

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Jacqueline Malcolm
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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 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**.

Young people receive personalised, quality care that meets their complex and diverse needs very well. Their health, welfare, education, behaviour and independence are promoted to a high standard. This results in them excelling in progress in all aspects of their development in relation to their starting points. Young people's identity needs are well met and positively reinforced by their contact with family and significant others. Young people's wishes and feelings are shared in their preferred communication method. This ensures that they are listened to and their views are taken into account in the running of the home and their individual plans. This promotes young people's rights. Young people are safeguarded by robust systems that are known and practiced by staff. Young people confirm that they feel safe in the home and professionals raise no concerns about their safety and welfare.

The home is efficiently managed and monitored by an experienced and conscientious Registered Manager. They ensure that staff receive good support and regular, good quality training to ensure a strong and competent workforce. An ambitious, but realistic development plan underpins the improvement agenda in the home, which demonstrably adds value to young people's lives.

The shortfalls identified at this inspection relate to: summaries of Regulation 33 monitoring reports have not consistently been sent to Ofsted in a timely manner; the noticeable cracks on some walls on the ground floor of the premises have not been checked to confirm that they do not pose a safety risk.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- review the Statement of Purpose to ensure that it contains updated contact details for Ofsted (NMS 13.3)
- ensure that the registered person takes action to address any issues of concern that they identify or which is raised with them. This specifically relates to checking the safety of the cracks on the walls and the prompt delivery of monitoring reports on the conduct of the home to HMCI. (NMS 21.9)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

Young people make extremely good progress from their starting points. Their positive attachments with staff give them the confidence to participate in new and exciting experiences both in the comfort of their home and out in the community. Young people who present with challenging behaviours are responsive to effective behaviour management strategies and clear boundaries. This contributes to a reduction of incidents over time, which improves young people's emotional and physical safety and security.

Young people benefit from exceptionally good health. This is due to their prompt access to health services that meet their specific health needs. Young people are successful in achieving specific goals to improve their overall health. For example, some young people have reduced the likelihood of tooth decay by thoroughly brushing their teeth. Other young people are developing a healthier weight by eating less fatty foods and taking more exercise. Young people who are resistant to certain treatments, such as vaccinations learn through social stories to become less fearful of certain medical procedures. This reduces young people's anxiety levels and keeps them fit and healthy. Young people who have undergone major surgery demonstrate strong resilience through their good recovery, which improves their quality of life.

Young people enjoy school immensely, which supports their excellent school attendance. Young people's educational progress is compatible with their learning needs. They show talent in some subjects and potential to achieve good examination results in the future. Young people benefit considerably from their involvement in a range of activities; for example, bowling; cinema; eating meals in restaurants; visiting places of interests; attending clubs; pop concerts and home based activities. This ensures young people's social integration and enhances their life experiences.

Good contact arrangements keeps young people well connected with family members and significant people in their lives. This promotes their identity needs and sense of belong.

Young people make good progress to develop realistic and meaningful independence skills. For example, undertaking some of their personal care, domestic tasks around the home, shopping and preparing meals and snacks. A professional said, '(young person) is making very good progress in terms of life skills, such as cooking.' Young people who have reached the age to make the transition into adulthood continue to live at the home. This is in their best interests and ensures that they receive appropriate services in the near future.

Quality of care

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

Young people thrive at this home due to the excellent quality of care that they receive. A strong contributing factor is that young people are cared for by a consistent staff team. Staff effectively invest time in the young people and make every effort to promote positive relationships with them. Staff achieve this by getting to know the young people's personalities and characteristics, which forms the basis of their strong attachments. The nurturing and supportive interactions that young people share with staff help them to gain a sense of trust in the adults who care for and about them. Professionals and parents are complimentary about the quality of care that young people receive. A professional said, '(young person) is offered a high standard of care by (the home), which her social worker and father are very pleased with.'

Young people's excellent quality of care is underpinned by their individualised high quality placement plans. The comprehensive and child-focused plans address young people's complex and diverse needs and they are regularly reviewed. This ensures that young people benefit from individual child care support packages that focus on clear, measurable and achievable outcomes. Staff understand the plans and comment positively about the young people's daily progress.

Young people's wishes and feelings are highly promoted and their views are taken into account regarding the running of the home. Young people confirm that staff let them have their say and listen to them. Young people decide on menus, activities and they are helped to understand their future plans within their capacity to make decisions. Young people's excellent review reports represent their progress in clear pictures and words. The staff team's exceptionally good understanding of young people's preferred communication methods enables staff to act as excellent advocates for the young people. This keeps young people at the centre of care practices and promotes their rights.

Young people are cared for by staff who place a significant value in supporting their education. Exceptionally good partnerships between the home, schools and stakeholders ensure that barriers to young people's full participation in education do not compromise their learning. This promotes the homes high aspirations for young people, with a strong emphasis on celebrating their achievements and promoting their social inclusion, regardless of the challenges and vulnerabilities that some young people may present.

Young people live in a healthy environment where their holistic health needs are very well met. This safeguards their welfare; for example, young people receive excellent pre and post-operative care and support at the home. Staff work in partnership with a range of health professionals to ensure that young people achieve good health outcomes. This is supported by thorough individual health plans. A health professional said, 'I have found that staff are generally very good at communicating concerns/queries about treatment plans in place.' Good medication management in the home ensures that young people receive the correct medication as prescribed. This promotes young people's health and safety.

Young people benefit immensely from living in a homely environment. The home is clean and tidy and is suitably furnished and decorated to meet their needs. Young people have personalised their rooms. This reflects their individuality, which makes them feel at home. A young person stated 'I do like this home.'

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Safeguarding young people is highly prioritised at this home. Staff are sensitive and responsive to young people's changing needs, which are rooted in their vulnerabilities that arise from their disabilities. The staff team's sound knowledge of the young people and their positive relationships alert staff to potential signs that might indicate a young person is at risk of harm. Staff are trained in safeguarding young people. Their good attitude to safeguarding and safe caring practices means that they are conscious of the potential for abusive practices and bullying. Appropriate staffing levels also contribute to the overall promotion of young people's safety and welfare at the home and in the community.

Young people do not go missing from home, but if they did, staff have access to the missing from home protocol. Young people confirm that they feel safe at the home and this view is supported by stakeholders, such as the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and the police who raise no safeguarding concerns. A professional said, 'no safeguarding concerns identified in the time (young person) has been resident there.'

Young people are protected by clear and robust risk assessments. They make explicit how young people's diverse risks are to be minimised, which effectively ensures their safety in different scenarios. Regular health and safety checks on gas, electrical appliances and fire equipment, including regular fire drills provide young people with a physically safe and secure environment. Good staff recruitment practices and monitoring of visitors to the home protect young people from people who may pose a risk to them.

Young people are actively supported and encouraged to effectively manage their behaviour when in crisis. This has resulted in young people learning to manage their

own behaviour by removing themselves from situations when they feel anxious or distressed. Positive support systems, such as one to one staffing and excellent de-escalation practices ensure consistent practice. Effective behaviour management strategies are successfully implemented and they are monitored for impact. There is minimal use of restraint in the home, which is used as a last resort and is routinely monitored to ensure its safe use.

Leadership and management

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

Young people live in a home that is effectively and efficiently managed. The Registered Manager has high expectations about driving improvement to affect positive outcomes for young people. This culture is shared with the staff team and results in excellent quality of care and an overall solid service for young people. Improvement is supported by an ambitious, but realistic development plan. Strong monitoring mechanisms are effective in tackling weakness and the action taken improves practice, which is in young people's best interests. The home has good collaborative partnerships with professionals and parents, which promotes consistent practice. Stakeholders report good communication from the home. One said, 'I have not encountered any difficulties in communicating with the home, but haven't really needed to' and 'the house manager has always been very prompt in replying to any correspondence.'

One requirement and one recommendation made at the last inspection have been addressed. This demonstrates that the home has capacity to improve. However, although visits by a nominated person take place in accordance with the regulations, the reports have not consistently been received by Ofsted with sufficient speed. This does not enable the regulator to promptly monitor and respond to any issues which may arise as a result of the visits.

Young people benefit from a well retained staff team who are familiar to them. The provider's commitment to developing the team through good support mechanisms and specific training adds value to the team's awareness about practice developments and safe care practices. A number of staff have attained a nationally recognised child-care qualification or are working towards completion. This ensures a skilled and competent workforce. Staff feel well supported, supervised and speak highly of the support that they receive from the manager. Effective daily handovers and team meetings keeps everyone up to date with young people's progress. This ensures their capacity to provide each young person with high quality care.

Young people live in a financially viable and well-resourced home. This promotes a stable home-life. The home is generally well maintained, but some noticeable cracks in the walls on the ground floor of the premises have not been checked to ensure that they do not present a safety concern. The Statement of Purpose delivers what the home sets out to do for young people. However, the contact details for Ofsted are out of date, which does not ensure prompt access to stakeholders should they wish to raise a concern with inspectors.

Young people's records are exceptionally clear, up to date and contribute to a good understanding of their progress. This ensures that young people have a comprehensive audit of their experiences at the home that can be accessed now and in the future.

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.