

## Inspection report for children's home

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| <b>Unique reference number</b> | SC391594        |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 20/06/2013      |
| <b>Inspector</b>               | Debbie Foster   |
| <b>Type of inspection</b>      | Full            |
| <b>Provision subtype</b>       | Children's home |

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| <b>Date of last inspection</b> | 08/02/2013 |
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## Service information

### Brief description of the service

This children's home is privately owned and provides care and accommodation for up to three children who have a learning disability.

The home is fitted with minor aids and adaptations to help support children who may also have a physical disability.

### 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 home provides well-planned care with good outcomes for young people. Young people receive good support from a child-focused and dedicated staff team. The staff team have the experience to care and support young people with learning disabilities.

Strong links exist with health and educational professionals who assist in supporting young people and ensuring their diverse needs are met. As a result, young people make good progress and thrive within a warm, supportive and nurturing environment. Young people are safe and comfortable within the home and their local community. This is because implement good safeguarding practices. There is a strong emphasis on young people developing self-confidence, good communication skills, social and independence skills.

The shortfalls identified during this inspection relate to: not recording or evaluating the progress that young people make against the targets outlined within their care plans and also in relation to pathways plans not being specific or detailed about the young person's plans for independence and the future move into adult services.

## Areas for improvement

### Recommendations

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

- ensure that each child's placement plan is monitored by a key worker within the home who ensures that the requirements of the plan are implemented. In particular ensure all areas of the plan are specific and clearly evidence and evaluate the progress each young person is making (NMS 25.2)
- ensure that the home contributes to the development of each child's care plan, including the pathway plan for "eligible" care leavers and works collaboratively with the young person's social worker or personal adviser in implementing the plan (NMS12.2)
- ensure young people are supported to prepare for adulthood; moving into their own accommodation; prepare for the world of further education; develop the full range of practical skills and develop positive self-esteem. (NMS12.1)

## Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

Young people are happy, treated with dignity and relate extremely well to staff. Each young person is cared for and respected as an individual. Cultural, gender and religious needs are identified and provided for. As a result, young people make good progress and develop a positive self-view and form and sustain attachments.

Staff engage with young people continually; which ensures young people's needs are met. Achievements are recognised and celebrated; which promotes the self-esteem of young people. A staff member stated: 'we have built strong relationships with our young people, know them very well and have worked hard on their communication skills so they can let us know what they want and how they are feeling.' Parents, social workers and staff report on marked improvements in young people's self-esteem and development, promoting positive well-being. These include, improved communication skills, having more socially acceptable behaviour and attaining social and independence skills.

Young people's health needs are well met. They enjoy a healthy well-balanced diet and are supported to attend all health-care appointments. They have access to the services they need, including children's mental health professionals and language and development practitioners. This to ensures they experience a good quality of life. Staff are trained to meet the specific needs of the young people in their care. Each young person's health needs are regularly reviewed by their key worker and at placement reviews.

All young people benefit from full attendance at school, thereby promoting positive educational outcomes. Excellent daily communication, between school and education staff, allows for any concerns or achievements to be shared which further promotes well-being and attainment. Shared aspirations and targets for young people provide a holistic approach in developing communication, social and life skills and educational

ability.

Young people benefit and are prepared for aspects of adult life, taking into account their ability and understanding. They are supported to develop the necessary life skills, such as, personal care; choosing the clothes they want to wear; undertaking simple house chores; and helping to tidy shared spaces and their bedrooms. In addition, they attend activities, such as, swimming, restaurants, shopping and attending young clubs within the local community. This promotes inclusion while bolstering young people's self-esteem and confidence.

A social worker stated: 'in the time I've known (NAME); he has progressed so much with his independence skills and is a more confident individual.' However, the local authority has not undertaken a comprehensive transition plan for those young people approaching 18 years of age. It is acknowledged that the home have pursued this plan. Suitable provision has not been made to take into account the anxieties that will arise from change to routine in their daily life for young people with autism. As a result, there is insufficient time, support, preparation and planning for young people's move into adult services.

Young people maintain excellent contact with their parents. Staff support young people to maintain good relationships and contact arrangements with those who are significant to young people and this is a key strength of the home. Frequent communication by phone and email is facilitated, where necessary. Staff support contact not just within the home but on shared outings. This promotes inclusivity and enables positive and fun shared experiences. A parent said 'My son is so happy living at the home; this really puts my mind at rest. He loves visiting me at home and without the support of staff this could not have been possible when he first came to live there. Now he has made so much progress he is able to visit me without staff support. This has made such a difference to us as a family. The staff have worked with my son and me to achieve this, it's wonderful.' Young people fully benefit from the security, stability and sense of consistency this provides both now and for their longer-term relationships as and support in adulthood.

## Quality of care

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

Young people benefit from having very strong relationships with staff in the home. The staff team have grown in experience and receive good and appropriate training which enables them to confidently care for the young people. Staff know the young people really well and this assists them in offering the best possible care.

Young people have varying communication skills and needs. Staff effectively use a range of communication methods to converse with young people and ensure that their needs are understood. A staff member said, ' (NAME'S) use of language and signing has improved so much.' Staff assist young people to contribute to their views and choices on a number matters, relating to activities, menus and contact with their families. A young person was observed communicating his wishes and thoughts to

staff using sign language during the inspection.

Staff support young people to attend their education. Excellent communication with schools ensures that home and school are aware of any issues which may impact on young people's education. Key workers visit young people's schools to share information and practice. This ensures that all agencies work consistently for the benefit of the young people.

All young people are cared for in accordance with their care plans which are tailored to meet their individual and diverse needs. Needs relating to young people's personal identity are clearly identified in their care plans and positively promoted in their daily living. Although staff and parents can demonstrate verbally where young people are making progress in their lives, this is not always fully evidenced or indicated within care plans and other supporting records. Therefore, the progress young people make is not accurately evidenced and evaluated to support their continued progress and achievement.

Staff support young people very well to make progress with daily living tasks. For example, young people make their own breakfasts; pour their own drinks; tidy away after themselves and learn how to wash and dress themselves. Young people's achievements are celebrated with lots of praise given. This helps young people develop confidence in their abilities and gain a positive self-view.

Young people live in a residential location which provides good access to a range of local community facilities. They have access to a vehicle and public transport which provides them with regular access to activities outside the home. Externally, the home is well maintained and blends in well with other houses on the street. Overall, the house is decorated and furnished to a good standard. New furnishings have enhanced young people's bedrooms further. Recent refurbishment of a toilet has been undertaken. Decoration of the hallway and landing is underway. Future refurbishment of others areas are planned. This ensures that young people experience and live in a positive environment.

## **Safeguarding children and young people**

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

Young people are safe. Staff receive regular child protection training and know what to do if they feel a child is at risk. Good staffing levels ensure that any potential episodes of bullying are eliminated immediately and young people do not go missing. A parent said, 'staff are caring for my son very well, I have no doubt about this; staff are always with him and he is never be left alone. He is safe.'

Good quality behaviour management strategies are influenced and supported by the advice of health-care professionals. These are applied effectively; reviewed regularly and applied in conjunction with individual risk assessments. Care is taken to reduce triggers that may lead to a young person feeling anxious or distressed and this promotes a sense of well-being and belonging. Staff are experienced in managing

challenging behaviours. Detailed handovers between shifts help the staff team to meet each young person's behaviour management needs. They work together with parents, education teams and health care professionals, which means that young people are treated consistently.

All staff are well trained in the use of physical interventions. Physical restraint is only used within the home's agreed guidelines and to prevent injury to a young person or member of staff or serious criminal damage. Staff record all incidents in a log kept for the purpose. This log is appropriately monitored by the Registered Manager.

Young people benefit from living in a safe environment. Young people's health and safety needs are a high priority and strong health and safety procedures for the building are very well managed. All utilities are checked and regularly serviced. Fire safety risk assessments and regular safety checks protect young people from fire. Regular evacuation procedures and practices ensure that young people and staff know how to respond in the event of a fire. This ensures young people are kept safe.

## **Leadership and management**

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

Young people benefit from an experienced and supportive manager who understands their needs and wishes. Staff are well supported and provide a safe environment with good care outcomes for young people.

A development plan includes a range of realistic targets for the home, such as, providing further training for staff in mental health; identifying targets and progress monitoring for young people; implementing the garden project with young people; improving consultation with parents and environmental improvements; liaise with neighbours on a three monthly basis and work to improve young people's ability to communicate with others further. This plan demonstrates the service is working to further improve the quality of care and outcomes for the young people who live there further.

The two requirements and the majority of the recommendations for improvement made at the last inspection have been met. Records of physical restraint now record the duration of the event as required by the Regulations. The monitoring of practices through Regulation 33 and 34 is more robust and better informed which better safeguards the welfare of young people. Quality assurance reports completed in line with Regulations 34 are now sent to Ofsted as required. These show that the home conducts reviews of the quality of care, in which any patterns and trends are identified with action taken in response. In particular, there is an improved focus on reviewing the environment and incidents of physical restraint. Alongside this staff are now trained in the use of physical restraint before they commence working in the home.

Although two recommendations, regarding placement and pathway plans have not been met in full, work is in progress to address them.

The management team provides good leadership of the home. Staff attend regular team meetings and there are detailed handovers at the start of every shift. This promotes good communication and consistent care which benefits young people. Staff receive regular formal supervision in which they receive advice and guidance in relation to the care of young people.

Systems to monitor and report on the administration systems of the home are effective. Any areas of weakness identified are acted upon by the manager. This is supported by regular unannounced visits from the provider who monitors and acts to improve the quality of care at the home. This ensures that standards at the home continue to improve.

The staff team are dedicated, competent and child-focused in their work with young people. Staff training in the home is well planned. A number of staff have obtained an appropriate child care qualification at level 3, or are working towards this. In addition to all mandatory training, the staff team undertake specialist courses which enable them to care for young people with learning disabilities. These include moving and handling, epilepsy, autism, communication methods and mental health. Consequently, young people benefit from care which is appropriate to meet their diverse needs.

Young people benefit greatly from the strong relationships with other professionals. This collaborative multi-agency approach fully meets the needs of young people in relation to their health, care and education.

Case files are stored securely in the home. Overall, they are of a good standard and easy to read. As a result, staff gain a good overview of the young person's specific needs, which assists them in delivering the best possible care.

The physical environment of the home is of a good standard. Consequently, young people benefit from a homely environment.

## 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 the inspection of children's homes.