

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Jo Stephenson
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This service is registered to provide short breaks for up to four young people who have learning and/or physical disabilities. A local authority owns and operates this setting.

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**.

The service provides a short break environment in which young people are extremely happy and well cared for. Young people enjoy positive relationships with staff who are well trained, motivated and able to recognise and respond to individual needs. The home delivers personalised care programmes that encourage young people to prosper in all areas of their development. The staff are enthusiastic, and encouraging positive outcomes is central to the work and ethos of the home.

The home ensures statutory short break plans are in place. Staff devise detailed internal support plans, risk assessment and individual 'target plans' to promote health, care and welfare. Consequently, young people benefit from a comprehensive approach to their care. The service effectively ascertains and records the views and wishes of young people, using a range of verbal and non-verbal communication methods. As a result, young people are involved in planning their care.

Young people are safe and feel safe in the home. Staff have an excellent understanding of their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding. Risk assessments that identify specific hazards or behavioural issues for young people, are comprehensive and reviewed on a regular basis. Subsequently, young people experience a proportionate response to managing risks.

Staff are effectively supported in their role by a passionate management team. Monitoring systems are in place that continually reviews outcomes for young people and the quality of care provided by the service. Managers seek regular feedback from young people and their families that shapes the development of the home. For

example, young people and their families were recently involved in the recruitment of new staff for the service.

Outcomes for children and young people

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

There are many excellent examples where young people receive personalised care that meets their individual needs. Relationships between staff and young people are extremely positive and promote social skills and development. As a result, young people respond well to staff and are able to form relationships based on mutual respect. Young people's achievements are continually verbally encouraged and celebrated; this gives them a sense of well-being and raises their self-esteem. Detailed consideration is given to the compatibility of young people with their peers when short break dates are arranged. As a result, young people benefit from additional opportunities to develop and maintain relationships with other young people accessing the service.

Staff work in partnership with parents to identify the health needs of young people. Health professionals are involved in agreeing complex care health practices that are included in internal placement plans. As a result, staff are able to ratify the appropriateness of their practice. Subsequently, young people receive a consistent and bespoke approach to meeting their multifaceted health needs. Staff liaise with families and psychology health provisions to maintain the emotional well-being for young people during periods of placements.

The home has introduced 'target plans' for young people that compliment statutory short break plans, internal support plans and education plans. As a result, young people are able to work towards developing their social skills, and when appropriate, independence skills. For example, young people have learnt to make their beds and clear tables following meals. This means that young people are able to review their progress and identify future aims, based on their abilities and understanding. Young people are encouraged to maintain relationships with their families when using the service. Staff involve parents in identifying daily routines for young people in the home. Discussions and decisions made with parents and social workers are chronicled in general records and detailed in case files. As a result, any changes to care and welfare needs are consistently implemented and progress is scrutinised. Consequently, young people benefit from an integrated and progressive approach to meeting their needs.

Staff identify community-based activities for young people that considers their abilities. The home offers an extensive range of individual and group activities, including special events that take place in the home. For example, a Christmas Fair has been arranged for all young people and their families. Young people participate in regular meetings to discuss activities and menu choices. Staff use a range of verbal and non-verbal communication methods to gain the views and wishes of young people, and use photographs to convey the responses and reactions of young people. This means that young people are encouraged to express their views on their

care and the running of the home. As a result, young people are involved in the home's development.

Quality of care

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

Young people have very positive relationships with staff. Staff are motivated and promote the importance of socially acceptable behaviour, respect and consideration for others. For example, staff wear communication symbols to allow young people to identify which staff are allocated to them. This means that all young people are allocated one-to-one support, and the challenging behaviours of others do not impact all young people using the service.

Statutory and internal care plans are in place for all young people. Keyworkers formulate, review and amend plans and this means that young people's progress is promoted. As a result, young people benefit from a consistent approach to their care and development. Staff are able to identify behavioural changes and raise these for discussion with families and other professionals. Case files show that plans are detailed, evaluative and reflective of changes in complex care needs. Subsequently, young people experience a comprehensive and continual review of their needs, and the services they require.

The home has a complaints procedure in place for use by young people, external agencies, parents or carers. Records show that all complaints are logged and monitored. Parents say that any issues they raise are taken seriously. Subsequently, young people and their families concerns are suitably addressed and resolved.

Staff have established excellent relationships with schools so that education plans and programmes are not disrupted during periods of placement. They maintain open dialogue with education provisions to ensure the compatibility of behaviour and learning plans used in both the home and allocated schools. Young people's educational achievements are discussed staff discuss young people's successes with them. In doing so, young people benefit from improved self-confidence and sustainable learning opportunities.

The service is suitably located and young people have access to a wide and varied range of community facilities and activities. The home is very welcoming and comfortable and young people benefit from communal and private space. The internal environment is exceptionally well maintained and decorated to promote sensory and visual stimulation for young people. Equipment is available and easily accessible to encourage young people to develop their communication, social and emotional skills.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people are safe and protected from harm. Parents say they know their children are safe when they are at the home and that young people enjoy using the service. Staff have an excellent knowledge of all aspects of child protection and work in partnership with parents, primary carers and professionals to provide an inclusive approach to safeguarding. Safeguarding is considered on a daily basis in the home. For example, managers and staff evaluate group compatibility when offering short breaks to families.

Young people receive enthusiastic verbal and non-verbal praise from staff. For example, staff use Makaton and other forms of sign language to inform young people of their progress. This means they understand the acceptable behaviours expected of them. The home chronicles incidents of aggressive or inappropriate behaviours in case files. Records provide sufficient detail to identify effective interventions and monitor incidents. This means that documents provide young people with a helpful record of their placement. Staff receive training in therapeutic de-escalation and distraction techniques to encourage young people to behave appropriately. The service has practice policies in place for physical intervention, missing from home incidents and episodes of bullying. However, it has not been necessary for the home to implement the use of these policies as these behaviours have not occurred in the home.

Staff complete general risk assessments to identify known hazards in the environment. The home has a fire risk assessment in place that is supported by personal evacuation plans for young people. This enables staff to adopt differing strategies in an emergency to reflect the specific needs of individual young people. As a result, young people are protected from the risk of significant harm. In addition, fire drills and tests are regularly completed and records detail the frequency that young people participate in these.

The home adheres to recruitment procedures in place to safeguard young people. Safety checks are carried out in full on all new starters and volunteers. This means that young people are cared for by suitably vetted and selected staff.

Leadership and management

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

The home is effectively and efficiently run by an experienced, enthusiastic and permanent manager. The home delivers a tailored service that meets the individual needs of young people. The staff have an extensive range of skills and are proficient at identifying the welfare and care requirements of young people. Staff say they feel empowered and involved in the development of the home, and praise the commitment of the manager. They say they receive regular and effective supervision and actively participate in staff meetings. Staff complete mandatory training that supports their role. In addition, the manager identifies supplementary training that reflects the more specific medical needs of young people. As a result, young people work with suitably qualified staff who are equipped to meet their needs.

Young people and staff benefit from vibrant leadership. The manager is central to the daily running of the home and retains a clear overview and input regarding young people's needs and progress. Managers and staff are able to recognise the strengths and weaknesses of the service and regularly identify opportunities to improve services. The Registered Manager ensures that the home is well resourced and structured and this endorses stability and consistency for young people.

Managers have established systems to ascertain and consider the views and wishes of young people using feedback records and photographs. These are incorporated into short break plans and internal programmes. This means that young people are involved in decisions about their care or the development of the home.

The Registered Manager's review of the quality of care provided by the service is robust and any shortfalls are detected and immediately addressed. The home operates central systems to record incidents and monitor actions taken. Records are cross referenced to case files and detailed accounts of incidents are completed. Young people have individual documents to record their activities and behaviours when using the service. Therefore, records contribute to the understanding of a young person's life. Subsequently, the value and impact of the service on young people is clearly apparent.

The home is maintained to an extremely high standard. The manager is proactive in securing financial resources to improve the service and provide specialist sensory and manual handling equipment. Young people benefit from a short break service where boundaries and expectations are clear and staff practice is consistent. Subsequently, the home has a positive impact on young people and improves their life chances and experiences through encouragement, dedication and care.

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.