they do support any plans the school and families have in place with regards encouraging young people to be able to be as independent as they possibly can.

## **Quality of care**

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

Young people benefit from positive and appropriate relationships with staff and peers. They are able to socialise in a safe environment and develop essential social skills. Positive behaviour is promoted and reinforced using approved behaviour management strategies. Staff are well trained in managing challenging behaviour and do so appropriately. The young people respond well to the highly motivated and child focused staff team.

Each young person has a thorough, in-depth and highly individualised care plan. This is completed in conjunction with parents to ensure consistent care is given to each young person. The care plan is perceived as a live, working document and is updated regularly around behaviour management when staff discover new strategies to help young people. These plans are also discussed in review meetings and amended as necessary. Children are actively involved in the review process and are consulted with prior to their meeting to ascertain their thoughts and feelings about the home. All individual needs for the young people are clearly met by the staff team including health, dietary and cultural. One key worker has taken lessons in a foreign language to support their key child and advises other staff members to aid communication.

Management and staff challenge barriers in order to ensure the full participation of the young people in their care. They work in partnership with the national youth advisory service and a representative visits on a monthly basis to meet with the young people and staff. Not only can the young people and their families access independent advocacy services, but also group work sessions. The manager has arranged, in partnership with the independent advocate, for young people to take part in a group work session around children's rights and has tailored a package specifically for young people with disabilities. The young people are also consulted independently by the advocate about their thoughts and feelings of the home.

Young people have access to a wide range of positive and purposeful activities whilst staying at the home and make choices about what they would like to do. They are encouraged to enjoy and achieve to their full potential and experience new things. There are excellent facilities for young people including a well equipped sensory room, a play room and a quiet room. The manager has secured a bid to have the garden redesigned next year and the plans are already in place.

Staff are extremely proactive and imaginative in finding ways to meet the individual needs of the children. By working in partnership with schools, the home has implemented a similar communication system promoting continuity and consistency between services. Photographs of staff and young people are set out daily to show which young people are visiting and what staff are on shift so they are aware of who is in the building. The home is also trained in the same behaviour management programme as the schools to reinforce consistent care.

### **Safeguarding children and young people**

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

Young people feel safe staying at the home and parents report that they feel their children are safeguarded. There are clear individualised risk assessments in place for each child in all areas including moving and handling. All other activities are also risk assessed appropriately. Staff are well trained in child protection procedures and are aware of the chain of command in reporting any issues. All significant events and incidents are recorded and reported appropriately and notified to the appropriate agencies. There is a clear safeguarding policy in place for staff to refer to.

There is a high level of physical intervention, however, these incidents are in the most part to prevent self harm and injury to staff and other young people. It is always used as a last resort, however, some behaviour can be extremely challenging and it is therefore used appropriately in managing those situations. Communication between school and families around behaviour management is common place in order to share best practice and keep parents and carers informed.

Risk management is a particular strength within the home. Developments around fire safety for staff and young people as a result of the previous recommendation are outstanding. Staff now undergo 'fire scenarios' in preparation for a potential incident and these scenarios are photographed for all staff to view. There are clear risk management strategies in place in the case of fire and all staff are aware of the correct procedures to follow.

The home is very secure which enables the most vulnerable young people to have a sense of safety and well-being. There are high levels of supervision which can increase or decrease dependent on a child's needs but are always adequate. Although young people have not gone missing, there is a clear joint protocol in place, and there are risk assessments in place in order to reduce the likelihood of a young person absconding whilst out in the community.

All new staff have been carefully selected and undergone the local authorities robust recruitment and selection process. All staff at the home have current Criminal Records Bureau clearance and have received a thorough induction to the home and the service it provides.

## **Leadership and management**

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

The home has undergone a recent staffing restructure in line with developments within the organisation. Unfortunately this meant some experienced staff no longer work for the company, however, as a result of redeployment within the organisation, the home is now fully staffed within the new structure. The outcome of this restructure means there is minimal use of agency staff and the management team are now in a position where they can develop themselves and, in turn, develop the new staff team. New staff have received a full induction and training needs are

identified and recorded in individual training and development plans. E-learning is now being used routinely for both cost effectiveness and effective time management. New staff will be enrolled onto the level 3 Diploma in Childcare within their six month probationary period. They are supported by regular supervision and team meetings. Staff state that they receive 'positive' and 'regular support' from their supervisors.

The manager is up to date with new legislation and practice developments and evidencing how the service meets the national minimum standards. This is discussed in supervision and team meetings for all staff to contribute towards. The home's Statement of Purpose and children's guide are in depth, clear and child friendly and the service meets the aims and objectives set out in the Statement of Purpose. However, the address details for Ofsted need updating, the details for the Children's Rights Director needs to be included, and also sections for the contact details for a young person's social worker and independent reviewing officer. A recommendation has been made as a result, however, the impact on young people is minimal as they have details of how to complain and have access to an independent advocate.

There is evidence of continuing improvement and development through numerous development plans in place. This includes developments to the interior and exterior of the building including the garden. Work with the national youth advisory service is developing and their input is set to continue. The recommendation from the previous inspection has been met and developed over and above the minimum standard. Rigorous monitoring is in place by the management team such as Regulation 34 checks, Regulation 33 visits, case file audits and supervision audits. Key areas of weaknesses are identified and plans put in place to develop these areas and the targets for these are realistic.

Equality and diversity practice is **outstanding**.