

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC066651
Inspector	Monica Hargreaves
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Sheffield City Council
Registered person address	Sheffield City Council, Town Hall Pinstone Street SHEFFIELD S1 2HH
Responsible individual	Dorne Collinson
Registered manager	Glynn Boldock
Date of last inspection	12/03/2014

Inspection date	27/11/2014
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Previous inspection	good progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	There has been no enforcement action since the last inspection.

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	good
Outcomes for children and young people	good
Quality of care	outstanding
Keeping children and young people safe	good
Leadership and management	good

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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Young people enjoy and benefit from their short break stays in the safe and nurturing environment that the home provides. The care they receive from staff is highly personalised to meet their complex needs. As a result of the way they are looked after, young people make progress in all areas of their lives. They form positive relationships with staff, they develop their skills and they grow in confidence. Young people's health needs are well met when they stay in the home. Their education is promoted so they are able to continue to work towards meeting their education targets.

Young people are cared for safely by a consistent team of staff who have a very good understanding of their vulnerabilities. Staff manage young people's behaviour very well and as a result young people generally behave well towards one another and staff. This contributes to their sense of security in the home and to their enjoyment of their stays.

Staff work very closely with parents to ensure that there is consistency of care and routines for young people. Parents really value the service they and their children receive and make positive comments about the home. One parent said 'Staff take into consideration all the child's needs and parent's views. They are very supportive

and always make extra effort to make sure my child is as comfortable as possible and they enjoy their stay'. Another parent commented 'I know my child enjoys going there. I would be lost without the service.'

The home is managed effectively. There is good oversight of young people's care and safety in the home and the progress they make. Managers understand the strengths of the home and are clear about the areas they are looking to develop.

Two recommendations have been made as a result of this inspection. These relate to local authority transition plans and the outcome of young people's reviews.

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home is run by a local authority as part of its service to disabled children and their families. The home offers residential short break care to six young people with severe learning disabilities, some of whom have complex and challenging behaviour.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12/03/2014	Interim	good progress
15/11/2013	Full	good
28/01/2013	Interim	good progress
29/10/2012	Full	good

What does the children's home need to do to improve further?

Recommendations

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

- ensure that each 'eligible' young person has a transition plan in place (NMS 12.4)
- ensure that the result of all reviews are recorded on the child's file. (NMS 25.8)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Young people enjoy coming to the home for short breaks. This is confirmed by parents and professionals outside the home. They benefit from the positive interaction they have with their peers and staff, and from the activities that they get involved with. As a result, they grow in confidence and they make measurable progress over time in many areas of their lives.

Parents retain the overall responsibility for their child's health needs, but staff make sure that these are fully met when they stay in the service. Young people enjoy a healthy lifestyle in the home. Staff understand young people's food preferences and particular dietary needs and they ensure that young people have a choice of nutritious meals during their stay in the home. Young people are encouraged to exercise through play. They enjoy activities such as cycling and walking and using the trampoline. Medication procedures are extremely robust. Young people are protected and their health is supported by the measures that are in place for storing and administering medicines.

During their stays, young people are supported to develop life skills at a pace that is appropriate to their individual and complex needs. For example, all young people are encouraged to make choices about all aspects of their care and to develop self-care skills. In addition, some young people are able to learn to make drinks and snacks. Young people gain a sense of achievement from acquiring skills and this helps to develop their confidence.

Young people are able to access a range of activities that they enjoy when they stay in the service. These include visits with staff to local parks and other leisure facilities and activities in the home such as arts and crafts and games. Many young people particularly enjoy playing electronic games on the computer and hand held electronic devices. Staff encourage young people to broaden their experiences when they stay in the home. For example, by diverting them from spending all their time on one activity. One parent commented that their child has been helped to spend less time focussing on the computer and now does other things as well. The parent feels that this has really benefitted them.

Young people's education remains the responsibility of their parents. However, young people are fully supported to attend school when they stay in the home. This promotes consistency for young people and supports their progress towards meeting their individual targets.

As this service provides a short breaks facility and young people live with their families, contact is not generally an issue. However, staff encourage parents to keep in touch with the service during their child's stay. Some young people like to phone

their parents when they are at the home and this is fully supported by staff. Parents report that staff are very supportive and welcoming.

Quality of care

outstanding

Young people benefit from the extremely high standard of care they receive from staff. Staff are very well informed about young people because a comprehensive assessment of their needs and abilities is undertaken when they are referred for a service. Detailed care and support plans are then put in place. These reflect every aspect of young people's care and developmental needs, including those arising from their culture, background and religion, as well their disabilities. Plans identify specific and measurable outcomes. Key workers take responsibility for making sure that plans are implemented, but all staff take equal responsibility for caring for young people. Plans are regularly reviewed in the home to ensure that they remain relevant to the young person's emerging needs. Staff contribute fully to the reviews of young people's care that are arranged by social workers. However, there is often a delay in receiving the minutes of these meetings, which means that information about changes to plans is not always immediately available.

Parents and professionals are very positive about the way young people are looked after. One parent said, 'They genuinely care and help in any way they can. I cannot thank them enough'. A professional commented that the home 'provides an invaluable service to children and young people and families'.

Staff are enthusiastic about their work and committed to ensuring that young people enjoy their stays and get the most from them. Relationships between staff and young people are very good. Staff respect and value young people as individuals. This is evident from the very positive way they speak about young people and interact with them. Staff have high aspirations for the young people they look after and they recognise and celebrate all their achievements. This empowers young people.

Staff work very closely with parents and professionals to ensure that there is consistency of care for young people. This partnership working is a real strength of the service and is greatly valued by parents and professionals alike. Staff have very strong links with professionals outside the service; for example, schools, the looked after children nurse and community nurses. This means they can access additional support and guidance about their care of young people. Young people who have an identified need, have prompt access to the child and adolescent mental health service and staff liaise effectively with professionals from this service.

Staff have a well-informed understanding of how young people, who do not use speech, communicate their wishes and feelings. Consequently, they are able to help young people to express their views about their care. This is achieved in ways that

are meaningful to the young people. For example, staff have developed a picture board with young people which is a collection of objects depicting things that young people enjoy doing. This helps staff to identify future activities for young people. Parents are confident that staff understand their children and communicate well with them and this in turn gives them confidence in the way their children are looked after. One parent said 'Staff go to great lengths in order to communicate with our child and understand them'.

Staff work very effectively with schools to ensure that young people's education is supported when they stay in the home. This is confirmed by education staff. Care staff know young people's education plans and contribute to their education reviews. They also support young people's general learning and development through play and social interaction in the home.

Staff work hard to ensure that young people are prepared for later life by helping to develop their skills. They are keen to contribute to transition planning but the work that staff are able to do is at times limited because transition plans are not put in place for young people at a sufficiently early stage. This means that young people and their parents do not always have clear information about the facilities that are available for young people when they reach 18 and no longer stay in this home.

Young people benefit from having short breaks in a home that is suitably located and well maintained. The home offers young people a suitable environment in which to stay. The home is spacious and enables young people to spend time alone or in groups, according to their wishes and needs. It is well decorated, comfortably furnished, clean and tidy. Young people are encouraged to bring personal items with them when they stay. This provides a sense of continuity for young people and helps them to feel settled in the home. Young people have access to a large garden which is safely enclosed and to a range of play equipment that they can use inside or out.

Keeping children and young people safe good

The home's arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff training in safeguarding and safe care is renewed at regular intervals. Consequently, staff know how to identify possible child protection concerns and understand how to manage and report them in order to keep young people safe. Young people's privacy and dignity is respected throughout their stay, for example when staff deliver personal care.

Staff have a good understanding of young people's vulnerabilities. They develop a range of individual risk assessments for young people that identify specific concerns and record how staff should work to protect young people. Staff understand how young people communicate their dissatisfactions and they take action to address any concern that they identify. This contributes to young people's safety and their sense of security in the home.

Parents report that their children are 'very safe' when they stay in the service. Young people themselves are happy and relaxed with staff. Good staffing levels ensure that young people are appropriately supervised at all times when they are in the home and when they are out on activities. This ensures that young people are not able to go missing and that bullying is not an issue. Young people's stays are carefully planned to ensure that they are placed in appropriate groups reflecting their needs and abilities. This contributes to their overall safety.

Staff have training in behaviour management strategies. They work effectively with young people to help them to behave in ways that are safe and socially acceptable. Consequently, young people's behaviour improves over time. Physical intervention is rarely necessary and if it used, it is at the lowest level required to support young people and keep them and others safe. There have been very few incidents of restraint since the last inspection. This contributes to young people's sense of safety and well-being.

The local authority has a robust staff recruitment policy that is followed in this home. This protects young people as it ensures that all new staff are vetted and assessed as suitable before they start work.

Managers and staff make sure that the home is kept safe. This is achieved through a system of risk assessments and checks on equipment and the environment. Each young person has an individual plan that identifies their individual needs in relation to emergency evacuation. Staff are trained in fire evacuation procedures and they have practice drills at intervals. This ensures that they know how to help young people out of the home to safety if there is a fire or other emergency.

Leadership and management

good

The home is managed effectively. The manager has a degree in social work and is currently working to gain the Level 5 Diploma in Leadership for Health and Social Care and Children and Young People's Services. He is very experienced in working with children and young people in residential care. He has managed this home for five years. There is a qualified and very experienced deputy who manages the home in his absence.

Managers keep up to date with changes in legislation and ensure that these are discussed with staff to maintain their knowledge and understanding. Management monitoring arrangements are effective and ensure that good standards are maintained in the home.

Young people benefit from being cared for by a team of competent staff. Staff are either qualified or working to gain the required qualification. They have the training they require to support them in their work with vulnerable young people with

complex needs. This includes training in such things as the management of epilepsy and gastric tube feeding.

Care staff report that they feel they are well supported by their managers. They have regular formal supervision that they feel is helpful to their work. In addition, they are able to seek guidance from managers and senior staff when they need it. Communication within the team is very good. This is achieved through regular team meetings and good handovers at the start of every shift. In order to keep their information on young people as accurate as possible, staff contact parents before their child stays in the home. They also report back to parents after their child's stay. Parents appreciate these contacts and report that this helps to reassure them about their child's welfare. These arrangements ensure that all staff are kept fully informed about the young people they look after.

The home's Statement of Purpose is clear and accurately describes how the home works and how young people are looked after. It is made available to professionals and parents. The young person's guide is produced in two different formats. One is in symbols and simple text and one in a written format. These meet the different needs of young people who use the service and enable parents and staff to help young people understand how the home will look after them.

The manager demonstrates a clear commitment to the improvement of the service. He takes action on all issues that are identified during inspections or through the monitoring process. There is regular consultation with parents and professionals as well as with young people themselves. This enables them to make their views about the service known and to influence the running of the home. Parents report that the manager acts on issues that they raise. This gives them confidence that their views matter and supports their relationships with the home. The manager has put in place a detailed development plan with clear objectives for future improvements. He is closely monitoring progress.

The recommendation that was made at the last inspection is met. The manager has put in place a system for recording the clothes that young people have with them when they arrive at the home to ensure that those clothes are returned home with them.

Staff keep clear records about young people that enable them to understand their past and present circumstances and their current plans. All information is kept up to date and is stored safely. Parents report that information is shared with them and that their views are recorded. Staff share information with young people in ways that are appropriate to their individual level of understanding.

What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
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.

Information 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 framework of inspection for children's homes.