

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	14/03/2014
Inspector	Lynn O'Driscoll
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	30/07/2013
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This local authority home provides a short-break service for up to six children and young people at any given time who have a permanent and substantial learning disability and who may also have additional needs arising from behavioural difficulties.

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**.

Overall, this home was judged to be good at the last full inspection on 30 July 2013. The outcomes for children and young people were outstanding.

There has been a satisfactory response to the four requirements made at the last inspection. Consequently, children and young people's files and the admission and discharge register now included all the required information. The Statement of Purpose has also been revised in line with the new Regulations and now accurately describes the services provided. The timeliness of appraisals and the frequency of supervision has markedly improved. However, the majority of staff did not receive supervision over the six week summer holidays and three staff have not consistently had monthly supervision in 2014. They are, therefore, not operating in line with the authority's own policies and procedures. Moreover, the duration of each session is not always recorded.

Three recommendations were also made on 30 July 2013. In response, medication

and first aid records are now satisfactorily maintained. Also, the views of social workers and Independent Reviewing Officers are now regularly sought on the quality of care provided in the home. The feedback is very positive. Examples include, 'The staff are devoted to listening and acting on the needs and wishes of the young people', 'This home is a wonderful place for young people to have the opportunities for social integration with their peers and supported access to community activities. All the young people thoroughly enjoy their stays. This service is also invaluable to parents and carers in providing a short break to enable them to enjoy some time for themselves and to have quality time with their other children' and, 'This home demonstrates good collaborative working and shows enormous understanding of the individual needs and wishes of the young people. They support families extensively. All the young people enjoy staying and I know parents could not manage without it.'

Young people's needs, views and opinions remain central to the day to day running and continued development of the home. This includes the recruitment of staff. However, the home is still exploring the most effective means of ascertaining the views of children and young people as part of annual staff appraisals.

Children and young people really enjoy their short breaks at this home. They are relaxed, safe and secure. They enjoy excellent relationships with the staff and benefit from highly personalised care which meets their unique and complex needs. The range and accessibility of specialist services continues to be a real strength. Comments from children and young people include, 'I like all the technology here', 'I really feel safe here and I have made good friends', 'They look after us well. The staff are caring towards us and everybody is kind', 'It's a great place to stay. The activities are great. I love the gardening club' and, 'I enjoy coming here and having a laugh.'

Children and young people have access to a full range of stimulating activities, in spite of their disabilities, which might not otherwise be available to them. This includes regular charitable events. The Christmas party was a very enjoyable family event. They have now introduced wheelchair friendly rambles as a means of building relationships with families and gaining their views in a more informal way.

In close partnership with parents children and young people are making significant progress. Examples include: increased self-esteem and confidence; improved communication, meal routines and food choices; and, reductions in obsessions, self harm, aggression and anxieties. Consequently, for example, one young person was recently able to tolerate and enjoy a trip to the seaside and a meal out, which is significant progress. Comments from parents include, 'My son has made lots of improvements including verbal communication since he began having short breaks. He is always happy there and his anxiety levels are much lower' and, 'I cannot praise the staff highly enough. They are so caring. The trips and outings are exceptional. My son enjoys his stays and his self esteem and confidence has improved.'

Although parents retain overall responsibility for their children's education, staff have excellent links with schools. They also work very closely with parents to ensure that the education of all the children and young people is actively promoted and

supported during their stay in the home. This has successfully maintained school placements and ensured smooth transitions to new schools.

Staff at this home have also actively supported young people and their families to ensure smooth transitions into adult services. One social worker wrote, 'Thank you for the excellent work you have done. He loved staying with you. Your support, kindness and sensitivity has made this a smooth transition in what could have been a traumatic event for him and his family. Social workers very much appreciate your flexible approach to working with children and families. You go above and beyond.'

The Registered Manager is suitably qualified and experienced. He is extremely child focussed and is passionate about driving continuous improvement with the whole staff team so there is a shared sense of responsibility and ownership. Three new members of staff have settled in well to the established team and bring new skills and ideas. In particular, they are improving some language and cultural barriers. This enables more families to fully engage in their children's reviews. This has also ensured they receive other services, for example, occupational therapists, and they get necessary adaptations to their homes.

There is renewed motivation within the team in recent months and staff morale has improved. Staff benefit from access to a good range of on-going and relevant training courses. They also completed all their mandatory training together over a week in September 2013 which they found to be particularly helpful. Comments from staff include, 'It's a great place to work', 'I am very happy with the management of the home. It is a happy, good staff team' and, 'It's a good team which is well organised and managed'.

Monthly reports from Regulation 33 visitors have highlighted, on more than one occasion, that sanction and restraint records are not consistently recorded in line with the Regulations. This has been frequently discussed in team meetings and new formats recently introduced to address this regulatory shortfall. However, to date there are no entries, so the effectiveness of this new book has yet to be evaluated.

The last six monthly internal review of the quality of care provided in the home includes very positive feedback from young people and parents. However, it does not include consultations with placing authorities.

Five children and young people do not sleep in a bed during their short breaks, but use a specialist alternative. This is identified in placement plans and written consent obtained from parents. However, this practice is not individually risk assessed in line with the home's own policies and procedures.

Parents remain highly appreciative of this particularly responsive, flexible and needs led service. This has a direct impact of ensuring families successfully stay together and long term foster care placements are sustained. They are actively involved in care planning and are consequently very happy with the quality of care provided. Comments include, 'My child's keyworker is very supportive of our sons very complex dietary needs and our families need for respite. She is a very focussed professional

who always has time to listen and understand the difficulties of having a disabled child', 'This service is wonderful. My daughter loves her stays and the opportunity to socialise with peers. She is not different there' and, 'These short breaks really help the whole family. My son loves coming here and gets involved in all the fun activities and trips. We get some desperately needed time to devote ourselves to our other children, so we value this service very much.' His sister said, 'We get a chance to go out.'

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
17B (2001)	ensure that within 24 hours of the use of any measure of control, discipline or restraint in the children's home, a written record is made in a volume kept for that purpose and includes all the required details (Regulation 17B(3))	31/03/2014
34 (2001)	ensure the review report forwarded to Ofsted in respect of the quality of care provided in the home includes consultations with placing authorities (Regulation 34(3))	31/03/2014
23 (2001)	demonstrate that all parts of the home are free from hazards to children's health and safety; and in particular, individually risk assess the use of different forms of sleeping equipment. (Regulation 23(a))	31/03/2014

Recommendations

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

- ensure all staff are provided with regular supervision, at the frequency prescribed by the authority's own policy and procedures and, by appropriately qualified and experienced staff (NMS 19.4)
- ensure supervision records always detail the duration of each supervision session (NMS 19.5)
- ensure all annual staff appraisals take into account the views of children and young people the service is providing for. (NMS 19.6)

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*.