

Inspection report for children's home

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| <b>Unique reference number</b> | SC389174         |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 25 February 2010 |
| <b>Inspector</b>               | David Coulter    |
| <b>Type of Inspection</b>      | Random           |

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| <b>Date of last inspection</b> | 24 August 2009 |
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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 is a children's home that offers short-term respite placements for up to eight young people who may have learning disabilities, physical disabilities, complex health needs and/or autism and associated challenging behaviours. The home, a large detached property, has been specifically converted and extended to meet the needs of the young people it accommodates and contains specialised facilities, such as a sensory room, outside play area and specially designed bathrooms. The home is situated in a residential area of a city and is accessible to a range of services and facilities including parks, health centres, schools and shops.

### Summary

The aim of this unannounced interim inspection was to assess how the home was meeting the national minimum standards and regulations and in particular how the outcomes relating to staying safe were being met. At the time of the inspection the home was providing respite care to eight young people.

A number of significant changes have taken place since the last inspection and the home is now operating with a new manager. The manager, who has extensive experience of residential care, is settling in well and is coming to terms with the inevitable logistical challenges associated with the delivery of respite care.

Occupancy levels remain high and evidence indicates that the home continues to provide high quality care to a particularly vulnerable group of young people with complex disabilities. The home's policies and procedures have been translated into effective working practices that ensure young people are kept safe. Young people are cared for within a purpose-built setting that is maintained to a high standard.

The home benefits from having a well-motivated stable staff team who are supported by a pool of agency staff who are conversant with the aims and objectives of the home. The specific physical, social and emotional needs of each young person are closely monitored and updated in line with changing needs and circumstances. Good lines of communication have been established between the home's staff and parents and placing authorities. The actions and recommendation made during the last inspection have been addressed. No actions or recommendations were identified during this inspection.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

### Improvements since the last inspection

Staff have continued to access National Vocational Qualification training and a number of staff have completed their courses. A new cohort of staff are about to embark on their courses at level 3. Staff continue to access training courses on a wide range of subject areas.

The damaged kitchen surface has had a temporary repair and the damaged area is about to be replaced by the introduction of a new double sink.

Plans are being developed to increase the range of outdoor play equipment and a swing has been introduced for an older age group.

## Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

While not all the outcomes relating to being healthy were judged, it was observed that the damaged kitchen surface, noted at the last inspection, has been subject to repair. In light of this, the overall judgement will remain the same.

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

The provision is good.

Although young people reside within a communal setting, each is treated as an individual with their own specific care needs. Each young person is provided with a room that is designated as their own personal space. Staff aim to ensure that each individual is comfortable in their surroundings and help them personalise their rooms by hanging pictures and posters. There is an expectation that each young person is afforded privacy when in their room. Due to the nature of their disabilities, many of the young people need close supervision and require regular visual checks at night. Staff try to carry out such checks with minimal disruption. Personal care tasks are carried out sensitively and bathroom doors are always kept closed. Confidential information relating to each young person is kept secure in an appropriate locked facility.

Many of the young people undertaking respite stays experience communication difficulties. Staff use a range of communication techniques to elicit information on all aspects of their stays in the home. Consultation normally takes place informally through one-to-one discussions. This approach works well and addresses difficulties before they develop into major concerns. If a young person or their placing authority is unhappy with any aspects of their stays, they can access the home's complaints policy. All complaints are logged and the actions taken to resolve them noted. No complaints have been made since the last inspection. The home is proactive in seeking out the views of parents and placing authorities by means of an annual questionnaire.

The home has well-developed policies, procedures and working practices to ensure young people are kept safe during their respite visits. All staff have completed child protection training and are aware of their personal responsibilities in regard to the reporting of child protection concerns. By the use of appropriate staffing levels, behaviour management strategies and close supervision, staff aim to minimise risk. For example, given the vulnerability of those accessing the service, staff always accompany young people outside of the building. Staff have developed pen pictures and physical descriptions of each young person that could be relayed to the police in the event of them going missing without permission. Records demonstrate that no young person has been reported missing since the last inspection.

Behaviour management plans are developed in respect of each young person and provide staff with guidance that ensures a consistent approach. Staff aim to help each young person develop positive behaviour. Although the home operates a policy of zero tolerance of bullying, staff are fully aware that many of the young people have limited control over their behaviour and experience involuntary actions that can unintentionally impact on others. Records indicate that it is not uncommon for young people to strike out at others. Close supervision aims to minimise the occurrence of such incidents. Sanctions are only applied if it is felt that the young person has insight into their behaviour. If a sanction is used it normally consists of a short period of 'time out'. All sanctions are recorded in a dedicated book. Although staff receive training in

the use of physical restraint, such intervention is only ever used if it is felt a young person is in danger of hurting themselves or others. Staff normally use diversionary techniques when confronted with challenging behaviour.

The home operates within a risk management framework. Risk assessments are extensively used to ensure the safety of both young people and staff. Risk assessments are subject to regular review and updated in response to any incidents. The home is subject to a range of inspections from bodies such as environmental health and fire safety. Records demonstrate that equipment, including the home's fire alarm system, is tested regularly and subject to regular maintenance. Staff regularly undertake evacuation drills. Access to the building is restricted and all visitors have to report to staff on admission. The home has appropriate liability insurance.

The home operates with a stable team of permanent staff who are supported by a number of the company's own agency staff who are familiar with both the young people and the working practices of the service. Staff are recruited through a well-established recruitment process that requires a comprehensive range of checks being undertaken. All prospective staff also have to successfully complete a training programme before being appointed. New staff only assume their full responsibilities once they have successfully completed a full induction process and demonstrated their competence.

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

The provision is outstanding.

The home's outdoor play area has, since the last inspection, been improved by the introduction of a new swing that is particularly suitable for the older age group. As not all the outcomes relating to enjoying and achieving were examined the overall judgement will remain the same.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is not judged.

### **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is not judged.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

A new manager has been appointed since the last inspection. The appointment has been welcomed by staff who see it as an opportunity for the further development of the service. There is a culture of training and development within the home and staff continue to access training opportunities on a regular basis. As not all the outcomes relating to organisation were examined the overall judgement will remain the same.

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

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| Standard | Action | Due date |
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## Recommendations

There are no recommendations.