

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Peter Harrell
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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

This privately run home provides accommodation and care for up to six young people with learning disabilities.

Overall effectiveness

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

Young people benefit from living in a home that delivers a good level of personalised care and support. Attention is given to planning and transitioning of young people into the home and on leaving. This contributes to young people being settled in their home. Young people achieve good outcomes through education, leisure activities and use of behaviour advisors. Committed and motivated staff make sure that young people receive continuity of care that aims to meet their specific needs. Good relationships exist between staff and young people. This provides young people with caring and nurturing staff that understand their needs together with their complex and challenging behaviours.

Safeguarding measures ensure young people's welfare is promoted. Young people live in a safe and secure environment. Young people are supported in a large, spacious well decorated and homely environment. The management of the home is satisfactory. A number of shortfalls are highlighted in the report and requirements and recommendations are made to address these. These relate to the children's guide, records of consultation following restraint, staff recruitment records, supervision and use of surveillance equipment.

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, restraint or discipline in a children's home, a written record is made in a volume kept for the purpose of which shall include confirmation that the person authorised by the registered provider to make the record has spoken to the child concerned and the person using the measure about the use of the measure (Regulation 17B (3)(h))	15/03/2012

27 (2001)	ensure that all persons employed receive appropriate training, supervision and appraisal (Regulation 27(4)(a))	15/03/2012
4 (2001)	make clear that a description of electronic means of surveillance of children which may be used in the children's home is included in the statement of purpose. (Regulation 4(1))	15/03/2012

Recommendations

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

- make sure that the children's home has a clear statement of purpose which is understood by staff and children (NMS 13.1)
- ensure the child's guide is available through suitable alternative methods of communication, e.g. pictures (NMS 13.6)
- ensure the children's home has a record of the recruitment and vetting checks which includes: checks to confirm the right to work in the UK and where the person has lived outside the UK, further checks as are considered appropriate (NMS 16.3 (e) (f))
- ensure a record is kept by the home detailing each supervision held for each member of staff, including the registered person. (NMS 19.5)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people make good progress in relation to their disability in all areas of their lives. Parents, staff and child care professionals comment that young people have grown in confidence and ability since living at the home. Young people's cultural needs are well catered for.

Young people attend local residential special schools. The schools ensure that each young person has an education programme that is tailored to their individual needs. Attendance is very good and staff from the home also support young people with transitioning to and from school and also during the school day. This allows young people to be more relaxed at stressful transition times and maintain good attendance levels. Young people observed returning from school present as relaxed and a parent commented that their child likes school.

Young people are empowered to make choices through a range of communication systems, about their daily activities, enabling them to feel more in control of their lives. Staff carry communication picture key chains. However, staff commented that some of the young peoples' understanding is very limited. This reduces the opportunities for non-verbal young people to make choices about their lives.

However the staff are active in seeking ways to understand the young people's views. A professional visiting the home commented that there were positive constructive relationships between staff and young people and a young person arrived with very challenging behaviour and this diminished over time; so 'staff must be doing something right.'

Records held accurately reflect the outcomes for young people since joining the home and detail pathway or plans to move to adult services. This impacts on staff being able to successfully move young people on to adult life.

Staff ensure young people's daily medical health needs are met and that they receive appropriate care and medication. Young people's health needs are further enhanced by appropriately trained and qualified staff. Consent for emergency medical intervention and therapies are gained. Young people are receiving a balanced nutritious diet that meets their physical needs.

Young people benefit from participating in the community with support from well-trained staff. Young people access the local leisure facilities, shops and parks. This results in young people having more opportunities and improved quality of life. Young people benefit from regular contact with their families.

Quality of care

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

Young people enjoy positive relationships with staff who are caring and understand their needs well. Staff treat young people with respect and dignity particularly with regard to managing their personal care needs. Young people gestured with a thumbs up sign and a smile when asked about the staff. Two parents who were consulted say the 'staff are absolutely fantastic, they know all young peoples ways' and another commented, 'the care is very good, I find the staff polite and professional.' Staff support young people to develop their self-help skills and become more independent individuals.

There is positive interaction between staff and young people. Staff have realistic aspirations for young people with efforts to ensure they reach their potential in all areas of their lives. Teachers say there is a positive professional relationship between the school and the home. Young people benefit from dedicated time from a variety of resourceful, caring and committed adults demonstrated by the behaviour advisor's views that, Staff 'are lovely, passionate and motivated, here to help' and that young people were very happy at the home. A parent commented that he is pleased his child has access to community activities which are provided by the home to benefit all young people. A parent commented about their child, 'Every time I go down there he is calm, he is happy, they do take a lot of trips out. I am happy, we are very pleased with the care the home provides.'

Young people receive individualised support and their views are actively sought through the use of picture exchange communication systems. All young people have

a key worker. Young people attend the weekly young people's meetings. Pictorial agendas and written minutes of meetings are produced to support young people's understanding and input. There are systems in place to inform young people how to complain but there have been no complaints from young people. However, it is unclear from looking at the young people's guide whether non-verbal young people understand the complaints system as it does not use picture communication symbols.

A parent commented that the home is very accommodating at ensuring that the home provides his child with food from their country of origin and he is pleased they celebrate their culture. Staff are recruited from a mixed gender, age and ethnic background and provide the young people with staff from similar ethnic backgrounds.

Young people's health needs are well met. Staff promote the health of the young people at the home and they are supported to attend regular appointments with health professionals. Procedures for administration and disposal of medication are accurate. First aid training is provided for staff; this ensures young people have access to suitable basic medical treatment when needed.

Young people live in a home which is a safe, warm and a vibrant environment. A great deal of care has been taken to meet the specific requirements of young people who live in it including having a sensory room and many soft furnishings. The property and grounds have been sufficiently maintained and there is a programme for redecoration or repair and a plan to landscape the concrete garden patio area.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people live in an environment that is safe and keeps them safe from harm. Young people are protected by the use of clear risk assessments. From observations and speaking to parents and social workers, young people are safe at the home and are able to report any concerns to staff. Parents say that their children are safely looked after in the home. The staff are knowledgeable about safeguarding procedures. The manager knows when to report matters or to seek advice from professionals outside the home. There are safeguarding procedures in place and clear reference in documentation to the local safeguarding children's board. Professionals outside the home are regular visitors and there is a clear record of these visits and meetings.

Since the last inspection there have been no incidents of young people going missing, procedures are in place for young people who go missing, which are linked to young people's individual risk assessments and behaviour plans. However this is not referred to in the Statement of Purpose. Young people are supported by good staff ratios thus reducing the opportunity to target other young people or display bullying behaviour. Young people's challenging behaviour is managed well. Staff and the care coordinator are good at finding supportive strategies to manage some very

complex behavioural issues. Young people benefit from positive reinforcement. There is a managing aggression statement which the staff refer to and young people regularly use the sensory room which staff say de-escalates young people's feelings of frustration.

The home has an appropriate policy and procedure for the use of restraint which the records reflect. There have been six incidents of restraint since the last inspection. However there is no record of whether young people have been communicated with after these actions took place. Staff receive regular update training on restraint and behaviour management which is in accordance with the British Institution of Learning Disabilities guidance; this ensures that young people are managed safely during restraint.

Employment records show that the provider has in place procedures to employ new staff which follow safer recruitment practices. However, recruitment records do not include specific checks to confirm the right of some staff to work in the United Kingdom where they are working on a student visa and where the person has lived outside the UK. This could potentially compromise young people's safety.

Young people are guided as to what they should do in the event of a fire at the home. Records confirm that the alarm systems are tested regularly and other procedures are in place to ensure maintenance of equipment and installations. Risk assessments are used to identify and reduce risks from hazards around the building, grounds and activities by young people. There is a plan of maintenance work including landscaping the garden area. Close circuit television surveillance equipment works in the home but it is not used by staff, therefore its purpose needs to be reviewed.

Leadership and management

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

Young people benefit from a Registered Manager and staff team, including a care coordinator, who are committed to improvement and reflect on evaluation of the care they provide to young people. All aspects of care are monitored and reviewed. The Registered Manager was formerly the Responsible Individual and has other roles within the wider organisation. A care coordinator works to further develop systems and staff practice and promotes better outcomes for young people. The Registered Manager is aware of the shortfalls of the home and has developed an action plan to make improvements. Requirements and recommendations made at the previous inspection have been acted upon satisfactorily. Staff now attend training to meet the needs of young people with autism; teachers at nearby special schools and child care professionals specialising in working with autistic children work closely with the staff and Registered Manager to inform practice and improvement. Regular monitoring visits are undertaken monthly by a senior member of staff from within the organisation. Reports are produced in a timely manner and appropriate in their content, detail and requests for action to be taken. There have been no notifiable incidents since the last inspection.

The home meets the aims and objectives set out in the Statement of Purpose. There is a clear focus of working in partnership with young people, parents and advocates which helps to achieve a consistent approach to meeting the needs of young people. The Statement of Purpose does not contain a description of surveillance equipment which is not used, there are no details regarding incidents of control and restraint and no details of the procedures to be implemented when a young person goes missing. The young people's guide is informative and comprehensive outlining what young people can expect from the home. However it is not suitable for the young people's level of understanding and has not been shared using picture communication symbols.

Staff are equipped with the necessary skills to support young people through a training programme targeted to meet the specific needs of the young people, in particular working with young people with autism. Staff confirmed that the training available is good. Most staff are able to access regular supervision to highlight their development needs. However some agency staff who have been working at the home for some time and perform similar tasks to permanent staff have not been receiving regular supervision or similar training opportunities.

Equality and diversity practice is **good**.