

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Robert Curr / Angela Whiteley
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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

The home, run by a local authority provides up to 10 placements for young people aged between 4 and 17 years with complex needs arising from profound and multiple learning disabilities, autism and other associated health needs. The home provides a short breaks service.

Overall effectiveness

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

The home provides well-planned care which means that the outcomes for young people are good. Young people enjoy staying at the home and receive good support from a very committed and dedicated staff team. The staff team have a wealth of experience to care and support young people with learning and physical disabilities. As a result young people are making good progress and are thriving within a warm, supportive and nurturing environment. Young people's needs are central to the operation of the home. Good safeguarding practices promote the safety and welfare of young people who feel safe and comfortable within the home. There is a strong emphasis on young people developing socially and emotionally.

There are areas to improve: the management of the setting is not ensuring that the best use is made of the range of monitoring activities; audible alarms used to aid safety have not been agreed by placing authorities and the young people's guide to the service does not contain all the required elements.

Areas for improvementStatutory 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
22 (2001)	ensure that the use of any electronic monitoring is provided for in individual placement plans and consent is agreed with each young persons parents and placing authority (Regulation 22 (1) (a-d))	30/11/2011
33 (2001)	interview with their consent and in private, such of the children accommodated there, their parents and relatives, as appears necessary in order to form an opinion of the standard of care provided in the home. (Regulation 33 (4) (a))	30/11/2011

Recommendations

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

- review the children's guide to include the contact details of young peoples Independent Reviewing Officer, the Children's Rights Director and Ofsted. (NMS 13.5)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people benefit from individual support which helps them to develop a positive view of themselves. Staff actively encourage and assist young people to develop their own identity whilst recognising the identities of others. Respect for others is well promoted. Staff demonstrate a very strong commitment in supporting the needs of young people with significant progress achieved. This is confirmed by parents. The home's expectations, rules and routines provide young people with an environment that focuses on positive outcomes.

Although, parents have full responsibility for their child's health, the staff ensure young people's good health is effectively supported whilst on their short break. The service accurately identifies individual's conditions and health needs. This is given a high priority; staff ensure they have up-to-date information by ensuring frequent contact with parents and the relevant health professionals. All staff have access to detailed health records. The young people's health is closely monitored during their short break, enabling staff to inform parents and medical professionals of health progress.

Young people are actively supported to achieve their educational ambitions. All young people visiting the service benefit from attending school on a full-time basis which assists in them making good progress in their learning. Contact between the home and school is regular and effective. This enables the staff to support young people successfully with personal targets where appropriate.

The home is now fully integrated within the community with links being established with various organisations within the town. Young people are fully involved in various fundraising events to benefit worldwide communities and various charities. This is ensuring that young people actively make a positive contribution to their home and the wider community.

Young people accessing this service still live at home with their parents or carers. Therefore, they have access to those people that are important to them the majority of the time. A young person and a parent said they have telephone contact with their loved ones during their stay at the home.

Young people have broad-ranging differences and abilities to learn life skills. The staff proactively supports each young person to take part in the daily living tasks appropriate to their ability and understanding. This means that young people are fully supported to develop independent living skills as part of their transition to adulthood services.

Quality of care

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

Young people benefit from staying in an environment where nurturing and caring relationships exist between themselves and staff. Young people spoke extremely positively about the care and support provided to them and their experience of staying at the home. The dedicated staff team undertake their duties in a supportive and professional manner. Young people are extremely relaxed and at ease in their company and within their environment. Young people comment they feel safe and comfortable living at the home.

Young people are supported to eat a healthy, varied and balanced diet. They are fully consulted in the menu planning process. Young people commented extremely positively about the quality and quantity of meals provided.

Young people make clear choices about their short stay in the home. There is a newly adopted format of care planning that is proving to be beneficial for young people as they feel that their views are listened to. Young people also make their views known on a daily basis and through their link worker. Clear policies and procedures are well established for dealing with complaints. Young people understand how to complain and are fully supported to raise any concerns openly.

Young people are cared for as outlined in their placement plans. These provide staff with clear guidance on how to effectively meet young people's day-to-day needs. Young people are fully involved and contribute to the production of their placement plans.

Young people live in an environment where their health care needs are fully met, some of which are very complex. Parents and carers take the lead for health care arrangements, although staff closely liaise with all appropriate support services for each young person.

Young people confirm that they are well-cared for when they are ill. Specialist intervention is provided to those young people who require specific input. Young people's health care histories and needs are well documented. Young people are fully supported to access a range of information, advice and support on health care issues. Good systems are established for the receipt and safe storage of medication. A very detailed and robust consistent recording system for the recording of medication administered is in place.

Staff actively support and encourage young people to participate in a range of purposeful and enjoyable activities. Personal interests are also fully supported and accessed. Various trips are also organised to enhance the experiences of young people. This supports young people in developing their confidence.

Young people live in a home which is maintained to an excellent standard. It is clean, tidy and very comfortable. It is also extremely well-furnished and in good decorative order. Young people take a great pride in their new home. Young people are provided with excellent communal facilities to meet their individual and collective needs. They are provided with their own bedrooms, which are personalised to their own tastes.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people feel safe and comfortable at the home. They feel that they can talk openly to staff who will listen to their worries and concerns and help them to resolve them. Staff receive regular training which focuses on the protection of young people. They are able to respond to any allegations or suspicions of harm and maintain an open and supportive dialogue with young people and their parents and carers.

Effective measures are taken to protect young people from bullying and intimidation. Young people do not currently see bullying as an area of concern. Young people say that staff take positive action to deal with any incidents if other young people are 'acting bossy'.

Young people are assisted to develop positive behaviour through the use of encouragement, reinforcement and positive behaviour. A variety of risk assessments are in place. These provide staff with clear strategies for managing young people's behaviour. Achievements and positive behaviour is actively celebrated and well documented. Sanctions and restraints are only used where absolutely necessary and detailed records are maintained for these methods of control. All staff are trained in the use of physical intervention and a debriefing session is always provided to young people where physical restraint is used. This aids in ensuring that staff are offering appropriate responses to challenging behaviour. However there are no signed agreements or specific policy in relation to electronic surveillance measures. This compromises young people's right to privacy.

Effective staff recruitment practices ensure the protection of young people. New staff and volunteers are suitably vetted and do not commence employment in the home until all the relevant checks have been carried out. Health and safety policy and practice guidelines are well established to ensure that staff and young people are appropriately safeguarded. Young people and staff regularly practise fire evacuation procedures and the various health and fire safety records are accurate and up-to-date.

Leadership and management

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

Young people benefit from staying at a home which is well managed. All young people and parents speak extremely positively about the care and support they receive from the manager and staff.

The Statement of Purpose outlines the aims and objectives of the home and this is translated into practice. It also describes the level of service young people can expect to receive and how they will be cared for. The young people were fully involved in the production of their welcome booklet which provides prospective young people with information they need to know about the home. However, the guide does not contain some matters that are important to young people, such as how to contact their Independent Reviewing Officer, the Children's Rights Director and Ofsted.

Young people benefit from effective management. The organisation ensures that the care and welfare of young people is continually monitored through unannounced monthly visits. Although reports outline any actions needed to improve the outcomes for young people, there is no clear evidence that young people are consulted as part of these visits.

The manager also ensures that monthly monitoring reports are completed as part of the quality of care review process. Surveys are also undertaken to obtain the views of young people, their parents and placing authorities. However, this is not forming part of the home's self evaluation process to monitor and improve the ongoing care provided to young people.

Young people are looked after by a staff team who are themselves properly managed and supported in safeguarding and promoting young people's welfare. For example, formal, individual staff supervision is being provided at suitable intervals to ensure that the performance of staff is regularly monitored. Regular staff meetings are also held to ensure that staff are kept up-to-date regarding all matters relating to young people and the running of the home. High staffing levels are maintained throughout the day and night which meets the individual and collective needs of young people.

Young people are looked after by a staff team who are trained and competent to meet their needs. The organisation is proactive in ensuring that all of the staff team hold a suitable qualification. All staff are provided with the opportunity to develop their knowledge, expertise and competence through attending appropriate training. This includes both mandatory and more specialist training. Staff commented extremely positively about the training opportunities available to them.

Young people's records are complete and are stored securely. Their placement plans reflect their individual histories and needs. This ensures young people are cared for effectively. All significant events relating to the protection of young people are consistently notified to the appropriate parties. The home ensures that parents and carers are kept regularly informed of the progress and well-being of young people.

This was confirmed by parents and various professionals.

Equality and diversity practice is **good**.