

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC387148
Inspection date	10/07/2012
Inspector	Anthony Kyem
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	13/02/2012
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This home is a purpose-built property which provides residential care, shared care and respite care for up to five young people with autism, learning disabilities, and physical disabilities. The home is run by a private company.

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 are kept safe by highly enthusiastic, caring and capable staff, who promote their needs effectively. Staff have high aspirations of young people and they work enthusiastically to maximise young people's full potential. Young people enjoy their time at the home where they benefit from excellent support and positive relationships with staff. They receive highly individualised care that encourages their positive progress.

The home is managed efficiently and effectively. The manager demonstrates effective leadership and has a clear understanding of the home's strengths and weaknesses. Management tackles identified shortfalls and builds on the home's positive features to improve the standard and quality of young people's care. Feedback received about the service is extremely positive and complimentary of the positive work undertaken by staff.

An independent reviewing officer said, 'Good knowledge and understanding of people and their needs; a solid pro-active approach and always willing to share information and work with other agencies.'

A parent said, 'This is the first parents' consultation I've attended and I like everything to do with the home. I found the whole proceedings open, honest and positive. I like the home's transparency and feel they really listen to parents.'

A social worker said, 'Staff are very welcoming and have a great deal of knowledge about the young people they support.'

As a result of this inspection, there are a small number of requirements and recommendations made. These relate to improved monitoring, recording and reporting procedures, improving the physical environment and supporting young people's future transition arrangements, where appropriate.

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
5 (2001)	keep under review and, where appropriate, revise the Statement of Purpose (Regulation 5(a))	01/08/2012
23 (2001)	ensure all parts of the home to which young people have access are free from hazards to their safety; this relates to removing and repairing damaged floor tiles, adjusting faulty self-closing fire doors and the replacement of finger guards, where necessary (Regulation 23(a))	31/07/2012
34 (2001)	ensure that all matters set out in schedule 6 are monitored specifically in relation accidents and injuries sustained by children. (Regulation 34(1))	01/08/2012

Recommendations

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

- ensure the home is well maintained and decorated and that avoidable hazards are removed as is consistent with a domestic setting (NMS 10.3)
- ensure each child can remain in the home until moving on is in their best interests unless this is impracticable or is against the welfare and safety of others (NMS 11.5)
- ensure the registered person takes action to address any issues of concern that they identify or which is raised; in particular the notification of any injuries, sustained by children, to their parents and staff following appropriate procedures in relation to recording. (NMS 21.9)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

The home works very effectively with those significant to young people to promote their educational achievement. There is excellent communication between the home, young people's schools and families, to promote their positive progress. Young people receive the support they need to learn and achieve. All young people attend full-time education. They enjoy excellent attendance at school and their educational achievements and outcomes are celebrated.

Staff recognise the role they play in improving young people's positive self-view. They have high aspirations of young people and they ensure that every child receives the help and support they need to achieve their full potential. As a result, young people's positive outcomes are promoted successfully.

Staff ensure young people benefit from the same opportunities as their peers to promote their full participation. They actively encourage and support young people to make a positive contribution to the home and the wider community. They teach young people to recognise their own positive attributes and they enable young people to develop their skills to increase their self-confidence. Staff ensure young people's daily experiences are positive. They put the safety and well-being of each child and young person at the centre of their practice.

Young people benefit from contact with their families which enables them to sustain their relationships and positive attachments. A parent said, 'I think it's brilliant; I have no concerns at all. I speak to them often and I can just drop in, it doesn't have to be arranged. I would give them 10 out of 10, it's excellent.'

Staff maintain excellent links with young people's families, partner agencies, social workers and schools. This ensures the needs of young people are communicated effectively and there is a shared approach towards achieving the best outcomes possible for them.

Young people receive extensive support to promote their independence. The transition arrangements for young people preparing to make the first steps towards adulthood are well planned. The home supports young people with the development of life skills and it strives to promote and achieve their smooth transition. The service has its own community based outreach service to support young people in the community by helping them adapt to life in the adult world. This ensures young people receive the support they may also need during adulthood.

Quality of care

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

Young people benefit from positive relationships with staff, who support them extensively. They receive continuity of care to enable them to form, develop and sustain their positive relationships. This ensures young people receive care from people they know and trust.

The home ensures young people receive the support they need to promote their positive health. Staff attend to young people's intimate and personal care needs sensitively. Staff receive training to enable them to meet young people's health needs and they actively support young people to lead an active and healthy lifestyle. They ensure young people have access to the services they need to promote their physical, emotional and psychological well-being.

The home employs a speech and language therapist who works enthusiastically with young people to develop their communication. This enables young people to make the best use of their communication aids. Young people and staff benefit from the therapist's advice and support. One senior carers said, 'It's a big help to us. It's nice to have someone to be directed by who you can turn to for advice.'

Young people benefit from a diverse range of enjoyable activities. They learn to develop their particular interests with increased self-confidence and self-esteem. The positive range of activities provides young people with excellent opportunities to interact with their peers. Young people are regular visitors to a farm project where they can learn about animal care and interact with the farm animals. The farm project is an excellent resource which caters for the needs of young people and their families. It has its own activity room, willow dome and outdoor play area, pod and log cabins. The home also facilitates a local youth club project to promote young people's participation in the community. This enables young people, their peers and families to come together and socialise as a group.

Young people's needs in relation to personal identity, disability, ethnicity and culture are all addressed positively. Young people's needs are assessed comprehensively and this ensures they benefit from well-planned care that is tailored to meet their specific needs. The families of young people are purposefully involved in young people's care and they are always made to feel welcome when visiting the home. By involving them, the home is able to work in partnership and achieve continuity and consistency of care.

The home is purposefully designed to provide care for young people with a disability. Careful attention has been paid to the physical environment to ensure it meets the needs and characteristics of young people.

There have been no formal complaints made by young people since the last inspection.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

The home has robust systems in place to safeguard young people and protect them. Staff are well trained so they know how to protect young people from neglect, abuse and exploitation. Young people are kept safe and staff make sure they feel safe. Those who work with young people are carefully selected and vetted for the protection of vulnerable children.

There are sufficient staff on duty to ensure young people receive high levels of supervision and support. While there are no issues with bullying there are on-going difficulties with some young people's complex behaviours. Generally, staff manage these behaviours very effectively. However, the very nature of some behaviour has the potential to impact negatively on the experiences of other young people. In addition, this places strain on staff resources and time. The manager is aware of these issues and they are taking action with the placing authority to support young people to move on to more suitable placements, if considered appropriate.

The home provides young people with a safe and secure environment. Recommendations made within a recent fire officer's visit have been completed to further improve the arrangements made to promote fire safety. Health and safety systems are generally managed efficiently. There are regular health and safety checks undertaken and risks associated with young people activities are identified clearly. It was noted that parts of the home are in need of re-decoration. There are damaged floor tiles in a bathroom that pose a potential risk to young people's safety. The self-closing door device in the lounge needs adjustment to prevent the door from slamming and a finger shield needs replacing on a bedroom door.

There have been no safeguarding concerns and no issues with young people going missing. The behaviours of young people continue to be managed safely. Restraint is only ever used as a last resort to protect young people from accident or injury. The use of restraint is exceptionally rare. Effective behaviour management strategies are applied consistently and staff adhere to safe working practices.

Leadership and management

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

There were no requirements or recommendations made at the previous inspection. Young people continue to benefit from a home that is managed extremely efficiently. The home employs a permanent Registered Manager who is suitably skilled, experienced and qualified. There is effective and proper oversight over the home's performance and this ensures identified weaknesses are tackled. The home is able to build on its strengths and its positive features to promote sustained improvement.

The manager stimulates staff's enthusiasm and they channel their efforts effectively. As a result, staff work harmoniously, efficiently and effectively. The home can demonstrate its capacity for improvement through the use of the rigorous monitoring activities which are used to improve the quality of young people's care. The home consults with social workers, stakeholders, young people and their families to enable their positive contribution. As a result, the home is able to act on their views and make alterations or improvements, where necessary.

The home has a written development plan to promote the positive development of the service. It has a proven track record and it continues to meet the aims and objectives of its Statement of Purpose. The statement, however, needs updating to

reflect staff changes that have occurred since the previous inspection.

There has been one concern raised about the service since the last inspection. This relates to an oversight on the home's part, with staff not following appropriate procedures in relation to reporting an accident to a parent. As a result, the home is asked to review its practices for the reporting and recording of accidents.

The home is extremely well resourced and the accommodation provided for young people is maintained to high standards, overall. However, there are parts of the home that are looking tired and worn, as a result of young people's behaviour. Without appropriate action these parts of the home will further deteriorate and this will have a negative impact on quality of the physical environment.

The home is able to evidence the positive contribution it has made to young people's lives and how their outcomes have improved considerably. Young people benefit from staff who are highly skilled, well trained, suitably experienced and qualified. Most staff hold the National Vocational Qualification at the required level in caring for children and young people. They receive high-quality training which enables them to further their skills and keep up to date with professional practice. Staff understand the needs of young people exceptionally well and this allows them to meet their diverse needs consistently.

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* (March 2011) and the evaluation schedule for children's homes.