

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Caroline Oldham
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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.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for the service.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding:	this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality
Good:	this aspect of the provision is strong
Satisfactory:	this aspect of the provision is sound
Inadequate:	this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Service information

Brief description of the service

This home is a new purpose built children's home for young people aged between 5 and 17 years on admission, who have a learning or physical disability. The home provides two different services within the same building. Short breaks are available for young people over weekends and school holidays. Boarding placements are also available, so that during the school term the home provides care and accommodation to young people attending Churchill Park School or another accessible special school.

The home is run by Break, a registered charity, under contract to Local Authority Children's Services. The home is located in a well-established residential area of a town and within walking distance of its centre and plentiful amenities. Five young people were resident at the time of the inspection and four took part in the inspection process.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

This is an overview of what the inspector found during the inspection.

This unannounced interim inspection focused on the progress the service has made with the three actions and one recommendation from the last inspection. In addition, this inspection also re-assessed the key standards for the outcome area of staying safe. The outcome areas: being healthy, enjoying and achieving, positive contribution, economic well-being and organisation were not looked at during this inspection.

The home has been open for over a year and the staff team are now established and settled. Some staff are qualified and others are currently on an induction and training programme. They are enthusiastic and committed to the care of the young people. They know the young people very well and have established good relationships. The young people have complex care needs and staff are sensitive to ensuring that young people are kept safe. Staff encouraged them to keep themselves safe both within the home and outside of the home in preparation for greater independence. However, the undertaking of fire drills has not been occurring on a regular basis and this puts young people at risk. The home is very well maintained with generally good monitoring systems to identify any problems thus ensuring that living standards and safety remain high.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection three actions and one recommendation were made. The actions related to the recording of sanctions and restraints, the staff rosters of hours worked and staff qualifications. The recommendation related to wording on the

insurance certificate.

Since the last inspection the bound books for recording sanctions and restrains have been reviewed and now contain all the prompts necessary for staff to ensure that they record all the details required. Staff rosters now clearly show the hours staff have worked and include all staff working on the premises. There is now a full establishment of staff and when new staff have completed their comprehensive six month induction programme and mandatory training; they will be enrolled on National Vocational Qualification at level 3 or equivalent courses. As this remains outstanding this will be a further recommendation. As the home belongs to a larger provider the insurance policy gives the head office address and not the specific home. The manager has agreed to demonstrate that the certificate of insurance is for this home. This recommendation will be repeated.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is not judged.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The operational guidance is a working document and staff are aware of the contents. Within it there is a policy on Professional Boundaries and Personal Relationships with young people; this includes the disclosure of personal information. Staff are very clear about not disclosing confidential information and keeping young people's files secure. Some young people require assistance with personal care and staff give real consideration about how to do this whilst maintaining the maximum dignity for them and encouraging greater independence.

Many of the young people have different communication needs and the staff use a variety of strategies to gain their views and their likes and dislikes. Although the complaints documents are readily available in symbols and pictorial format for young people, most prefer to communicate their views to their link worker. Details of the complaints procedure are clear and other avenues for complaint such as the local Social Services and Ofsted are given. There have been no complaints since the last inspection but the staff have received a compliment from a social worker for offering short term care at short notice.

There are clear guidance and procedures for safeguarding children and the policy links with the Local Safeguarding Children's Board procedures for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of children. Staff are familiar with these procedures and confident about how to respond to any allegation, however it is received. Staff are highly motivated to ensure the welfare of the children remains of paramount importance and they recognise the particular vulnerability of the children who use this service.

All staff are trained in managing behaviour and de-escalation techniques. Staff have good strategies with dealing with unwanted behaviour and each young person has an individual behaviour management plan.

Bullying is not currently an issue for these young people, and there are good links with the school to ensure that if concerns arise they are kept informed. There is a policy on bullying; this includes advice for staff on being alert to the risk of bullying and guidance on how to take reasonable steps to prevent such behaviour. Caring for each other and basic rules for respecting one another are covered in the young people's meetings. There is an operational policy to deal with an incident of a young person going missing and protocols with the local police in place. However, this situation has not arisen in this home.

Staff consider young people's safety to be of paramount importance and are vigilant with regard to checks to monitor fire safety equipment and other safety reviews for example the self closing fire doors. In addition there is regular, professional maintenance of gas, electric and fire safety equipment. However, there has not been a recent fire drill and therefore young people are not being reminded of the procedure, this puts young people at risk in the event of a fire. A recommendation has been made. A good range of individual and premises risk assessments identify specific actions necessary to ensure that young people are kept safe from harm.

There are good systems in place to ensure that robust suitability of staff decisions are made. All relevant checks are completed on staff before they commence employment and there is a comprehensive package of induction and mandatory training. Although not all staff are qualified they are suitable, and there is a training programme in place. This ensures that young people are cared for by staff that are suitable. Visitor's identification is checked on arrival to ensure that young people are suitably protected from people who could cause them harm.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is not judged.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is not judged.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is not judged.

Organisation

The organisation is not judged.

What must be done to secure future improvement?

Recommendations

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

- ensure that a minimum ratio of 80% of all care staff have completed their National Vocational Qualification at level 3 or equivalent (NMS 29.5)
- ensure that at least four fire drills, including evacuation of staff and children from the building and fire drills held at night, take place in a 12 month period, and are recorded (NMS 26.8)