

Inspection report for children's home

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| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 19 May 2009       |
| <b>Inspector</b>               | Monica Hargreaves |
| <b>Type of Inspection</b>      | Key               |

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| <b>Date of last inspection</b> | 12 August 2008 |
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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

This home is registered to provide a short breaks service for up to five young people of either gender, aged between five and 17 years and who have a range of disabilities.

The accommodation is all on one level and has been adapted to provide suitable facilities for children and young people who are wheelchair users. There are five bedrooms which are used by young people, all of which have sinks, call alarm systems, television and computer points. One bedroom has a ceiling track hoist. There is a large dining room and two lounges, both of which have ample storage space for suitable play equipment and toys and there is a separate fully fitted multi-sensory room. There is one bathroom and two shower rooms which are all suitably adapted.

The home is located in an established residential area. It is detached and set in its own grounds, with sufficient safe parking for staff and visitors. The grounds have been landscaped and have suitable play equipment for disabled and able bodied young people.

### Summary

This unannounced key inspection was undertaken to assess all the key standards in all outcome areas and to consider the response of the provider in relation to the recommendations made at the last inspection.

Young people are well looked after when they stay at the home. Their health needs are well met and their education is supported. They are provided with a range of activities, toys and equipment, to help them to enjoy their stay at the service and to help them to develop their skills.

Staff are qualified and properly trained to meet the diverse needs of the young people who use the service. They work well together to support young people and keep them safe. Leadership in the home is good.

The building is suitably adapted for its purpose and is well maintained, so that young people have the benefit of being cared for in a pleasant environment.

Recommendations have been made at this inspection in relation to the training given to members of the casual staff team and also with regard to the bullying risk assessment.

The overall quality rating is good.

This is an overview of what the inspector found during the inspection.

### Improvements since the last inspection

The majority of recommendations made at the last inspection are met.

The manager has developed a children's guide to the service which is produced in a child friendly format, so that young people can be helped to see how they will be cared for in the home.

Staff have good information about young people's educational needs, so that they can make sure that young people's education is appropriately supported when they stay at the home.

The manager has ordered a new vehicle which will be kept on site. This is capable of transporting young people who use a wheelchair, as well as young people who are independently mobile, so that staff will be able to take all young people out on activities when they stay at the home.

An assessment of the times and places within the home where the risk of bullying is greatest, has not yet been completed, so this recommendation is carried forward.

## **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

The health needs of young people are well met when they stay at the home.

Staff have an excellent understanding of the diverse and complex needs of the young people who use this service and are properly trained to promote their good health. Detailed information about young people's health is recorded in individual support plans, so that staff can be consistent in their care. They liaise closely with health professionals outside the home, who provide them with training and information about individual health conditions. For example, training has been provided in gastric feeding and the management of epilepsy. Staff communicate regularly with parents, so that they can be sure that information about their ongoing health needs is up to date and accurate.

Young people are provided with a healthy diet that takes into account their diverse cultural and religious requirements. Staff make sure that any young person who has a diet that is self limiting, is encouraged to try different foods and they report some success in this area. Meal times are pleasant social occasions, where all the staff and children eat together and staff support those young people who need help with their meals. Young people are encouraged to take part in activities that promote exercise, for example swimming and walking or playing in the garden, which further promotes their good health.

Robust systems for the storage and administration of medication protect young people. No stocks of medication are kept in the home and medicines are only given to young people as prescribed by their doctor. Records are clear, up to date and regularly monitored. Staff are trained in the delivery of first aid, so that they know how to look after young people in an emergency.

## **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

Young people are cared for safely when they use the service.

The privacy of young people is properly respected and staff practice in a way that protects young people's dignity when they carry out personal care tasks. Information about young people is safely stored to protect their right to confidentiality.

Staff supervise young people well so that they are protected from bullying and from going missing from the home. Possible concerns about bullying are identified in individual risk assessments, but the service has not yet developed an assessment of the times and places within the home where the risk of bullying may be greatest, to further minimise the risk. Young people are also protected from abuse because staff understand the signs and symptoms of abuse and are clear about the actions they should take if there is a serious concern. Although

all permanent staff are trained in safeguarding issues, there is no clear information about the training that has been given to staff from the casual team who work at the home. Therefore there is no confirmation that their knowledge of safeguarding is up to date.

The home has an effective system for responding to complaints. Information is produced in a child friendly format, to help young people to understand how to make a complaint. Parents are also given information about how to make a complaint and staff have good communication with families, which enables them to deal promptly with issues that are raised. Some young people do not use speech and communicate in other ways, for example through facial expressions or body language or using a Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS). Staff have a very good understanding of how each young person makes their dissatisfactions known and take prompt actions when concerns are identified.

Staff are trained to respond positively to challenging behaviour. This includes training in the use of restraints, although it is clear that physical intervention is used only as a last resort. Staff promote positive behaviour and use techniques such as distraction, to defuse potentially difficult situations, so that young people are kept safe. They have a very positive view of the young people in their care and have good relationships with them.

There are appropriate systems in place, to make sure that young people are cared for in a safe physical environment. Risk assessments are robust and are kept up to date. Regular checks are carried out on gas appliances and electrical equipment in the home and young people and staff are involved in fire drills, so that staff know how to evacuate children from the building in an emergency.

The authority has a robust system for checking staff before they are employed at the home, to ensure that they are safe to work with children and young people. The home is kept appropriately secure to prevent unauthorised access and the identity of all visitors is checked to keep young people safe.

## **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Sound assessments and good planning ensures that the young people who use the service have very good support when they stay at the home. Staff understand their complex needs. Individual support plans are detailed and show how each young person's needs will be met. Staff have links with a range of agencies outside the home, to make sure that young people are able to have additional support when they need it.

Education is valued and promoted in the home. There is good communication between staff, parents and schools, so that staff understand young people's education plans and can support them when they stay at the home. Staff also make sure that young people can learn and develop skills through play and the home is well equipped to promote this. For example, there is a computer, a multi-sensory room and toys and games, which young people enjoy. Young people are also able to take part in a number of activities outside the home which they enjoy, for example visits to local attractions, swimming and football. The manager has recently ordered a new vehicle which will enable all young people to access facilities outside the home and the newly developed outreach service is aimed at helping young people who use this service to access local community resources. Taking part in activities inside and out of the home benefits young people in a number of ways, enabling them to socialise and to develop their skills.

## Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Support plans are holistic and are based on the careful planning and detailed assessments that are undertaken before any stays are planned. These systems ensure that the complex needs of young people can be met when they stay at the home and that staff are consistent in their care. Plans are regularly reviewed, so that information is up to date and accurate and to ensure that the placement is meeting the young person's identified needs.

Young people who use the service live with their families or main carers and so the promotion of family contact is not an issue. However, staff have good information about any specific contact issues that may arise for individual young people and work closely with families and social workers to make sure that young people are properly supported in these circumstances.

All placements at the home are well planned so that every young person is introduced to the service at a pace that suits them and meets their needs and those of their family. This ensures that they feel supported. Staff also work well with families, placing social workers and other agencies, to enable young people move on from this service in a planned way.

There is good consultation with young people and their families. The knowledge that staff have of how young people communicate, enables them to understand if a young person is unhappy with a service and also enables young people to be supported in making choices during their stay, for example about the things they want to do when they stay or the food they like. The manager has recently completed surveys with young people, presented in a format that is suitable for their needs and has also encouraged parents to attend meetings where they can comment on the care that their children are given at the home.

## Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Young people benefit from being cared for in an environment that is well adapted to meet their needs, that is clean and brightly decorated, comfortably furnished and has a warm and welcoming atmosphere. The home has two lounges where young people can relax and play games, do art work, watch television or use the computer. The dining room is large enough to enable all the children to eat together with staff and the multi-sensory room is well used by many young people who stay at the service. Bathrooms and bedrooms are properly equipped for the diverse needs of young people and enable them to have appropriate privacy.

Staff are keen to help every young person to enjoy their stay at the service and to help them to develop skills that are appropriate to their individual needs and abilities and that will benefit them later in life. For example, some young people are able to learn to make drinks and snacks and help staff with shopping or cooking activities, whilst other young people may be helped to socialise within the group, or to develop more independence with personal care. Care staff work with parents and social workers to support young people with a move into appropriate adult services when they reach 18.

## Organisation

The organisation is good.

The home's statement of purpose accurately describes how care is provided and is regularly reviewed and updated. Young people are given written and verbal information about the routines of the home, so that they can be helped to understand how they will be looked after when they stay.

Young people benefit from being looked after by an established and enthusiastic team of staff who are all qualified and appropriately trained. There are sufficient staff on duty to make sure that young people are properly looked after during their visit. The permanent team of staff is supported by members of the casual team, recruited through the local authority's procedures, so that young people are cared for by staff who are known to them. There are sound arrangements for senior staff to deputise for the manager in routine absences. At present, the registered manager has been away from the home for some months and the home is managed by a suitably qualified and experienced person who gives effective leadership. Staff feel they are properly supported.

Robust management systems, which include internal scrutiny by the manager and senior staff and independent visits from senior managers, ensure that the work of the home and the care of young people, is closely monitored.

The home keeps detailed information on young people, so that there is a history of every young person's stay in the home and a detailed record of how their needs are to be met. Records are stored securely to protect confidentiality.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Staff are knowledgeable and able to meet the diverse and complex needs of all the young people who stay at the home. The authority's policies and procedures and training, demonstrate a commitment to promoting equality and valuing diversity and this is reflected in the work of this home.

## **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 Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

| Standard | Action | Due date |
|----------|--------|----------|
|----------|--------|----------|

### **Recommendations**

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

- undertake an assessment of the times, places and circumstances in the home in which the risk of bullying is greatest (NMS 18.5)
- ensure that all casual staff have up to date training in safeguarding children and young people (NMS 17.8).