

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC060034
Inspection date	25/03/2013
Inspector	Stephen Halliley
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	19/09/2012
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The home is owned by a registered charity. It provides respite care and short breaks for up to six children at any one time, who have a learning disability or a social and communication disability within the autistic spectrum. Children may also have associated physical disabilities.

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 **good progress**.

This short break service was last inspected by Ofsted in September 2012 and judged to be providing a good level of service to young people. Since this time the Registered Manager and her team have addressed the two requirements and two recommendations which were made. There has also been significant progress in the way in which staff communicate with young people, the equipment in place in the home and the development of bespoke packages to address identified needs. This has contributed to the good progress judgement being given at this inspection, though some shortfalls were noted in recording and staff supervision. These have not had an impact on the well-being of young people.

The monitoring of the home by both the Registered Manager and external visitor has been strengthened since the time of the last inspection. The introduction of a specialised communication system has enabled a greater level of interaction with young people and allows for an improved level of consultation. This ensures that adults are more aware of young people's needs and feelings and are able to respond to these. Parents have been sent questionnaires about the service and the external

visitor is contacting them periodically to ensure that their views are fully included in the monitoring of the quality of service provided. These improvements have led to a more robust system of monitoring the quality of care provided being put in place.

Volunteers are not currently used in this home and no new volunteers have been recruited since the last inspection. However, the organisation has put a new system in place for ensuring that references are taken up and verified on any future volunteers. This will involve the HR department requesting references and the Registered Manager verifying them, as is the case with permanent staff. This new system will further protect young people from the potential of abuse or harm by adults working with them.

The safeguarding policy in the home has been strengthened since the last inspection. It now makes clear reference to the Local Authority Designated Officer and when information should be passed to them. This is also supported by information provided in the home's Statement of Purpose.

Progress in the quality of care and the service provision has been made in a number of areas. Several staff have attended a course on specialised communication and are cascading the use of the home's chosen system throughout the team. This has greatly enhanced the opportunities for young people to make choices, especially around menus and activities. A new specialised bath has been installed for use by less mobile young people and this will allow them a choice between bathing or showering. The garden is in the process of being redeveloped and already boasts a basket swing, a zip wire and a new slide, all surrounded by cushioned flooring. The sensory room is due to be fully refurbished early next month. This all allows young people a greater range of activity when they are staying at this home and provides a range of different stimuli to help further develop coordination and physical activity. The home has actively been involved in consultation with parents, school and child psychiatrists about ways to manage some self-harming behaviours more effectively. This has led to a bespoke package being put in place to allow for a more enjoyable, quieter stay. This shows a clear response to a highlighted need, clear and open consultation and a willingness on the part of the home to go that extra mile to make the short breaks as enjoyable and pleasant as possible for young people.

Safeguarding of young people and ensuring they are protected from potential harm is given a high priority in this home. Fire systems are checked weekly but there were some gaps in this recording which could have a potential impact on young people's safety should there be a fire. Additionally, while defects are clearly recorded during these tests, there is no clear record of the remedial action taken to address the defect. While an inspection of these areas clearly shows this work has been carried out, there is a limited record of accountability for this work should a similar problem occur, especially in an emergency situation.

Behaviour management is a strength of this home. There have been no restraints and only seven sanctions given since the last inspection. However, one sanction given to a young person involved withholding supper. The Registered Manager immediately explored this in full with the staff involved, it was discussed in a staff

meeting and the inappropriate nature of the sanction made clear. There have been no further instances of inappropriate sanctions being given to young people.

Staff receive good training opportunities and are supported by the Registered Manager to look for courses which they feel will be beneficial to the service provision. This supplements the mandatory training and the diploma courses being undertaken by staff. Staff also receive regular supervision from suitably experienced and qualified staff. However, one member of staff did not receive her supervision as regularly as anticipated during her probationary period. This has not had a detrimental effect on her work and she has since had additional support to rectify this shortfall.

Young people seen in the home were relaxed around staff, knew the routines in place for the start of their stay and were supported by staff to take part in a number of different activities. It is clear young people benefit from attending these breaks and that they enjoy the time they spend in the home.

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
17 (2001)	ensure that the following shall not used as disciplinary measures on children accommodated in a children's home; any punishment involving the consumption or deprivation of food or drink (Regulation 17 (2) (b))	30/04/2013
29 (2001)	ensure that the registered person maintains in the children's home the records specified in Schedule 4 and that they are kept up to date; specifically a record of any deficiency in the fire fighting equipment and the details of the steps taken to remedy that deficiency. (Regulation 29 (1)).	30/04/2013

Recommendations

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

- ensure that all the staff's work is consistent with the regulations, national minimum standards and the home's policies and procedures; this relates to ensuring that fire alarm tests are carried out at the required intervals and that all staff receive supervision at the frequency stated in the policy. (NMS 21.3)

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*.