

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Sharon Lewis
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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

The home was initially registered on 19 January 2006. The home currently provides accommodation and care to young people of mixed genders aged between 12 and 18 years old with learning disabilities. This includes providing a service for young people on the autistic spectrum. The home is registered for up to a maximum of six young people. At the time of this inspection, one young person was enjoying a respite break. Due to the nature of their disability they were unable to verbalise their satisfaction with the home. It was observed that they were comfortable in their surroundings and interacted positively with staff.

The home is spread across two floors, with young people's bedrooms located on the first floor. The bedrooms are appropriately furnished. Young people have access to two lounges, a sensory room, a timeout room and an activity room. There is a garden with a patio area and a large trampoline. The home is situated within walking distance of local shops and is served well by transport networks.

Summary

At this unannounced inspection all key standards were inspected. Young people benefit from good outcomes, which enhances their lives. It is an aim of the home to 'promote the individuality of each child regardless of their disability'. This value is evident throughout the home's working practices. Staff focus on young people's capabilities. Young people continue to make good progress in their independent living and social skills. The use of pictorial aids assists young people in expressing their choices and in raising their awareness.

Staff have built good relationships with placing authorities and parents. At the heart of the service is the best interests of young people. The responsible individual continues to cover the manager's post. Although they are effective in their role, regulations require the registration of a manager. To further safeguard young people a recommendation is being made, regarding parental medical consent.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, one recommendation was made to further improve practice. This related to producing a written development plan. The home has a clear direction and there is a wish to provide a quality service for young people with disabilities. Written information was received by Ofsted. This relates to future developments within the home.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people receive good outcomes from the home's health practices. Young people benefit from efficient food hygiene arrangements. Young people assist staff with the food shopping and packing items away.

Staff encourage young people to make healthy food choices. Young people enjoy eating a variety of nutritious and international dishes. Staff imaginatively incorporate vegetables and

fruits into young people's diets. Pictorial aids enable young people to plan their own menus. A pictorial weekly menu is also on display. This reminds young people of the foods which are served each day. Young people have the opportunity to develop their cooking skills. They enjoy making their own pizzas and light snacks. Mealtimes are a social occasion, where young people and staff eat together. Young people also have the opportunity to eat out regularly.

The home broadens young people's awareness of health issues. Teaching sessions enable young people to learn about the hazards of smoking and misusing alcohol. The home has a specialist pictorial resource. This depicts in pictures what happens at various health appointments. This informs young people of what they can expect and assist in alleviating any anxieties. Young people's health folders detail their physical and emotional needs. This provides a good basis for staff to positively respond to young people. Files list young people's allergies, immunisations and professional involvement. Young people receive support with their personal care. Staff sensitively work with young people. This involves supporting them with personal care and managing any continence problems.

A staff member with a nursing qualification takes the lead on medication issues. The home securely stores medication in a purpose built cabinet. Staff sufficiently maintain medication administration records. The pharmacist is scheduled to undertake refresher training with the staff team. In the event of an emergency, first aid boxes are well stocked. Parental consent to administer medication or first aid is available for the majority of young people. The exception is a young person who receives day care. This is a recent placement and the young person is not prescribed any medication. The home should obtain parental consent to administer emergency treatment or first aid.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The home effectively promotes the welfare of young people. A range of policies and procedures are dedicated to safeguarding and health and safety. Staff securely store young people's personal information in locked cabinets. Staff appropriately maintain confidentiality. Staff demonstrate a commitment to preserving the privacy and dignity of young people. A complaints procedure is available to channel any concerns. Since the last inspection the home has received no complaints. The home has a whistle blowing procedure. Staff are also able to highlight practice concerns in meetings. The home has good links with the Local Safeguarding Children's Board. This enables staff to keep updated on good practice. Examples are child protection plans and placing authority guidelines.

Young people enjoy the time they spend at the home. The high staffing ratio enables young people to have a good amount of individual attention. Young people do not experience bullying. There are no problems with young people being absent without authority. Young people are comfortable in their surroundings and have built up sound relationships with staff. The only issue relates to young people occasionally hitting staff. Staff appropriately intervene. They use timeout and distraction techniques to manage young people's volatile behaviour. Staff tend not to restrain or sanction young people. More emphasis is spent rewarding young people for good behaviour and achievements.

Young people live in a home which ensures their physical safety and security. Risk assessments highlight hazardous situations in relation to young people, activities and the building. Young people participate in regular fire drills and there are weekly fire alarm tests. Specialist

professionals verify the safety of fire equipment, the gas supply, the electrical installation and appliances. Appropriate public and employee liability insurance is also available. The organisation has a recruitment procedure to ensure the suitability of new employees. Young people receive support from a small stable staff team. To promote consistency the organisation employs a bank of relief staff to cover additional shifts. Visitors do not have unsupervised access to young people. The home maintains a visitors book.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people benefit from individualised care related to their needs. Each young person has an allocated key worker, who leads on the implementation of their care plan. The key worker monitors young people's development and progress. Young people have an activity planner which details their daily routines. This is available in a pictorial format, which young people can easily understand. Staff maintain good communication networks with social workers and parents. Key workers produce a weekly report for social workers. Parents also receive a daily log of their child's experiences at the home.

Young people live in an environment which values their education. Staff have a close relationship with schools which enables good continuity of care. Staff demonstrate a commitment to enhancing young people's lives. Staff empower young people and do not assume they are unable to learn. The home has developed their own life skills programme. This focuses on literacy and numeracy. Young people receive support to develop their practical daily living skills. Their routines also importantly include rest, relaxation and leisure activities.

Socialisation is an important aspect of learning about community living. Young people receive support to travel on public transport and develop appropriate social skills. Young people enjoy exploring their wider community. This includes sightseeing trips to various destinations within London, trips to the seaside, amusement parks and other places of interest.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Young people's placement plans effectively detail their individual needs. Documentation complements the placing authority plans. Staff regularly review young people's care plans and write weekly progress reports. Topics covered include health, wellbeing, learning, relationships, identity and independent living skills. This practice enables the home to easily monitor the effectiveness of their intervention. Young people show a marked improvement, as staff focus on their ability to achieve. Staff provide a positive contribution to young people's statutory reviews. Young people benefit as staff advocate for their needs and influence future decisions.

The home currently provides short term respite breaks for young people. Parents maintain parental responsibility and there are no issues regarding contact. Staff establish and maintain strong working relationships with parents. This focuses on promoting the best interests of young people. The home has clear admission criteria. Procedures ensure young people move into and out of the home in a planned manner. Staff ensure introductions to the home are gradual. This ensures young people are comfortable and staff are able to meet their needs. The admission and discharge of young people is taken at the young person's pace.

Young people's views have a direct impact on the home's ways of working. Staff consult with young people on a weekly basis during residents' meetings. Here, young people discuss their food preferences, activities, rewards and independent living skills. Staff use a range of methods to obtain young people's viewpoints. This includes observation of body language and the assistance of pictorial aids. These meetings also act as teaching sessions.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Young people continue to make good progress with their independent living skills. The home develops individual life skills programmes for young people. Although programmes take into account the young person's disability there is greater emphasis on building on their capabilities. Staff assist young people with developing their confidence and raising their self esteem. This is in relation to numeracy, literacy, communication and daily living tasks. Young people are working towards practical goals, which will assist them as they approach adult life. Young people learn self respect, self reliance, self care and how to make their own choices. They are able to attend to their personal hygiene by taking their clothes to the laundry. With staff support they can prepare light meals and clear and set the table at mealtimes. The home works in partnership with placing authorities to ensure a smooth transition into adult services.

Young people live in a clean, comfortable spacious home. Pictorial imagery is on display throughout the building. This assists with orientation and communication. Painted murals on the walls provide a vibrant stimulation for young people. Young people have the choice of socialising with others or spending time on their own. They can relax in a range of communal areas. There are two lounges. The main lounge has a television and DVD player. The leather sofas, wooden flooring and blinds contribute to the modern and homely atmosphere. The second lounge is carpeted with sofas. Young people's personal play equipment is also stored in this lounge. A time out room, sensory room and an activity room is also available for young people. The latter has a sand pit, toys, games, table football and a specially designed ball play structure.

The home is suitable to young people's needs. All bedrooms are upstairs. Each room is uniquely decorated and has modern furniture. Young people stay in their preferred room during their respite break. Other facilities include two bathrooms, a dining room, a laundry room and a fitted kitchen. Young people can spend time in the garden which has a large trampoline. The home also has their own van, which enables young people to explore the wider community. The home is situated in a good location, close to transport links, shops and amenities.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Young people, their parents and placing authorities benefit from the home's clear Statement of Purpose. This document summarises the home's objectives, philosophy and ways of working. Pictorial images ensure the format is accessible to young people. The home aims to promote 'the individuality of each child regardless of their disability'. This value was evident throughout the inspection. Young people respond well to the focused individualised care.

Young people receive care from a competent and culturally diverse staff team. The team are gender balanced and have wide professional experience. This includes nursing and social work. At all times there are at least two members of staff on duty. Young people benefit from the

high staffing ratio. Young people are able to have one-to-one care. There is also sufficient staff to support them on individual activities. Staff feel they are a cohesive team. Staff feel well supported, valued and enjoy having delegated areas of responsibility. This contributes to their ability to provide consistent care to young people. Young people's files provide a good indication of their progress. Records reflect their individuality, their strengths and the effectiveness of staff intervention.

Young people receive support from staff with appropriate skills and experience. The home has a training and development plan. The home is currently working towards all staff having the appropriate level 3 National Vocational Qualification. The organisation recognises the need to provide specialist training for staff. Staff training is on going. This includes courses run by the National Autistic Society, the local authority and mental health organisations.

The home is continually adapting to effectively meet the needs of young people. The further introduction of pictorial imagery and communication aids, promotes better outcomes for young people. The responsible individual has produced a summary regarding the development of the home. This was a recommendation from the last inspection. The future direction of the home is clear. There is a wish to provide a quality service for young people with disabilities. Quality assurance systems contribute to an improved service. A manager from another home within the organisation undertakes these monthly visits. They focus on all areas highlighted in regulations. Each visit concludes with recommendations. The Registered Manager's post remains vacant. The responsible individual continues to cover this post. Although they are effective in their role, regulations require the registration of a manager.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The home has a wide range of documentation which promotes equality and supports social inclusion. These address all forms of harassment, diversity and equal opportunities. There is a vision for everyone with a learning disability to have 'an equal right to choice, opportunity, and respect, with the support they need'. Staff focus on young people's ability not their disability. Care planning addresses relevant topics including identity. Staff benefit from specialist training on disability issues. Imagery throughout the home reflects a variety of cultures. Young people enjoy a culturally diverse diet. There is a comprehensive exploration of diversity which covers race, age, colour, first language, ethnicity, national origin, community background, political belief, sex, disability, appearance, sexual orientation, responsibility for dependents, marital status, medical status and work style.

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
34	appoint a suitable manager and submit a registration application to Ofsted. (Regulation 7)	1 June 2010

Recommendations

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

- obtain for all young people written parental permission to administer first aid and appropriate non-prescription medication. (NMS 13.4)