

## Inspection report for children's home

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| <b>Unique reference number</b> | SC065730        |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 30/11/2012      |
| <b>Inspector</b>               | Judith Longden  |
| <b>Type of inspection</b>      | Full            |
| <b>Provision subtype</b>       | Children's home |

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| <b>Date of last inspection</b> | 07/03/2012 |
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## Service information

### Brief description of the service

This home is a ten-bedded residential short break service for children with a range of disabilities, including learning disabilities, physical disabilities, autism and complex health needs. Children usually attend three or four nights per month. Funding is from the local authority and the health authority. The staff team are multi-disciplinary and nurses are always on duty.

### 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**.

This short breaks service provides good quality of care. Care episodes are well planned with the full involvement of parents. Young people play an active role in their care and in the running of the service. Young people make excellent progress in achieving positive outcomes in all aspects of their lives. They enjoy coming to the home and have very good relationships with staff and each other. Young people are kept safe by staff who demonstrate a good understanding of safe working practice. The manager understands the strengths and areas for development for the home and has a development plan in place to improve the service. There are two requirements made in relation to the need for a missing person's procedure and to ensure records are kept up to date. In addition three recommendations are made. These do not significantly impact on the progress, welfare or safety of young people.

## 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 |
|------|-------------|----------|
|------|-------------|----------|

|              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |            |
|--------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| 16<br>(2001) | prepare and implement a procedure to be followed when any child accommodated in a children's home is absent without permission which has regard to any relevant local authority or police protocols on missing children (16 (4)(b)) | 31/12/2012 |
| 28<br>(2001) | ensure records in respect of each child accommodated in the home are kept up to date. (Regulation 28(1)(b))                                                                                                                         | 31/12/2012 |

## Recommendations

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

- ensure the children's guide includes how a child can contact their Independent Reviewing Officer, the Children's Rights Director and Ofsted if they wish to raise a concern with inspectors (NMS 13.5)
- ensure staff are provided with regular supervision (NMS 19.4)
- ensure a written record is kept which includes details of the action taken, and the outcome of any action or investigation, following a notifiable event. This is in relation to the outcome of any child protection enquiry being sent to HMCI. (NMS 24.2)

## Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people make excellent progress in achieving positive outcomes in all areas. The home has had a significant impact in supporting this progress, especially with regard to young people improving their communication, increasing their confidence, and gaining social and independence skills. Young people participate in activities that help promote a positive self-image, for example they are encouraged to undergo beauty treatments such as have their nails painted or have a hand massage. Progress and achievement is recorded and evaluated with young people and as a result they make exceptional progress towards developing a positive self-view and increased confidence.

Young people benefit from a varied and healthy menu that provides a balanced diet and takes into account their medical dietary needs and their preferences. Young people help to choose meals and some are able to prepare snacks and hot drinks giving them the opportunity to learn new skills. Outdoor activities and exercise are encouraged in order to promote healthy living. Young people also benefit from quiet time and relaxation opportunities. Their health is further promoted by the implementation of daily personal hygiene routines. Young people are making significant progress in achieving responsibility for their own hygiene and health needs. For example some young people are able to clean their own teeth with prompts from staff.

Young people benefit from access to a wide range of activities that provide new and challenging experiences. They are encouraged to engage in community activities and outings as well as enjoying activities in the home. This supports them to feel part of their wider community and enjoy the activities and social life this provides. A social worker said the home is, 'Effective at breaking down barriers to participation.'

Young people achieve excellent outcomes in their education and this is complemented by the provision of learning activities in the home. Staff praise young people's progress and this encourages them to achieve their educational potential.

Young people learn life skills such as baking, household chores and self-care skills that they would not have the opportunity to learn at home. This means young people learn skills appropriate to their age and understanding and learn to make decisions and choices.

Young people who use the short breaks service are supported in their transition to adult services. Staff work closely with adult care teams and parents. As a result young people receive care to help them prepare for transition to adult care.

Young people benefit from excellent contact with their parents and family. The home communicates very effectively with parents and social workers. Young people are encouraged to develop social interactions with other young people in the home and in the community. As a result people who play an important role in young people's lives are actively involved in the care they receive.

## **Quality of care**

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

Young people receive good quality care from a committed and experienced staff team. A social worker said, 'The service is highly valued.' Parents' views are regularly sought through meetings with staff and through correspondence. Key workers contact parents before and after each short break visit. This ensures the planning of the short breaks is fully inclusive of the parents and takes into account the views of young people and the friendship groups that have been established. A social worker said this leads to, 'A consistent, joined up approach to their care.' Young people benefit from care plans that identify their individual needs, likes and dislikes. Key workers identify targets for them to achieve and strategies to support their development. These are recorded in various formats such as on computerised systems and in young people's files. However, not all paper records are updated in line with changes and developments so it is not clear that daily routines always reflect the most up to date targets or current strategies in place for young people.

Young people using the service have complex needs and many have communication difficulties arising from their disabilities. The home has very good processes and methods in place to enable young people to express their views despite these difficulties. The manager continues to implement new ideas to continue to improve

communication and consultation. Young people are able to participate in making choices about routines, activities and life in the home using various formats and communication methods. They make good use of the consultation group to express their views and share their experiences within the home. For example young people discussed the meals provided and requested more roast dinners which has been addressed. Young people have also been involved in developing new rules for the home such as not shouting. Young people play an active role in their reviews and identify their wishes and feelings about the care they receive. This means they participate in day-to-day decisions about their lives and have a say in the running of the home.

Young people benefit from excellent relationships with staff and are developing skills to enhance their communication and social interaction with other young people and the community. Staff have a good knowledge of various communication methods and the needs of the individual and this enables them to interact positively with the young people.

Young people are supported if they wish to complain. Good information on how to complain and who to speak to is available in a variety of formats. There have been no complaints from young people.

Parents are aware of how to complain and there has been one complaint since the last inspection. This was dealt with appropriately and the home has adjusted its medication procedure as a result.

Young people who access this service have a high level of clinical need, disability and associated learning difficulties. The provision is staffed by social care professionals and qualified health professionals. This multi-agency approach ensures the holistic health and care needs of the young people are met. Staff work closely with parents who are primarily responsible for their child's health care. This ensures there is continuity of health care when young people are on short breaks.

Young people live in a home that provides a safe but stimulating environment. The home is generally well maintained and decorated. Where there are areas that need some improvement, such as carpets needing a clean, the manager has taken steps to ensure the work is scheduled. The home offers good facilities and resources that provide a variety of stimulating activities and also areas where young people can relax. The home is close to local amenities and leisure facilities providing a range of opportunities for young people.

Staff encourage young people to engage in a variety of activities and leisure pursuits within the home and outside play areas. This includes use of a range of outdoor play equipment, sensory room, soft play, arts and crafts and music. Staff encourage children to engage in trips to the zoo, park and local town. As a result children benefit from access to a range of activities and events they would not otherwise have the opportunity to experience.

Staff are proactive in supporting educational attendance and achievement.

Communication between education providers and the short breaks staff is very good. Key workers visit the school and attend education review meetings and work in partnership with parents. This means there is continuity in the learning for young people.

## **Safeguarding children and young people**

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

Staff and managers are aware of the individual behaviours of young people and group them together ensuring the mix of the group does not pose a risk to others. The home has a good anti-bullying policy in place and a high staff ratio to young people helps to reduce the likelihood of bullying. This means the home provides an environment of care and support where bullying is not tolerated. Positive behaviour is encouraged by giving lots of praise and frequent expressions of approval. This is supported by strong positive relationships between young people and staff. The use of sanctions is in accordance with the understanding of the young person and include mild or severe verbal reprimand, increased supervision or reparation such as an apology. However, there have been no sanctions since the last inspection. Staff are trained in managing challenging behaviour and the use of various intervention methods. The use of physical restraint is as a last resort. Any use of restraint is recorded correctly. As a result children interact positively with staff and each other and behave appropriately.

Young people benefit from a range of very good policies and procedures for safeguarding practices in respect of child protection, handling allegations, recruitment and young people's risk assessments. The safeguarding policy includes strategies to ensure child protection is responsive to the needs of disabled young people. Staff are trained in safeguarding including training on recognising abuse in disabled young people. Staff are clear on their role in the safeguarding process. Young people are protected from unsuitable people gaining employment by a good recruitment process. Visitors to the home are asked to sign in and identification is checked. Visitors are monitored in the building throughout their visit. This further ensures young people are protected from significant harm.

A range of proportionate risk assessments enable young people to experience new challenges and develop new skills. These are reviewed and adjusted where necessary. For example, one young person had been risk assessed as able to make a cup of tea with supervision. Following an incident where they banged the kettle and splashed their hand with hot water the risk assessment was reviewed. Rather than stopping the young person from making tea the staff now ensure there is the minimum amount of water required in the kettle to reduce the likelihood of splashing hot water. As a result the young person continues to enjoy a level of responsibility and learning new skills whilst remaining safe.

Staff have access to the joint missing from care protocol formulated with the police and local authority but there is no home's procedure for the staff to follow should a young person be absent. However, young people are safeguarded by high levels of

supervision and there have been no incidents of young people going missing or being absent from the home. Where young people have been identified as being at risk of running away measures have been put in place to ensure they remain safe. For example one young person arrives by taxi that now reverses right up to the main door. Staff form a 'guiding corridor' of people to encourage the young person through to the main living area. This is done with no physical touch but verbal encouragement. This ensures the young person is not provided with an opportunity to run from the taxi.

Young people stay in a home that provides the appropriate level of security to ensure their safety and wellbeing. Regular fire, maintenance and equipment checks further promote the safety of children. Fire drills are held as required. This means the building is safe and secure and young people are protected.

### **Leadership and management**

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

Young people benefit from a service that continues to encourage them to achieve and progress in all aspects of their lives. A number of improvements have been made since the last inspection including improved communication, staff development and consultation. The requirement made at the last inspection has been met and the manager now submits a regular review of the quality of care to Ofsted as required. A social worker commented that the local authority, 'is fortunate to have such an excellent provision, children would be at greater risk without this provision, it is superbly managed.' There are two requirements and three recommendations made as a result of this inspection. However, these shortfalls do not significantly impact on the progress, welfare or safety of young people.

Young people are provided with good information about the home in an easy to read welcome guide. The guide contains an address for Ofsted but the telephone number has not been updated. A recommendation is therefore made to update the young person's guide to ensure full and accurate information is provided. The home has a comprehensive statement of purpose that provides a detailed account of the service provided. This is regularly reviewed to ensure it remains accurate.

The home is provided and managed by suitable personnel who are qualified and experienced ensuring a service to young people that is efficient and effective in caring for young people and developing them to reach their full potential. The manager has established good partnership working especially with schools.

The manager has a clear development plan in place that identifies progress already made and plans for the future of the service. This provides a framework for the manager to review the strengths and identify the areas for development for the home.

Staff have a range of skills, qualifications and experience and bring different strengths to the service. Some staff are increasing their responsibilities and taking a



lead role in specific areas such as improving communication, being a mentor and supervising staff. The staff rota ensures young people's needs are met through the provision of sufficient staffing. Young people are aware of who is working with them.

Staff receive a good induction and benefit from a variety of training and development opportunities. The training material is relevant and of good quality. The manager encourages staff to be reflective following training and thus enables them to put their learning into practice. As a result they are able to improve their competency and ensure children's needs are met.

Staff are not always supervised in accordance with their supervision agreement with some shortfalls in the frequency of supervision. This means supervision systems are not sufficiently robust and a recommendation is therefore made. However, staff say they are well supported and that supervision is good. They also say they feel supported by colleagues in team meetings. All staff benefit from annual appraisals reviewing their progress and setting objectives for the coming year. This means they are supported in their role and continue to provide a good quality service to young people.

The home has robust procedures for monitoring the quality of the service provided and the welfare of the young people. The registered provider undertakes visits to the home in accordance with regulations and carries out checks to ensure the quality of service is good and the welfare of children is monitored. This includes consultation with children and parents where possible. The manager monitors records kept by the home to identify any concerns, patterns or trends. As a result the quality of care and the welfare and protection of children is monitored.

Records are stored securely and information sharing is in accordance with data protection. Significant events relating to the protection of children in the home are mostly notified as appropriate and actions taken as required, however there has been one instance where, although the instigation of a child protection enquiry was sent as required, the outcome of the investigation was not sent to Ofsted. A recommendation is therefore made.

## 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 children's homes.