

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Paul Scott
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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 is operated by a private organisation and is registered to care for up to 4 young people. The home provides residential and respite care for young people with learning disabilities.

Overall effectiveness

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

This is a good home. Young people thrive and make good progress because of the excellent support provided to them. Care practice is highly personalised. Young people's needs are clearly identified and care plans are used by staff to positively address them.

Young people enjoy positive relationships with staff. Staff are familiar with young people's individual routines and offer a good continuity of care. Staff work with young people to maximise their individual potential. Communication difficulties are creatively overcome through the empowering use of visual supports which staff use to ensure young people's views are actively sought.

Young people are kept safe and made to feel safe. Robust systems and good care practice ensure the welfare and safety of young people is promoted at all times. Staff are well trained and have a good knowledge and understanding of young people's vulnerabilities enabling them to meet young people's complex needs, safely and effectively.

Good arrangements are in place to ensure the home is effectively managed until a permanent manager is appointed. Staff are provided with good support, regular supervision and training opportunities to equip them with the knowledge and skills they require to look after vulnerable young people.

The acting manager makes good use of monitoring systems to review the quality of care provided for young people. They understand the home's strengths and weaknesses and take action to rectify any identified weakness to promote the good operation of the home and enhance the quality of care provided for young people.

Some areas for attention are identified. These include improvements to the staffing rota, first aid training and staff induction.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- ensure staff rotas have time scheduled to ensure handovers are held (NMS17.6)
- ensure all staff have received sufficient training in first aid (NMS 6.7)
- ensure new staff undertake the Children's Workforce Development Council's induction standards, commencing within 7 days of starting their employment and being completed within 6 months. (NMS 18.3)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people benefit from well planned care which is highly personalised to their individual and specific needs. Staff work hard to ensure young people are provided with the right opportunities and support to achieve their potential. Young people have strong and trusting relationships with staff and as a result they feel valued and that staff accept them as individuals.

The arrangements made to promote the health needs of young people are very good. For example, staff encourage and support young people to eat a healthy and nutritional diet and take regular exercise. Extremely detailed and highly individualised health action plans ensure young people's health needs are safely met on a daily basis. This includes providing young people with the individual support they require to ensure their physical, emotional and psychological health needs are met..

Young people are making good progress relative to their age, level of understanding and individual ability . The promotion of young people's education is a shared responsibility between the home, school and young people's families. Staff work very closely with school staff to ensure young people are supported to regularly attend school and achieve educational success. For example, care staff directly support young people in school, enabling them to receive continuity and consistent support.

Contact is supported so that young people can sustain their relationships with their families. Good links with parents ensure arrangements for contact are well planned. Young people and their families are given the practical and emotional support they need to ensure contact is a positive experience.

Young people are actively supported to develop their independent living skills. Good opportunities are provided for young people to develop new skills, with good support and encouragement from staff. This enables young people to develop their self confidence to complete daily tasks safely and independently.

Social inclusion is given a high priority. Young people benefit from having access to the same services as their peers, to promote their participation and inclusion in the community. This enhances their self worth and self esteem.

Quality of care

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

Young people are cared for by a committed and dedicated staff team who place young people's needs at the very centre of their work. Staff have an excellent understanding of young people's individual needs and are very good at recognising the signs, behaviour and symptoms of anxiety or concern. This enables staff to take action to support young people in times of need.

Good systems are in place to ensure young people and their families know how to express their concerns and that any matters arising are addressed quickly and fairly. Relationships between young people and staff are genuinely warm and friendly. Staff have a very good knowledge of the young people in their care and are fully committed to enabling them to overcome the difficulties they may face to lead a happy and fulfilling life.

Staff have devised a number of effective communication tools to overcome the barriers to communication and enable young people to express their views and opinions. This means young people are supported well to express themselves positively and contribute to the running of the home.

Staff plan young people's care very well. Placement plans are extremely detailed and provide a comprehensive picture of young people's individual needs and the support they require. Staff consistently put these plans into practice, recognising young people as individuals with different backgrounds, interests and needs. This means young people receive an individualised service designed to meet their personal needs and identity, disability and future plans.

Young people benefit from living in healthy environment that actively promotes their physical, emotional and psychological well-being. Not all staff have completed first aid training however which compromises young people's health and well-being. The home uses a number of specialist resources to ensure that young people receive the right support to meet their individual health needs

Young people get effective support to help them to attend school regularly and achieve their potential, relative to their individual abilities and skills. They are encouraged and helped to positively plan their recreation time both inside and outside of the home. For example, young people are regularly taken shopping or for meals at local restaurants enabling them to have the same experiences as their peers.

The location of the home ensures that young people have access to local places of interest. The homes is purposely designed to cater for young people's complex needs including needs arising from disabilities. The house is well decorated and furnished to a good standard. Each young person has their own bedroom that they are encouraged to personalise their rooms to their own taste.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people live in a safe environment where they are effectively protected from harm. For example, staff are trained in safeguarding and know how to recognise, respond and report suspected abuse. Young people's safety is given the highest priority. They are protected by comprehensive and detailed risk management plans that staff consistently put into practice to promote their safety and well-being.

The home has very effective procedures for monitoring young people. High staffing ratios ensure young people receive the supervision and support they need to keep them safe. There are no issues of young people going missing as young people's whereabouts are closely supervised and known at all times. Young people are effectively protected from bullying, intimidation and harassment which promotes their welfare and safety.

There is a calm and caring approach towards behaviour management which means young people's challenging behaviour is sensitively and effectively managed. This is because all staff are appropriately trained in behaviour management. Staff have used physical restraint on a number of occasions. Where restraint has been used, it has been used professionally to prevent young people from causing harm to themselves or others.

The recruitment and selection of people working at the home is very thorough which ensures young people are protected. Recruitment and vetting procedures are followed to ensure that staff employed have the right skills and are suitable and safe to work with vulnerable young people.

The home provides young people with a safe place to live. They are protected by a good range of health and safety procedures, risk assessments and routine checks. Each young person has a detailed fire evacuation plan. Young people and staff are involved in fire drills every three months to ensure they know how to evacuate the building in the event of a fire.

Leadership and management

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

The home currently has no Registered Manager however suitable arrangements are in place to manage the home. The home has been efficiently and effectively managed and has continued to provide a good quality of care for young people.

All staff demonstrate a strong commitment to delivering a high standard of quality care that places the needs of the individual at the centre of their work. This has resulted in young people making good progress in many aspects of their lives, including contact with their family, managing their own behaviour and academic progress.

The operation of the home is well monitored which improves the quality of care provided for young people. The home can demonstrate its capacity for continued improvement, based upon on it's good track record, performance and continued compliance with standards and regulations. The home has a very detailed written development plan in place, which is used effectively to identify areas for potential development for the benefit of young people.

All requirements and the majority of recommendations made at the previous inspection have been positively addressed. This has improved outcomes for young people across a range of issues. For example, staffing levels have increased, parents are better informed about complaints procedures and medication is managed more effectively. Two good practice recommendations regarding the Statement of Purpose and facilities within the home have also been met. However, there is still no scheduled time for staff handovers so this recommendation is raised again.

Young people benefit from the home's strong commitment towards staff training and development. There are good opportunities for all staff, to further develop their knowledge and skills through good quality training. Staff receive frequent supervision and support of a high quality to ensure they have the opportunity to develop their practice to best meet young people's needs. However, new staff do not undertake the Children's Workforce Development Council's induction standards.

Young people's files and individual records are stored confidentially and securely. Records are comprehensive and regularly updated ensuring care planning is individualised and relevant to young peoples needs.

Equality and diversity practice is **good**.