

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Stella Henderson
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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 provides a residential short break service for children with a range of disabilities, including learning disabilities, physical disabilities and complex health needs. It is community based and close to local amenities and resources.

The home is very well resourced and meet young people's needs well. Bedrooms have sufficient space for lifting equipment and some rooms have overhead tracking for hoists. All bedrooms have en suite facilities which include a shower, toilet and wash basin and grab rails.

The garden areas are separate with a garden play area containing a tarmac track for quad bikes and a sensory garden. The second garden contains outdoor recreational play equipment for young people who enjoy more physical activities. Two mini buses provide further opportunity for young people to have trips out during their stay.

Summary

The purpose of this visit was to undertake an unannounced key inspection. Six outcomes were inspected on this occasion; Being Healthy, Staying Safe, Enjoying and Achieving, Positive Contribution, Economic Wellbeing and Organisation.

The home provides a good standard of care for young people. Procedures are in place that make sure that children and young people are protected and kept safe from abuse. Staff make sure that health care needs are met so that the good health of children and young people is maintained. The staff team have experience as well as relevant training in how to care for children and young people with disability.

Staff are supported by clear policies and procedures, supervision and relevant training. There is good management oversight into how the home is running and quality assurance systems in place to monitor and improve the quality of care that young people receive.

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 two good practice recommendations were made in relation to fire drills and recruitment information. Evidence from this inspection demonstrates that these recommendations have now been met.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Staff help young people to remain healthy when they visit the home. The home works closely with parents and other professionals to ensure that the health needs of young people are met and their well being promoted. For example, the home gains a wide range of information prior to admission on their general health status, immunisations, the nature of young people's disability and how this is best managed.

There is a clear understanding around respecting cultural identity and diversity through the provision and preparation of meals. This is supported through training that equips staff with the skills necessary to meet individual dietary needs, such as for specialised feeding requirements. Inspection of menus and discussion with the cook confirmed that young people are offered a wide range of healthy food. One parent confirmed that the home provides a wholesome, varied diet.

The cook makes it her business to ensure that she is fully informed about each individual child's dietary needs and preferences, and whether they have eaten and enjoyed the food provided. Staff make no regular systematic recording, however, of food intake which means that the manager does not have an overview of whether young people are receiving a balanced diet.

There is frequent communication with parents and where there are changes to a young person's health their parents are kept informed. Young people's health and well-being is monitored informally, through professional and family discussion and close observation. Qualified nurses form part of the team and cover every shift, and the integrated nature of the service means that there is easy access to professionals such as occupational therapists.

Young people's health is safeguarded by the robust approach to the management and administration of medicines. All medication is appropriately stored and dispensed using recognised recording and auditing systems. Staff follow required procedures to ensure medication is safely administered and take advice from pharmacists where appropriate. Medical consent is sought from parents so that staff have the authority they need to attend to young people's health needs.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Staff show a high regard for the privacy and dignity of young people, and for maintaining appropriate levels of confidentiality. Files and other documentation containing personal information is kept under secure lock and key and information held on computer is password protected.

A visitors book is maintained and checks on identification are routinely carried out on visitors to the home, and effective procedures for the recruitment and vetting of staff also mean that young people are adequately protected from those who are unsuitable to work with children and young people

When helping with personal care tasks, staff consult with parents and take into account the individual preferences of young people. Staff treat young people with respect which is demonstrated in part by how they communicate with them. The home is large enough for young people to have privacy and time away from other young people should they so wish it.

Parents take the lead role in ensuring young people's safety and well-being, but the home has a good range of operational policies and procedures, such as those for complaints, behaviour management and child protection that are used to effectively promote the safety and welfare of young people. One parent confirmed that they felt confident that their child's wellbeing was safeguarded at the home.

Due to the nature of young people's disabilities, absconding and bullying is not an issue at the home, although systems are in place for staff to implement procedures should these eventualities occur.

The home generally provides a safe environment for young people. A risk assessment approach applies to all aspects of care such as moving and handling and other aspects of care. There are inconsistencies in the routine updating of these risk assessments, however, and there was no risk assessment for one external activity although the responsible individual gave an undertaking at inspection to remedy this.

Environmental risk assessments are also undertaken with regular testing and maintenance of fire and electrical equipment to ensure that they remain in good working order. Medical devices are also regularly checked and maintained, and procedures are in place to receive and respond to relevant safety warnings.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Outstanding practice at the home ensures that each young person receives high quality support that is tailored to their individual needs. Detailed care plans - set out in the 'All About Me' documentation - are constructed around these identified needs. Staff are excellent in providing the individual support and intervention that young people with very complex disabilities require to achieve their full potential.

As an integrated service there are highly effective on-site links with a range of other professionals and services. This means that young people's needs are more promptly met and this contributes to young people experiencing excellent individualised support during their periods of respite at the home.

Parents retain primary responsibility for their children's education, but young people benefit from excellent support from the staff to enjoy their time at the home and to continue to attend school and achieve. The home regularly keeps in touch with the different schools that the young people attend and works in close co-operation with parents on this matter.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Young people benefit from having their needs effectively assessed. Prior to placement, and in consultation with parents and other professionals, a comprehensive assessment of need is undertaken. Clear and specific plans, recorded in the 'All About Me' documentation describes these needs in detail and how they are to be met.

A key working system ensures that plans are effectively implemented and parents confirm that the needs of their children are very well met. There is frequent dialogue and exchange of information between parents and staff regarding young people. This informal means of monitoring ensures that the development and progress of young people is effectively monitored and any intervention adapted accordingly.

Statutory review mechanisms are in place and staff provide excellent information about young people to inform this process. Decisions from those reviews are not always recorded on young

people's files in a timely fashion, however. This means that agreed outcomes of those reviews are not reflected in the day to day care of the young person.

The home makes every effort to take an inclusive approach to consultation. Young people's meetings - the 'Sunshine' groups - are held, their views are recorded and staff respond to young people's requests. In discussion with parents and using appropriate communication methods systems, staff find out about how a young person lets others know what they want or are thinking about. The majority of young people visiting the home have no verbal communication skills, however. The registered manager therefore uses meetings with parents to establish consultation as they are the people who know their children best.

Procedures are in place to ensure that young people's admission to and discharge from the home is undertaken sensitively. As young people are having just short stays, formal planning around contact with family during this time is not generally seen as necessary or appropriate unless there are child protection issues to take into account.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is outstanding.

The home provides outstanding facilities that benefit young people with complex disabilities. The home is highly resourced and the registered manager and staff are effective in creating a homely, safe environment. The physical environment has been planned exclusively around the needs of young people visiting the home and there is good use of communal and private space.

For example, there is equipment such as hoists to facilitate the moving and handling of young people. There are wide, light corridors, multi-sensory rooms and tactile surfaces. All bedrooms are en-suite and specific beds are available for those young people who need a 'safe' sleeping space. The home has toys and games with the interests and needs of the young people visiting the home in mind, although each young person has their own box of favourite toys, CD's or videos brought from home.

The building itself is safe and secure. Kitchens and young people's own bathrooms are kept in immaculate condition and there is an effective system in place for dealing with any repairs and maintenance issues. Young people benefit because the service is in the heart of the community, which enables them to access other facilities and services promptly.

Although young people have very complex disabilities, nevertheless staff encourage a level of independence in daily tasks wherever possible. Young people benefit from the support of staff when they move from children's to adult services. The home enables young people to make this transition through careful planning and liaison with parents and other professionals.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The statement of purpose provides a good range of information about the home. The document is regularly reviewed to ensure it accurately reflects what it provides for young people. This enables their families to know what they can expect from the home and how their children will be cared for.

The competence and expertise of staff, and flexibility in staffing, means that even when young people have very different levels of need, these are successfully met. Young people are cared for by experienced and competent staff who are child focused in their practice. The manager ensures that there are sufficient numbers of staff on duty at any one time to meet individual needs and provide adequate support and supervision of young people.

Staff are supported by access to a wide range of training opportunities, team meetings and regular supervision. Supervision does not cover the issues referred to within these standards, however, which compromises young people's wellbeing and safety.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Young people are cared for by a staff team which is balanced in terms of age, ethnicity and gender. Evidence across the five outcomes supports a consistent commitment to equality and diversity in terms of identifying and responding to the needs of young people with complex disabilities. This is reflected in the quality and detail of assessments and placement plans and in good practice generally within the home.

Independent monitoring provides a statutory check on the home's functioning and identifies any shortfalls in practice or procedure. In addition, the manager uses Schedule 6 checks to monitor the performance of the home and to identify where improvements to the quality of care can be made. This ensures that young people continue to benefit from appropriate care and good standards being maintained.

Comprehensive records ensure that each young person has a permanent and secure record relating to time spent at the home. Administration within the home is good. Standard documentation and policies and procedures are to hand and young people's records are in good order. Case auditing takes place to check that files contain all the information that is required by these regulations, and in order to ensure that young people's needs and experiences are accurately recorded.

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

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

- ensure a record of menus (as served) demonstrates provision of a suitable diet (NMS 10.4).
- regularly review the implementation and effectiveness of action identified as a result of risk assessment carried out (NMS 26.3).

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- ensure the result of all statutory reviews are recorded on the child's file and reflected as necessary in the day to day care of the child as provided for in the placement plan (NMS 3.1/3.4)
 - ensure that supervision of staff working with children addresses the issues outlined in NMS 28.4 (NMS 28.4)