

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Caroline Brailsford
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This home is a ten-bedded residential short break service managed by a local authority for children with sensory impairment and learning and physical disabilities.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: a service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements

Good: a service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements

Adequate: a service that only meets minimum requirements

Inadequate: a service that does not meet minimum requirements

Overall effectiveness

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

Young people make good progress in many areas of their lives during their short breaks because of the home's highly positive and individual approach. There is particularly good progress made with regard to young people's behaviour, social interactions and health.

The management arrangements have a very positive influence in this home. The Registered Manager is dedicated to young people's progress and safety. She successfully manages and leads the staff group who are in turn, highly motivated to provide excellent care to young people.

Staff are at all times very respectful of young people, whatever their background, abilities and behaviour. Young people are always at the centre of the work taking place and there are good working relationships with other professionals to promote progress. In addition, the very positive relationships with parents ensure that care plans have the detail required to keep young people safe and meet their needs. As a result, young people feel happy, comfortable, well and safe.

There is one requirement made as a result of this inspection. This is in relation to the monitoring in the home which does not establish the young people's views wishes and feelings about their placement. In addition, a recommendation has been made because not all references for new staff are verified as the national minimum standards require.

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
33 (2001)	Ensure the person carrying out the visit shall interview with their consent and in private such of the children accommodated there, their parents relatives and persons working at the home as appears necessary in order to form an opinion of the standard of care provided in the home. (Regulation 33(4)(a))	31/01/2014

Recommendations

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

- ensure that telephone enquiries are made as well as obtaining written references for staff. (NMS 16.1)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

Young people make very good progress in achieving positive outcomes in many areas. In particular, they maintain excellent health while staying at the home. Some young people's health needs are exceptionally complex, yet their needs are consistently well met, ensuring that they feel well and comfortable during their stay. In turn, this enables young people to enjoy the short break, spend time with their friends and develop skills in many areas such as independence skills. Young people learn life skills such as cooking and self-care skills that they might not have the opportunity to learn at home. Achievements are recognised and praised by staff and managers. This means young people learn skills appropriate to their age and understanding and learn to make decisions and choices. In addition, young people make progress socially. The short break opportunity allows for time to be spent within friendship groups which many young people particularly enjoy.

Young people enjoy the purpose built facilities where there is space to run around and spend relaxation time in sensory and soft rooms. The wide range of specialised equipment helps them to feel relaxed and further their learning through sensory stimulation. For example, there is sensory equipment such as specialised lights to promote relaxation. In addition, despite young people attending different schools, transport is effectively arranged to promote attendance in education. There is extremely good contact between the home and schools so that staff are fully aware of all targets and learning areas. This allows young people to continue with their

education in the home and fully supports their progress.

There are a variety of communication methods within the group of young people and their individual style is very well respected by staff. This ensures that whatever their method, they can contribute their views, choices and wishes in their day-to-day living.

Young people's interests are developed and achievements very well celebrated. This assists the development of confidence. For example, a recent gardening club and sunflower growing competition was won by a young person who felt proud and their self-esteem was raised as a result.

Young people also make good progress with their behaviour as a result of the placement. This enables them to feel more settled and enjoy their break. This setting benefits young people and their families because their break alleviates stress in their family, so that all are refreshed and prevents further family stress, difficulties or breakdown. One parent says that for their family the setting has been a 'life line' illustrating the benefits of this home to their family and therefore to their young person.

Quality of care

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

Young people receive very high standards of care and support because staff highly respect and value them for their own differing personality and behaviour. They always try very hard to break down barriers to communication and look for new ways to promote further communication with each young person. This ensures that young people's views are a priority and that their wishes and feelings can be established about their routine and life in the home.

Young people are not always present at their review due to their inability to understand their situation. However, staff and the manager ensure that there is a full report completed for the review meeting covering all areas of progress, so that every opportunity is created for further improvement. In addition, there are other opportunities for young people to contribute their views to the meeting. Staff work hard to ensure that they consult with young people to represent the young person's views in their own communication style. For example, symbols, photographs or pictures are used to present likes and dislikes. This gives a full account of the progress made in a way that each young person can understand. In addition, young people are listened to in the home and changes are made because of this consultation; for example a new touch screen computer has been purchased in response to requests from young people. The positive responses to young people from the provider ensure that young people are empowered and this helps them to realise that they can be in control of what is happening in their own life.

All young people are very well supported to develop independence skills for their future as an adult. Young people have a range of opportunities based on their

individual needs. For example, very practical skills such as household chores and cooking. These opportunities are based on identified needs, levels of abilities and understanding which secures a very high level of learning and development in this area.

Extremely high staffing ratios ensure that care planned for young people can consistently be delivered to an exceptionally high standard. Staff and young people have very positive relationships, which enhances young people's enjoyment of their stay. One social worker reported that relationships between staff and young people are 'brilliant'. Young people can have fun in a safe and nurturing environment, where all their individual needs are met. At the same time, staff are very clear with young people about their behaviour and what is expected. Young people make exceptional progress with their behaviour because of the proactive approach from staff. Staff see the young people's behaviour as part of their communication style and any difficult behaviour is managed well through a thoughtful and consistent approach, leading to many improvements.

Staff monitor progress made by young people very well. They identify any new areas of need as they arise. This can be particularly challenging as the needs of the young people are extremely complex and change regularly. In addition, young people only use the setting for short breaks which can be sporadic. This makes it more difficult to be precise about the up-to-date care that is required. However, excellent collaboration with parents ensures that new and emerging needs of the young people are regularly discussed. Parents are very positive about this collaboration and say that 'staff are fantastic' and 'they resolve issues'. Also, in addition to a very experienced and knowledgeable care staff team, there are qualified nursing staff on shift all the time to attend to the health needs of the young people. They are very competent and sensitive. The nursing model does not interfere with the social aspects of the home. In addition, the arrangements for the administration of medicines are safe.

The care plans are exceptionally detailed and highly responsive to the changing and emerging needs of young people. They provide all staff with specific instruction as to how each need should be met. Therefore, each need is met exceptionally well. The monitoring of the plans, progress and difficulties that young people face is excellent and multi-disciplinary working is a top priority to maximise progress. For example, there are regular meetings with teachers and social workers to review progress. In addition, one staff sits on the governing body at the local special school to promote very positive joint working.

The home's location and design is exceptionally well suited to young people's needs, in that there is plenty of room for a variety of activities. In addition there is room for the extremely extensive range of specialised equipment which is provided to assist young people in their day-to-day life. The home's locality provides good access to a range of local amenities, services and transport links. Each young person has their own room, their privacy is respected and they are able to personalise their room if it is appropriate to their needs

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people are safe in this home and individual plans contribute well to their safety; these include detailed risk assessments and care plans that help to minimise risks for individuals. These documents are of a high quality and clearly set out what staff must do to protect young people. The documents are well understood by staff and therefore work well to reduce risks.

Staff at every level, whatever their job in the home are all trained in safeguarding children and are well aware of the important and complex safety and welfare information about individuals, which promotes their safety. This includes domestic staff as well as care staff, ensuring that all are very clear about what they must do should a safeguarding situation arise. Staff work closely with placing authorities so that a joint working approach can benefit young people's welfare. This approach gives every opportunity for improving safety. This is because other professionals are fully up-to-date and can therefore give further ideas and suggestions about improvements.

Young people are protected through good quality policies and procedures if they should go missing. This has happened since the last inspection, however, an open, reflective and learning approach ensures that risks are fully minimised given the complex needs of the young people. Action has been taken swiftly to prevent this from happening in the future and the risk assessments and care plans are very prescriptive about staffing supervision and access to the garden. There are times where, despite there being a full and thorough investigation, the audit trail and the learning points are difficult to ascertain. This is a recording issue and does not impact on the safety of the young people. It is clear that young people are safe and that appropriate measures have been taken to protect young people's welfare with regard to going missing.

The young people's needs are very complex and as a result, some behaviours and associated risks are presented. Positive intervention and a very consistent approach ensures a reduction in risk taking behaviours. The staff have a positive and proactive approach to young people's behaviour and as a result there are very few physical interventions. This is positive, given some young people's complex behavioural needs. Each young person has an individualised care plan identifying clearly their behaviour, which is well supported by staff. The manager and staff are clear that some behaviours are part of the young person's own communication style. Where incidents could be labelled as significant events they are seen and valued as part of the young person's personality which is very positive for young people and fully promotes progress.

The home has good health and safety arrangements, with regular and routine checks being undertaken by the staff and the manager. Young people are further protected by staff recruitment practices where checks are completed for all staff to ensure the safety and welfare of young people. However, it is difficult to ascertain if all

references for all staff are verified by telephone, therefore a recommendation has been made because this may pose a risk to the safety of young people in the future.

Leadership and management

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

Young people benefit from a well-managed home. One social worker said that management is 'fantastic'. In addition, staff at every level are positive about the management arrangements. The Registered Manager is a very positive role model to her staff and to the young people. One staff said, 'the manager is very good'. She provides exceptionally clear leadership and direction to a caring and committed staff team. She is always positive about staff qualities, but at the same time supports them to develop and improve their care to young people further. This helps young people to make progress in their placement. As a result of the manager's approach, staff feel highly motivated and enthusiastic. One staff said 'I love working here'. Staff are very clear about their roles and responsibilities and thoroughly enjoy their work with young people. They bring a thoughtful, caring and nurturing approach and the level of care is highly individual, thus promoting further progress. The manager and staff are driven by the need to want to make a difference to the lives of the young people in their care. As a consequence, the young people make good progress and are looked after well.

The manager continues to be vigilant in checking the quality of care provided. For example, care plans and risk assessments are monitored effectively. In addition, the provider completes their own inspections of the home as part of the monitoring arrangements. These concentrate on the documentary evidence in the home and do pick up shortfalls that are rectified quickly. This shows that the visits are effective in promoting improvement. However, the young people's views about their care are not established in line with the Regulations, therefore a requirement has been set.

Staff training is well organised and along with mandatory training such as behaviour management, health and safety and first aid, there is training over and above the national minimum standards. This further promotes the needs of young people. For example a recent training course called 'living through disruption' has helped staff to understand how young people can be affected by their short break and to therefore minimise the impact on staying away from home for young people. In addition, the nurse's training for health care delivery and tasks is organised through a practice development nurse who assesses the competency of each task regularly. This ensures that, whatever a young person's complex health needs, they are well addressed in the home.

The manager establishes some young people's views about the running of the home periodically and in relation to her monitoring but the recording of young people's views is not always instrumental to the development plan. However, This is a recording issue and it is clear that young people are always at the centre of the work.

The home's Statement of Purpose also informs young people, parents, carers and placing authorities very well about what to expect. There were no requirements or recommendations made at the last inspection.

There is a very clear system in place that works well to notify appropriate authorities of all significant events relating to the protection of young people living at the home. This ensures the promotion of young people's well-being and protects them from harm at all times.

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* and the evaluation schedule for the inspection of children's homes.