

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC397344
Inspection date	08/06/2012
Inspector	Caroline Jones
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	21/10/2011
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The home is part of a charitable organisation. It provides care and accommodation for up to four young people with physical and learning disabilities.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: a service that significantly exceeds minimum requirements

Good: a service 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 live in a nurturing home where high quality care supports them in making good progress across all aspects of their development. Established communication techniques are successfully used with young people to enable their participation in decisions about their lives. Staff assist young people to develop their independence skills, although, detailed plans and guidance are not in place to demonstrate competence and skills for adulthood. Communication between staff and young people's families is good, however, specific feedback about the quality of care provided is not routinely sought to inform and develop the service further. Young people feel safe and happy living in the home.

Staff know young people exceptionally well which is evident in the positive and constructive relationships they have built with them. Staff work proactively with young people's families to promote contact and sustain meaning relationships in the best interests of young people. Young people's families and partner agencies are extremely complimentary about the service provided. They comment: 'I am very happy, couldn't ask for anything better, the staff are brilliant, young people come first here.'

The home is effectively managed and a strong emphasis is placed on providing high standards of care. Internal and external monitoring systems are in place to scrutinise the care provided, however, there are some gaps in relation to how this data is utilised to identify trends and learn and improve practice further. Moreover, the current systems do not include the provision for six-monthly quality assurance reports to be forwarded to HMCI. All staff have regular training, supervision and appraisals to develop their competence and skills in providing a quality service to

young people. The views of young people are not sought during the appraisal process which means that opportunities to learn and improve can be missed.

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 monitoring utilises the information on emerging patterns or trends to continually improve practice (NMS 21.2)
- ensure that quality assurance reports are completed and forwarded to HMCI at six-monthly intervals (Volume 5, Statutory Guidance 3.14)
- ensure that plans are developed to include further opportunities for young people to learn skills in preparation for adulthood (Volume 5, Statutory Guidance 2.131)
- ensure that appraisals take into account any views of young people the service is providing for (NMS 19.6)
- ensure that the views of young people, their family, social worker and Independent Reviewing Officer are sought on young people's care, unless in individual cases this is not appropriate. (NMS 1.4)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people continue to develop their individual skills, abilities and talents which helps them grow in confidence. As a consequence of the support and care they receive, young people are making significant progress in acquiring competence in attending to their personal care. Young people choose menus, activities and they are involved in shopping for food, clothing and personal items. All young people, including those who do not communicate verbally, actively participate in decisions about their life. This empowers young people to have more control in their daily lives.

Young people benefit from education that is targeted to meet their individual needs. They have an excellent record of school attendance and make very good progress. Transitional arrangements are in place for young people to ensure they receive continuity of care and support into adulthood. Staff advocate for young people and have facilitated communication between them and partner agencies to ensure their voice is heard and responded to. Although, young people's independence is promoted, detailed plans and guidance is not in place to further develop and demonstrate young people's skills for adulthood.

Young people take part in regular activities to promote a healthy lifestyle including, group trips to the seaside, youth clubs and swimming. Young people also like to use

computers and electrical gadgets and are guided by staff to ensure their safe enjoyment. Young people have plans to meet their health needs and receive professional treatment as required. Medication is stored safely and records are maintained on the administration. All staff receive suitable training to support health and well-being and have a first aid qualification to ensure safer caring of young people.

Quality of care

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

Young people continue to grow and develop in a nurturing and supportive environment. Staff are committed to young people which is evident in the warm and caring relationships that have been established. Staff know young people very well, their individual communication styles and mannerisms, which enables young people to express themselves and contribute their views and ideas. Placement plans are detailed and provide a thorough understanding of the support young people require to ensure they are treated according to their uniqueness. Full attention is paid to their individual identity and staff demonstrate respect for young people's privacy and dignity. Personal care is attended to discreetly and young people have space within the home environment to have time alone away from the group if they choose.

Young people's right to complain is promoted within the home through regular young people's meetings and key worker sessions. Pictorial exchange, story boards and photographs aid this communication. Young people have information about complaints and advocacy which is accessible and tailored to their needs and understanding. Although, consultation with parents and partner agencies is good, their feedback about the quality of care received by young people is not routinely sought which means that suggestions for improvement to the service can be missed.

Young people are encouraged to behave appropriately and excellent behaviour management plans guide this. Staff understand young people's triggers and have strategies in place to manage behaviour effectively. Appropriate use of re-direction and de-escalation techniques assist young people to relax and refocus. The home operates a zero sanction approach as this is not conducive to the needs of young people. Key worker sessions promote young people's understanding further which is complemented by the consistent team work approach within the home and with the school.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

A strong organisational emphasis is placed on safeguarding and protecting young people, this promotes a safeguarding culture and ethos. Staff receive safeguarding training, including advanced training, and have an excellent understanding of their duties in promoting young people's welfare. Locally-agreed protocols are in place to

ensure a robust response to any allegation of abuse or safeguarding concern. Additionally, young people have comprehensive risk assessments that are regularly reviewed to clearly manage and identify risks to young people. Young people are actively included in this assessment to aid their understanding of safety. Close supervision of young people and proactive safeguarding practices ensures that their personal safety is maintained and that they do not engage in any risk taking behaviours.

Staff know young people very well and have developed planned strategies to manage behaviour successfully, as a result no sanctions are used and physical intervention is minimal. Staff focus on re-direction techniques and engage positively with young people to assist them in working through their frustration. Staff confirm that that physical intervention is only used as a very last resort and that young people's behaviour is managed in a calm and supportive manner.

Young people live in a physically safe environment in which health and safety issues are thoroughly managed. Written records clearly show that staff carry out routine health and safety checks around the home. Safety and insurance certificates are up to date and direct work with young people takes place to ensure they are aware of an emergency evacuation route in the event of a fire. A robust recruitment process is in place and staff take appropriate steps to verify visitors identity to ensure young people are protected.

Leadership and management

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

The home is efficiently managed and effective in meeting its Statement of Purpose. The Registered Manager works with young people and staff to rigorously monitor young people's welfare, which ensures the high standards of care and the safety of young people. The Registered Manager provides leadership and accountability; therefore staff fully understand the roles and responsibilities delegated to them.

There are internal and external systems in place to monitor the quality of care which include monthly visits by a designated person in accordance with regulation. Although, monitoring is very good, there is no analysis of trends to identify areas for improvement and development of the service. Additionally six-monthly quality monitoring reports are not completed or forwarded to HMCI to continually improve the service. The Registered Manager has a development plan in place which is currently under review; it identifies the strengths and weaknesses of the home. Regular supervision of staff takes place together with annual appraisals. However, young people's involvement in the appraisal process is not yet developed to ensure their views are counted.

Staff feel supported and 'love' their work. A rota system operates and high staffing levels are sufficient to ensure young people gain the care and support they need. The organisation demonstrates a commitment to professional development and training is high on the agenda. All staff receive a two-week induction programme

before they commence work with young people, are suitably qualified and new staff are working towards a recognised qualification. These practices ensure that staff are confident and competent in providing quality care to young people.

Staff fully understand young people's diverse needs and have high aspirations for them in achieving their individual potential. Recordings are generally very good and provide a picture of young people's daily lives. Young people's information is securely stored and staff share young people's information confidentially to protect their safety and privacy.

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.