

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC412979
Inspection date	02/08/2012
Inspector	Gillian Walters
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	30/01/2012
--------------------------------	------------

© Crown copyright 2012

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Service information

Brief description of the service

This children's home is operated by a private organisation and is registered to care for up to four young people. The home provides residential and respite care for young people with 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**.

The home provides good personalised, well planned care for young people with diverse and complex needs. It takes account of their individual needs and challenges, ensuring that good outcomes are consistently achieved. Young people are encouraged to make choices and express their views in accordance with their individual communication ability. Parents' views are seen as important and they are valued as advocates for the young people placed here. Successful caring relationships exist between young people and the staff group.

The home prioritises the safety and well-being of young people, ensuring that they feel protected and cared for at all times. Staff are well qualified and trained and have the required skills, enabling them to effectively support the young people in their care and manage their many complex needs.

The home's Registered Manager has recently left to take up a similar position with one of the organisation's other homes. An acting manager and suitable management support arrangements are in place to ensure the home is effectively managed until such time as a permanent manager is recruited. The management team work well together to ensure the smooth running of the home and demonstrate a competence in doing so. Internal monitoring of the service is good but there is a shortfall in evaluating findings of this process and reporting to Ofsted. There are also some recent issues with the home's independent monitoring arrangements, both in terms of quality and availability of reports to Ofsted and the home's manager.

Further areas for improvement focus on recording in relation to fire safety and de-

briefing of staff following physical interventions, children's review arrangements and notifications of significant events.

Areas for improvement

Statutory 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
7 (2001)	ensure that the registered provider shall appoint an individual to manage the children's home, and when appointed give notice to Ofsted of the name of the person so appointed and the date on which the appointment is to take effect (Regulation 7)	28/09/2012
30 (2001)	ensure that all significant events are notified to Ofsted without delay, this relates specifically to events concerning serious illness or serious accidents sustained by a child accommodated in the home (Regulation 30(1))	28/09/2012
33 (2001)	ensure that visits take place at least once a month and interview with their consent, children accommodated, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home as appears necessary in order to form an opinion on the standard of care provided; inspect the daily log of events and complaints records and prepare a written report on the conduct of the home (Regulation 33(4)(a)(b)(c))	28/09/2012
33 (2001)	ensure the provider shall supply a copy of the report required to be made under (4) to Ofsted and the registered manager of the children's home (Regulation 33 (5)(a)(b))	28/09/2012
34 (2001)	ensure that the registered person shall supply to Ofsted a report in respect of any review conducted by him for the purposes of paragraph (1), observing guidance that such reports are completed at six monthly intervals, sent to Ofsted within 28 days of its completion and identifies any trends and issues of concern arising from monitoring of matters set out in Schedule 6. (Regulation 34(2))	28/09/2012

Recommendations

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

- ensure all children and staff are given an opportunity to discuss incidents of restraint they have been involved in, witnessed or been affected by, with a

relevant adult. This relates specifically to staff de-briefs being sufficiently reflected in the records kept by the home (NMS 3.17)

- ensure there is an emergency escape plan that all staff and young people are familiar with and have practiced so they know what to do in an emergency. This relates specifically to undertaking fire drills of a night and recording when they have occurred (NMS 10.9)
- ensure that a review takes place before a child is moved to another placement. This relates specifically to children moving from one home to another within the organisation's provision. (NMS 11.6)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people make good progress in this home from their starting points taking account of their age, understanding and ability. They are well settled in this home and benefit from having a caring and supportive staff team that clearly understand their varied and complex needs. This means that they have stability and receive personalised care that meets their individual requirements and promotes their personal development.

Young people enjoy regular contact with their family enabling them to maintain those relationships that are most important to them. For some this means that they are also provided with opportunities to engage with enjoyable activities within their home community. Young people are reassured by the good level of communication between the home and their family that arrangements are flexibly made to include practical support for them on visits or to return to the home earlier than planned if required. This ensures that the experience is most positive and enjoyable for all concerned.

Young people understand that they can make choices and are actively encouraged to do so. This enables them to know that their views are valued and promotes good self-esteem. Young people participate in a range of activities in the home and the community. This provides them with fun, stimulation, new interests and learning experiences, ensuring that they feel socially included in their home and wider community.

Young people's health care needs are well met. They benefit from careful health assessment, planning and timely intervention to ensure that their well-being is prioritised and their needs properly met. The home works closely with local practitioners and a number of specialist physicians ensuring that the nature of their health care needs are properly understood and provided for.

All young people in this home are engaged with learning and attend a local special school owned by the provider. Young people are making good progress in their education in relation to their ability and understanding. Young people benefit from the direct support provided by the home's staff in the learning environment. Working

alongside teaching staff, they ensure a familiar and consistent approach that supports and promotes their achievement. Young people benefit further from this arrangement as staff are able to mirror approaches within the home, consolidating learning and building confidence that will assist their eventual transition to adult life. One social worker confirmed, 'staff are proactive in trying to maximise young people's independence.'

Quality of care

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

Young people are well supported in all aspects of their daily living by a dedicated staff team who are familiar and responsive to their individual and complex needs. Staff have a good understanding of the specific support and care each young person requires. Placement planning is thorough and well detailed. This ensure that staff are appropriately guided and respond effectively and consistently to optimise young people's safety and well-being. Staff are warm and friendly and demonstrate considerable patience in working with the young people in their care. As a result positive and trusting relationships have developed that significantly reduce the known anxieties and concerns experienced by the young people.

Staff work hard to ensure effective communication with all young people. They have developed a range of resources that encourage and enable young people to express their views and respect their right to choice. Individual plans have been developed to enhance communication and are well documented to ensure that staff have a good knowledge of each young person's ability and specific understanding of daily routines and events. Such measures are successful in overcoming some of the barriers of non-verbal communication. Staff have developed positive relationships with parents and social workers and welcome their views as advocates. As such, young people are well supported in making a positive contribution and having their views and wishes taken into account. The home also has effective systems in place that enable young people and their families to raise concerns and suggest improvements relating to the quality of care provided.

The home maintains good communication with parents and actively seeks to encourage their involvement in the care planning and review programme, valuing the significant contribution they have to make. Generally this is of a high quality and ensures that all involved understand the plan and are in agreement with it. However, this inspection revealed that there was one occasion when a review did not take place of a young person's plan before moving into the home from another placement within their organisation. Although this did not hinder a successful transition for the young person it meant that parents did not have a full understanding of the plan.

Staff are attentive to the varied and complex health needs of young people, ensuring that specialist knowledge and support is engaged to assess, monitor and promote the successful management of young people's physical, emotional and psychological needs. Detailed health care plans have been developed for each young person to ensure that staff are fully informed and know how to respond to maintain their good

health and well-being. All staff have completed first aid training, enabling them to respond appropriately should a medical emergency arise.

Staff accompany and care for young people in school and work alongside teaching staff throughout the day. This ensures that young people are consistently supported in accessing learning, have good attendance and are securing good educational achievement. Young people enjoy a number of activities that support learning, relaxation and fun. Such activities include safe play, trampolining, sensory stimulation, swimming, and outings to places of interest.

The home is located in a quiet residential area close to shops and other local amenities. It has been designed to meet the needs of young people who have varied and differing complex needs arising from disabilities. The home has recently benefited from considerable refurbishment. It is nicely decorated, comfortably furnished and well maintained. Young people's bedrooms reflect their individual preferences and needs. New play equipment, including swings and a trampoline, have been obtained and installed in the garden, providing an additional source of recreation and fun for young people.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Staff take great care to ensure that young people feel safe and are protected at all times. Young people benefit from the support of high staffing ratios that ensure that their needs are consistently met and supported on a daily basis. Reasonable security measures are in place to ensure that young people do not leave the home without appropriate staff support. These measures also ensure that no unauthorised visitors who may pose a risk to the young people can gain access to the home. This includes locks on external gates and a coded security locks on the main door to the front of the premises. Young people are well monitored; there have been no incidents of young people going missing from this home.

The home has robust procedures in place for managing child protection matters and staff are appropriately trained and familiar with them. The home treats such matters very seriously and is rigorous in its approach to addressing any concerns raised. This ensures that young people are well protected from any potential sources of harm.

Staff are well trained and have a clear understanding of behaviour management techniques that are appropriate and may be used to support young people in avoiding harm to themselves or others. Such intervention is only ever used when it is essential and in accordance with the legislative framework and the young person's individual care plan. Records of such incidents are completed routinely after any such event. They provide good detail of the event and the level of intervention and support required. However, the recording of staff de-briefing following such events is not always routinely completed or lacks sufficient detail to provide a full and comprehensive account.

The home demonstrates strength and rigor in the recruitment and selection of its staff. Robust procedures and consistent adherence to good practice ensures that those employed have been thoroughly vetted, have the necessary skills and are suitable and safe to work with young people. This ensures that young people are not exposed to adults who may be unsuitable and pose a risk to their safety.

The home is a safe environment for young people to live. Risk assessments sufficiently address any potential sources of danger or harm to young people; they are routinely monitored and updated as required. Routine health and safety checks are completed on a regular basis, including essential fire safety equipment and utilities. Young people and staff participate in regular fire drills to ensure that they have practiced and know what to do in the event of a real emergency. However, records examined during this inspection did not reflect the times when such evacuation practices had occurred. This raised some uncertainty if young people and staff would be confident in their evacuation should an emergency occur at a time other than daylight hours.

Leadership and management

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

The post of Registered Manager is currently vacant and the post is yet to be advertised and recruited to. However temporary arrangements are in place and these are successfully ensuring the effective and efficient management of the home to support and deliver good outcomes for the young people placed there.

Staffing levels within the home are sufficient to meet the needs of the young people currently placed. Staff are well motivated and committed to providing a high standard of care. They are suitably skilled and experienced and most are appropriately qualified with more than half the staff team having attained a level 3 qualification or above. The remaining staff are all enrolled on and working towards qualification. All staff receive regular supervision and are positively engaged with the organisation's annual appraisal process. Staff benefit from a full and extensive training programme that gives them good opportunity to refresh and obtain new skills and knowledge, ensuring that they are up-to-date with practice developments and current legislation.

Parents and placing authorities are complimentary about the skill and level of dedication shown by staff in meeting young people's needs. There is confidence that staff are providing a good quality of care and helping young people to achieve good outcomes.

At the last inspection one requirement and one recommendation were made. The home has made the recommended improvement in ensuring that all staff have received sufficient training in first aid. However, the home has still not satisfactorily supplied Ofsted with any review of matters monitored as set out in schedule 6. Management were receptive to clarification offered during this inspection about the expected content of such a report and were confident that this would be addressed

without further delay.

The home is maintained to a high standard and is well resourced. Adequate quality assurance arrangements are in place to monitor the quality of care provided. The home continues to be regularly monitored by the temporary manager who completes monthly reviews of the provision in accordance with the schedule. The organisation has an arrangement in place for carrying out regular independent visits. However, there have been recent issues with the minimal content of some reports and the availability of others to both the home's temporary manager and Ofsted. Reports that had not been received by Ofsted were also not available in the home during this inspection. This results in a shortfall in the quality assurance programme that is designed to assist the organisation and manager evaluate the quality of the service provided by the home and act on any improvements identified. However the recent nature of this deficit does not highlight any decline in either the quality of care offered or safeguarding arrangements for young people placed at the home.

Young people's individual records are well organised, comprehensive and consistently detailed to provide clarity and guidance concerning their care. All records are securely stored preserving young people's confidentiality and privacy. There was one event identified that should have resulted in a notification to Ofsted in accordance with the schedule. This action had been omitted for no obvious reason; the detail recorded of the event did not produce any practice concerns.

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.