

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Judith Longden
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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 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.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: a service that significantly exceeds minimum requirements

Good: a service that exceeds minimum requirements

Satisfactory: a service that only meets minimum requirements

Inadequate: a service that does not meet minimum requirements

Service information

Brief description of the service

This children's home provides care and accommodation for up to five young people who are diagnosed as being on the autistic spectrum and/or having learning disabilities and who are unable to live with their families due to the complexity of their diagnosis.

Overall effectiveness

The overall effectiveness is judged to be **satisfactory**.

The home provides good, personalised and well-planned care. Young people at the home have high levels of challenging behaviour and complex needs which are taken into account when planning and delivering the care. Good progress is made in young people achieving positive outcomes particularly in relation to health and education. Relationships between staff and young people are satisfactory and positive behaviour is actively encouraged. Young people are able to communicate that they feel cared for and safe. There are good safeguarding processes in place to protect young people from abuse. However health and safety assessments have not been adequately reviewed and updated to ensure the safety of the young people is maintained in respect of the building and environment. The Statement of Purpose and the children's guide are incomplete. Staff currently do not receive regular formal supervision to support them in dealing with some very challenging behaviours and complex needs.

Areas for improvementStatutory 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
4 (2001)	update the children's guide to include the correct address and telephone number of the HMCI (Regulation 4(3)(c))	30/09/2011
4 (2001)	update the statement of purpose to include the matters listed in Schedule 1; in particular the qualifications and experience of manager and staff (Regulation 4 (1))	30/09/2011
32 (2001)	ensure there are adequate precautions against the risk of fire; in particular update the fire risk assessment. (Regulation 32 (a))	30/09/2011

Recommendations

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

- ensure risk assessments of the home environment are recorded in writing and regularly reviewed (NMS 10.8)
- ensure staff are provided with regular supervision by appropriately qualified and experienced staff. (NMS 19.4)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people develop self esteem, build their confidence and increase their social skills by their involvement in their care and by taking part in new activities. They are helped to understand their background and family life through the use of life story work dealing with circumstances such as bereavement.

Young people are involved in developing a menu that provides a healthy balanced diet and also includes their favourite food. Themed food evenings provide young people with an opportunity to learn about food from other cultures and widen their experience. Their health is further promoted by the implementation of daily health and personal hygiene routines. Staff work with young people to help them understand their sexuality and issues concerning puberty and arousal. Young people benefit from access to a variety of health professionals to meet all their health needs. As a result the good health of young people is promoted.

Staff encourage young people to engage in new leisure activities to try different challenges and develop new skills. Young people's interests and hobbies are also encouraged such as roller skating and trips to the park. This enables young people to enjoy their interests and be a part of the community and social life of the area.

Young people are achieving good outcomes in their education and in learning new skills in the home. Young people have individual achievement charts that monitor progress against targets set in their education plans. Progress is scored in areas such as making their views known, cleaning their teeth, attending school, adding up, using the computer. Achievement awards are on display in the foyer of the home recognising significant achievement by young people for example helping the younger children on the bus. Art work created by young people is on display throughout the home and the manager has a sign on their door designed by one young person. As a result young people are achieving their potential. Their achievements are recognised and praised by staff and managers.

Young people benefit from appropriate contact with their parents, family and friends.

Where contact is not appropriate staff explain the situation to young people and help them understand why it may not be safe. People who play an important role in their lives are actively involved in the care they receive taking part in planning and in reviews. Good communication is maintained by staff with parents and carers to ensure they are kept fully informed of activities or incidents. As a result young people are supported by those who play a significant role in their lives.

Young people benefit from good inter-agency work on transition to adult services. Staff from both services spend time with the young people, visiting their new home and working on a smooth transition. Young people play an active role in their transition plans using symbols and pictures to communicate their views. As a result young people are supported into adulthood in a new home with a service that meets their individual needs.

Quality of care

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

Good placement plans are in place that provide detailed information on the needs and wishes of the young people and any risks they present and how to minimise these. Daily care plans and routines are devised as a result of these plans and implemented by staff. For example one young person is currently subject to a sensory diet; lists of the food permitted within this are on display in the office and staff are reminded at every shift of the food the young person has already had and what they are to have for the rest of the day. This ensures young people are cared for in line with their individual plans.

Young people are encouraged and supported to be involved in their own care and in the operation of the home. They contribute to review meetings about their care. Very good pre-review work is carried out with young people to gain their views and opinions. These are recorded in a way appropriate to that young person and staff record what action is taken as a result of these views. Parents, family members and social workers views are regularly sought to support the care of the young people. As a result young people are fully involved and benefit from the best possible care.

Young people benefit from satisfactory relationships with staff and are developing skills to enhance their social interaction with other young people and the community. Young people are supported if they wish to complain. Information, advice and guidance are available in a variety of formats. They take part in meetings about the home and contribute their views and opinions. This enables young people to develop confidence, improve their self esteem and enhance their communication skills.

Young people have very good health care plans that are developed and reviewed regularly with the support of parents and medical professionals and ensure their complex health needs are met. Daily health care routines are implemented by staff who are trained in a variety of health matters such as first aid and safe handling and administration of medicines. Good multi-agency working ensures young people benefit from support from a variety of medical professionals. Staff support young

people to understand health issues such as smoking and sexual health. As a result the physical, emotional and psychological health of the young people is promoted.

The home creates an environment of learning through the provision of computers, art materials and a library. Staff support and encourage young people in their learning. As a result young people continually learn and develop. Staff maintain excellent links with schools and support the attendance of young people ensuring there is continuity in the learning.

Young people live in a homely environment with access to a variety of facilities including a sensory room, music room, soft play area, garden and outside play equipment. Young people are encouraged and supported by the staff to take part in activities in and outside of the home to encourage their learning and development. The home is due for substantial refurbishment and redecoration in the coming weeks to provide a more pleasant and welcoming environment for the young people.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

The home provides an environment of care and support where bullying is not tolerated. A high staff to young people ratio helps to reduce the likelihood of bullying. Staff are aware of presenting behaviours and are able to address any behavioural concerns before they escalate into bullying. This ensures young people are protected from bullying.

Positive behaviour is encouraged by giving lots of praise and frequent expressions of approval. This is supported by strong positive relationships between young people and staff based on mutual respect. Sanctions are not imposed but negative behaviour is discussed with young people. Staff are trained in managing challenging behaviour using verbal conflict resolution techniques and they only use physical restraint as a last resort. As a result young people interact positively with staff and each other and behave appropriately.

The home has good policies and procedures for safeguarding practices in respect of child protection, handling allegations, recruitment and young people's risk assessments. Staff are trained in safeguarding and are clear on their role to enable young people to disclose any abuse and to protect them from any future abuse. There are no incidents of young people going missing from the home but staff are aware of the homes procedures to follow should a young person be absent. This ensures young people are protected as far as possible.

Sound recruitment processes and the recording and monitoring of visitors to the home further ensure young people are protected from significant harm. Young people are kept safe as a result of individual risk assessments that determine risks associated with behaviour, activities and travelling. Regular fire drills are held and fire alarm systems are checked as required. However the fire risk assessment has not

been updated despite recommendations by the fire service to do so. The health and safety risk assessment for the building has not been updated within the last year and does not reflect the current situation or risks presented by the current behaviour of young people. As a result the environment may not offer the full protection required to young people to ensure their physical safety.

Leadership and management

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

The home has improved in a number of areas since the last inspection. The manager has completed the registration process to become the Registered Manager and has implemented a number of organisational changes that improve the service for young people. For example, senior staff have been allocated specific tasks in relation to the running of the home and monitoring the quality of care provided. The revised behaviour management policy has also had a significant impact for young people with more focus on praise for positive behaviour and a reduction in the use of restraint.

Two requirements from the previous inspection have been met in relation to staff use of mobile phones and the verification of references for new staff. There is now a mobile phone policy which staff are provided with and implement to ensure dignity and privacy of young people is respected. References for any potential new staff are verified verbally and the manager has implemented a monitoring log of the recruitment process. This protects young people from harm. Two recommendations made at the previous inspection have been met. Restraint logs are now recorded appropriately and are monitored both by the manager and those undertaking regulation 33 visits.

However there are three requirements and two recommendations made as a result of this inspection in relation to safety of young people and leadership and management of the home.

The home has good policies on the admission of young people and their move to other services. Young people are supported through periods of transition with the involvement of parents, staff and other agencies. Work is undertaken with the young person moving on and those still in the home to support them in a period of change and loss. Young people are involved in their admission and transition plans ensuring they feel valued and respected.

Staff and managers are clear about the objectives and ethos of the home. They provide a service to young people in line with the home's Statement of Purpose. Staff are able to identify the strengths of the home in providing good quality care for young people. The home is provided, managed and staffed by suitable personnel who are qualified and experienced. Staff work together to deliver a service that is efficient and effective in caring for young people and developing them to reach their full potential. However the Statement of Purpose does not specify the qualifications and experience of the staff or manager. This means parents and placing authorities

are not clear on the experience of the staff or manager at the home when considering placing young people.

The home has a comprehensive children's guide available in a variety of formats for young people. This helps them understand what to expect at the home. The contact details for Ofsted are incorrect in this guide which could prove confusing for young people wishing to make a complaint or comment on the service they receive.

Young people's needs are met through the provision of sufficient staffing. Where additional support is required this is provided either by increasing the staffing levels or by using other organisations to support specific behavioural issues or young people's needs.

Staff are able to continue to develop their knowledge and skills through a variety of training opportunities to improve their competency. The training material is relevant and of high quality and staff are able to put learning into practice. As a result young people are looked after by staff who are trained and competent to meet their needs.

Staff are supported in their role through the effective use of staff handover meetings and good peer support. There is satisfactory communication between staff and the manager who operates an open door policy whereby staff can approach her for advice or guidance at any time. However formal supervision is not currently taking place at the required frequency and staff say they need the support this supervision provides given the current behaviour of young people. As a result there is insufficient support for staff at present in managing young people's behaviour. Their performance and development is however reviewed in their annual appraisal.

The home has detailed procedures for monitoring the quality of the service provided and the welfare of the young people. The registered provider undertakes visits to the home in accordance with regulations and carries out checks to ensure the welfare of young people is monitored. The registered provider consults with young people using a variety of communication methods and identifies any areas for development to improve the quality of care provided. The manager and deputy manager regularly monitor records kept by the home to identify any concerns, patterns or trends. However the manager has not monitored or reviewed the health and safety assessment for the building in light of recent events. All significant events relating to the protection of young people in the home are notified as appropriate and actions taken as required. As a result young people are consulted about the quality of care they receive and how effectively their needs are met but there is inconsistency in monitoring their protection.

Equality and diversity practice is **good**.