

Inspection report for children's home

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| <b>Unique reference number</b> | SC059853          |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 16 June 2010      |
| <b>Inspector</b>               | Monica Hargreaves |
| <b>Type of Inspection</b>      | Key               |

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| <b>Date of last inspection</b> | 2 November 2009 |
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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 outcome for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and relevant National Minimum Standards for the establishment.

## 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**

This local authority home provides a short-breaks service for up to six children and young people of either gender who are between the ages of eight and 18 years and who have a permanent and substantial disability.

It is a purpose-built bungalow with facilities that are appropriate to meet the needs of the young people who use the service. The home has six bedrooms, three bathrooms, two lounges, a dining room and a kitchen and is appropriately adapted and equipped to meet the specific and diverse needs of the young people who stay. There is an enclosed garden area at the rear. The home is within walking distance of local shops and other amenities and the town centre is a brief car journey away.

There were three young people present during this inspection.

### **Summary**

At this unannounced full inspection, all the key standards in all outcome areas were assessed.

The service continues to provide an excellent standard of care to young people when they stay. Safeguarding is of paramount importance in the home and robust policies and procedures and good care practices ensure that young people are cared for safely. Staff are trained to understand the complex needs of the young people in their care and they communicate very effectively with young people, families and professionals outside the service, to ensure that young people's specific and diverse needs are met. They demonstrate a high regard for the young people they look after and work hard to help them to enjoy their stay.

The home is kept safe and is well managed. There are robust mechanisms in place to make sure that staff are supported and the work of the service is monitored, so that young people benefit from their short breaks stays in the home and excellent standards of care are maintained.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

No actions or recommendations were made at the last inspection.

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is outstanding.

The home has excellent procedures and care practices that ensure that the good health of young people is promoted when they stay. For example, every young person has a detailed health plan. This is developed from a comprehensive assessment of their needs that is undertaken when they are referred for a service. These plans are developed in close consultation with parents and the nurse who works with the service and are regularly monitored so that they are kept up to date. Detailed up-to-date plans enable all the staff in the home to understand the specific support each young person requires to ensure that their good health is promoted. Staff are knowledgeable about the specific and diverse health needs of the young people they look after. They are trained in specific areas of health care and work closely with health staff in their

own service and agencies outside the home. This enables them to understand how to manage conditions such as epilepsy and diabetes, so that young people are safe and healthy in the home.

Staff encourage young people to exercise to promote their good health. There is equipment in the garden, such as a trampoline and a swing and staff organise trips outside the home, for example to local parks and leisure facilities, to give young people opportunities to exercise.

Young people are well nourished during their stay in the home. They are given a healthy and balanced diet, are encouraged to try different foods and to help to choose the meals they want to eat. Staff have an excellent understanding of the different needs of young people, such as food intolerances, their religious and cultural requirements and their preferences and they make sure that these are incorporated into their diets. Young people have enjoyed building a poly tunnel in the garden where they grow vegetables and salads of their choice. This promotes young people's knowledge of how food is produced and allows them to eat the healthy food they have grown, in addition to giving young people some exercise when they garden.

The administration of medication is managed through highly effective procedures and excellent care practices. For example, all staff are trained in the safe delivery of medicines and are knowledgeable about the medication that young people take. Medication is brought into and out of the service by parents specifically for the time of the young person's stay. It is checked and signed for by two staff and always administered to young people by two staff. Medicines are stored in a locked cabinet in the office to keep them secure. These robust systems protect young people. Staff are trained in first aid procedures so that young people are cared for safely in an emergency.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is outstanding.

The service has very effective policies, procedures and care practices, which ensure that young people are cared for safely.

Staff are sensitive to the need to promote the personal dignity of young people and to protect their right to privacy and confidentiality. Young people have the use of individual bedrooms, where they can spend time in private and there is a telephone that they can use in private. Staff understand the need to keep sensitive information confidential and make sure that records are stored safely in the office. Personal care tasks are undertaken in a way that protects the privacy and dignity of young people.

The arrangements for complaints and child protection issues are managed safely. There is a clear complaints procedure and records show that any complaint that is raised is dealt with promptly and investigated thoroughly. Parents spoken with confirm that they feel confident about raising issues with staff in the home, but that they have not had to make a formal complaint. Parents are very happy about the way young people are cared for and give positive feedback to the service. Records show that there have been no complaints about care at the home for over two years. Staff show a genuine interest in helping young people to have a voice and advocate on their behalf. They know young people well, understand how they make their views known and can identify any changes in behaviour, which might indicate that young people are unhappy. Young people also have access to an independent advocate who visits the home regularly. Staff are trained in child protection issues and have an excellent understanding of

the reporting procedure. Parents comment that they are confident that young people are safe in the home and young people indicate in their surveys that staff help them to learn about staying safe.

There is evidence that bullying is not an issue in the service. Young people say that they are not bullied. Staff however, remain vigilant about the possibility that due to their disabilities, some young people may target others and they take appropriate action to protect them. The measures that are in place to protect young people from bullying include planning short breaks to ensure that young people who do not get on do not stay together and making sure that young people are properly supervised during their stay.

The service has a clear protocol for responding to unauthorised absences. However, due to their complex needs, young people do not leave the home unsupervised and there have been no incidents of young people going missing from the home.

Staff manage young people's behaviour very well. They encourage, recognise and reward positive behaviour. Staff are trained to respond positively to difficult behaviour, including in the use of physical restraints. If a young person's behaviour becomes unacceptable or challenging, staff intervene at an early stage to distract them and defuse difficult situations, so that all young people are protected. There is clear evidence that physical intervention is only ever used as a last resort and at the lowest level necessary to protect the individual young person or other young people and staff. Individual behaviour management plans and positive handling plans ensure that there is consistency in the way that the staff work. Staff have a very positive view of the young people in their care and young people respond very well to the staff.

Young people benefit from staying in an environment that is kept safe. Comprehensive risk assessments are completed on all aspects of daily living and other activities, to ensure that hazards are eliminated or minimised. Equipment and installations are regularly checked and serviced to keep them safe. Each young person has an evacuation plan, so that staff know how to get them to safety in the event of a fire and young people are involved in fire drills, so that they learn what to do in an emergency.

Stringent checks are undertaken on all new staff who are recruited to the home, to ensure that they are safe and suitable to work with children and young people. The identity of all visitors to the home is checked before they are allowed in and the building is kept appropriately secure. These measures are effective in protecting young people from unauthorised individuals gaining access to the home.

## **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is outstanding.

Excellent care practices ensure that young people receive a high level of support in the service. Detailed placement plans enable staff to make sure that young people's assessed needs are being met. There is an established key working system, which means that every young person has an identified member of staff who takes responsibility for making sure that plans are implemented. Staff have an excellent understanding of the needs of the young people they look after and are skilled at communicating with them. They work very well with parents and professionals outside the home to provide a high standard of care to young people. Parents comment that 'staff are good at doing anything and everything' and that their children are given 'excellent support'.

Parents maintain the overall responsibility for their children's education. However, staff have good links with schools and they work closely with parents to ensure that the education of young people is promoted during their stay in the home. They visit schools and attend education reviews and they communicate regularly with teaching staff through the young person's home/school diary. This enables them to know the goals young people are working to achieve in school and to support them in the home. Young people also work towards a recognised qualification when they are in the service, which helps them to develop their skills. The targets that are set for young people are based on their individual abilities and needs, for example learning to set or clear a table or improving their self-care skills. Young people also have access to a computer, books and games in the home to promote their learning.

Staff are keen to help young people enjoy their short breaks and young people say that they can 'choose from lots of things to do' when they stay in the home. Staff make sure that they can pursue hobbies or activities they are interested in, for example playing and watching football and attending youth clubs. They provide many opportunities for young people to go on outings. Recent examples have included canoeing and snow tubing. The home is well equipped, for example with games, indoor and outdoor toys and play equipment and a sensory room, so that young people can choose activities that they enjoy.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is outstanding.

Staff are well informed about meeting young people's needs. They work in partnership with parents and other professionals to ensure that full and detailed information is available to them prior to the admission of any young person for a short-breaks service. This ensures that staff are equipped to meet young people's needs. Placement plans address every aspect of a young person's care including any needs that arise from their culture or religion. Plans are drawn up in consultation with parents to promote consistency in the care that is given to young people at home and in the service. Staff involve all young people in identifying their care needs and young people who are able to, read their plans and make comments that are added to them. Young people's care is regularly reviewed to ensure that information is up to date and accurate and that the care they are given is consistent with their needs.

The promotion of family contact is not generally an issue in the home, as young people live with their families. However, if there are any specific circumstances around contact for individual young people, for example if a young person is staying at the home for longer periods, then clear arrangements are made to ensure that they are supported to have positive contact with family and friends.

Young people move into and leave the service in a planned way. Staff arrange gradual introductions for the young person at a pace that suits the individual young person and their family. They also work closely with parents and other professionals to ensure that young people can move on from the service in a planned way. These arrangements help to reduce anxiety for young people and their families and ensure that they are supported at times of transition.

Staff are keen to involve young people in the decisions that are made about their stays in the service and there is regular and meaningful consultation with young people and with their families, which enhances all aspects of young people's short-break stays and provides them with consistency. Staff send out regular consultation surveys to parents and young people and there are regular house meetings. Staff are skilled at communicating with young people who

do not use speech. They are adept at interpreting young people's body language and facial expressions and make sure that information for young people is produced in forms that are appropriate to their needs, for example in signs, symbols, pictures and simple language. Regular consultation with young people and families enables staff to develop the service in response to the views expressed by them.

## **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is outstanding.

The promotion of independence is a goal for all young people who stay in the service. The targets that are identified for young people are dependent upon their individual skills, needs and abilities, so that they meet their specific requirements. For example, some young people are supported to develop their self-care skills and others to be involved with shopping for and cooking simple meals. All young people are encouraged to take part in community-based activities. Young people and their parents say that staff are 'very patient' and that they help young people by 'being very supportive'. Staff work closely with parents and professionals from other agencies to help to prepare young people for moving on from the service into other provisions as they reach 18 years.

This purpose-built bungalow provides excellent accommodation which promotes the well-being of young people. The home is very well equipped to meet the diverse needs of the young people who use the service. All areas are accessible to all young people and bathrooms and bedrooms have suitably adapted equipment. Staff make sure that the building is kept clean and tidy and free from hazards and that it is well maintained internally and externally. The home is comfortably furnished, warm and welcoming. Young people are encouraged to bring in small items to personalise their room when they stay.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is outstanding.

The service has a comprehensive Statement of Purpose which gives clear information about how the home works and how young people are cared for when they stay. The young person's guide is produced in a format that is appropriate to the needs of the young people who stay in the home. It includes symbols and pictures and simple text and tells young people how they will be looked after in the home.

The home is well managed and well staffed. Care staff are qualified, well trained and competent. Mandatory training is kept up to date and staff undertake additional training to meet the specific and diverse needs of the young people in their care. Staff are committed to providing individualised care for young people and are focused on what is best for them. The team regularly review ways of working so that best outcomes for young people are achieved. There is excellent communication within the team and with parents and professionals outside the home, which promotes consistency in the care young people are given.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. Staff have an excellent understanding of the young people they work with and are skilled in communicating with them. Information throughout the service is produced in forms that are appropriate to the needs of young people with complex needs and each young person is treated as an individual. Staff demonstrate a clear commitment to promoting choice and inclusion and to ensuring that young people receive a service that is tailored to meet their specific and complex needs.

The work of the home and the care of young people is effectively monitored. The manager undertakes routine checks on records and visits are carried out regularly by someone independent of the home. Staff supervision and team meetings also take place regularly, which means that practice is regularly reviewed and adapted to meet young people's needs.

Information about young people is detailed and is stored securely to protect confidentiality. It is shared with young people and their parents, so that they have a clear record of the time the young person has spent in the service.

## **What must be done to secure future improvement?**

### **Statutory requirements**

This section sets out the actions, which must be taken so that the registered person meets the Care Standards Act 2000, The Childrens Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

| Standard | Action | Due date |
|----------|--------|----------|
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### **Recommendations**

There are no recommendations.