

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Russell Shackford
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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 outcome for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and relevant National Minimum Standards for the establishment.

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 service is a children's home. The home is registered to provide a service for up to six children and young people, male or female between the ages of five and 17 years old, who have a learning disability and may also have a physical disability.

The home offers a short term respite service only, no one is accommodated on a long term basis and one of the six places is used only for emergency respite. The home sometimes offers occasional day care either planned or in emergencies.

The service is close to the local town centre. Local shops and public transport are easily accessible. There is a large car park for visitors, which is shared with other council premises.

The home is a single storey building with wheelchair access. There is one double and four single bedrooms, a bathroom, shower room, lounge, dining area, kitchen and playroom. Outside is an enclosed garden that has been developed into a play area and there is a sensory garden.

Summary

This was a key inspection to check on all key standards and related regulations under the Every Child Matters outcome groups for young people.

This is a good service with some outstanding features. Young people are encouraged to eat healthily and their good health is very well promoted. Good child protection procedures and practice, safeguards the welfare of the young people. Education and leisure needs are very well met and the home works closely with parents and other services, to meet the range of young people's needs. Care planning is good and placement plans are very well recorded and reviewed. Choice, communication and participation is outstanding. Staff are sufficient in number and they are trained, experienced and competent. The home is well managed and there is satisfactory monitoring of the standard of care provided in the home. The promotion of equality and diversity is good. There are good approaches to promoting equality and diversity detailed in all outcome areas. Examples highlighted include choice, communication, cultural preferences, diet, participation and personalised targets.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

There were no actions or recommendations made at the last inspection.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Young people are given choices about their food. The use of pictures and each young person's preferred communication method ensure that as far as possible all young people are able to make food choices. The food served is both healthy and nutritious. Staff encourage young people to eat healthy foods and snacks. This is supported by the use of a breakfast and snack menu which has been produced by the staff team. The cooks at the home are trained in nutrition and special diet matters. The staff have a good understanding of food hygiene and food issues.

that may arise out of diversity. Staff and cooks work collaboratively to produce menus that reflect young peoples individuality. They demonstrate a good understanding of each young persons preferences which helps to ensure that young people enjoy the food served. Individualised menu cards help to ensure that dietary, cultural and religious preferences are adhered to. This is particularly well managed. Young people are involved in shopping, baking and preparing meals. They have access to a well equipped kitchen, where they can prepare drinks and snacks for themselves. Baking and snack making are often used as an entertaining way of supporting a healthy diet. Therefore, young people enjoy healthy, nutritious meals that meets their dietary needs. They also have opportunities to plan, shop for and to prepare meals.

Health promotion is a high priority at the home. Healthcare records are up to date and accurate, enabling staff to change their ways of working or to inform health professionals and parents of the children's health progress. Specialist health workers are involved where appropriate. There is detailed written guidance for staff on a wide range of young people's health and medical matters, to make sure that they understand about young people's health and what their responsibilities are. The home has links with a wide variety of specialist health services and there is much evidence of these being used, to meet individual young people's needs. Individual learning opportunities, reflecting care plan targets around health are planned and supervised on a regular basis. The staff plan, develop and deliver a variety of events that encourages individual interests, play and healthy activities. Examples highlighted include walks, cycling, trampoline and football club. Recently, the young people helped to raise money to buy a new sensory equipment unit. This is a very popular addition to the facilities at the home, with stimulating music and dance sessions being enjoyed. Young people's involvement is supported by staff who explore their individual choices, likes and dislikes. The staff have established very good links and relationships with community based activity providers. Therefore, young people's health needs are identified and services are provided to meet them, and their good health is very well promoted. This is a notable area of strength.

Staff are trained in medication matters to enable them to safely store, administer and record the medication that they are responsible for. Medication is securely stored and records are up to date and accurate.

All staff have received training to enable them to provide first aid if necessary. Staff have also received specialist training to meet a range of individual young peoples health and medical needs. Therefore, young people's health needs are met and their welfare is safeguarded by the home's policies and procedures for administering medicines and providing treatment.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Facilitating privacy for the young people is done sensitively and safely. Young people have access to a private telephone. Details about young people's care is recorded and stored appropriately, to maintain appropriate levels of confidentiality.

All staff have received training on complaints, to ensure that they know what to do if a person complains about the service. The young people know how to make a complaint, because the staff have explained what to do and there is information in the young people's guide about how to complain. The staff and independent visitors act as advocates for some of the young people. The complaints records contain the required details. Therefore, complaints are satisfactorily handled.

The provider has a good safeguarding procedure for staff to follow, in the event of any allegation or suspicion of abuse. The manager and staff have received child protection training at an enhanced level, to cover the needs of children with a learning disability. Staff demonstrate good knowledge and understanding of the safeguarding procedures, to promote and protect the young people's safety.

Any significant events at the home are notified to the relevant authorities.

The behaviour management policy promotes the use of praise, encouragement and de-escalation of behaviours. The policy is constructive and reflects the age, understanding and individual needs of the young people concerned. Personalised behaviour management techniques are recorded and implemented. Physical restraint is occasionally used to manage behaviour where no other alternative exists. Staff are trained in the provider's policy and authorised techniques. The staff have access to training which enables them to manage specific behaviours in a safe manner. The physical restraint records contain the required details.

Written risk assessments are recorded, to enable staff to know what action to take, to minimise the risk to each young person during their known and likely activities. These are clearly written and they are reviewed regularly.

All staff and young people have been involved in regular fire drills. All staff working at the home have received up to date fire safety training, to enable them to minimise the risks to young people in the event of a fire at the home. Evacuation procedures are displayed in different formats to enhance fire safety practices. The fire safety check records are up to date and accurate. Therefore, young people's physical safety from fire in the home is adequately protected.

All staff have been appropriately recruited and they have undergone satisfactory Criminal Records Bureau checks, to ensure that they are suitable to work with young people.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

The young people receive very good personalised support, appropriate to their needs. The staff appreciate that the individual young people have a range of needs arising from diversity. All staff have received training around equality and diversity. The staff make a lot of effort to ensure that young people are enabled to make choices about their care by using individualised communication methods. The records contain details of individual support services involved in the health, care and education of young people. The home has links with a wide range of helping agencies and the provider commissions services and resources, to fit the young people's needs. Young people are supported at the home to achieve their personal targets. There is very good evidence of staff working in partnership with schools, parents and other agencies, to establish consistency of care and education. This is a notable area of outstanding strength.

Education is a very high priority and it is vigorously promoted. Staff encourage and support good school attendance. Home and school books are used to aid communication and consistency. Education plans detail individual young people's targets and progress is very well evidenced. There is space, resources and facilities at the home, to enable the completion of homework or personal target learning opportunities. A computer is available for the young people to use for

educational purposes. Therefore, the education of young people is actively promoted, as valuable in itself and as part of their preparation for adulthood.

Staff plan, develop and deliver a variety of participation events that supports individual interests, play and activities. Examples highlighted include Visual Arts Centre, musical instrument playing, cooking, sensory experiences, trampoline club, bowling, dance, meals out, shopping, youth club, football club and art shows. There is also a good range of books, DVDs and games available for learning and entertainment. Themed events and activities are used to promote diversity. The young people are particularly proud to have had a piece of their collectively done sensory springtime collage chosen, for a national exhibition called 'Flourish'. Recently the young people visited a gallery in London to see the picture displayed and went on to see a production of Peter Pan. Young people's involvement in activities is supported by staff who explore their individual choices, likes and dislikes. The staff have established very good links and relationships with community based activity providers. Therefore, young people are able to pursue their particular interests, develop confidence in their skills and they are supported and encouraged by staff, to engage in leisure activities. This is a notable area of outstanding strength.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

The home's referral system enables the manager to fully assess the needs of the young people concerned and to take into account the likely effects of their admission, upon the existing group of residents. Admissions to the home are planned and the child or young person and their family where appropriate, are involved in that planning. Young people may visit the home before they move in. Therefore, young people are able to move into the home in a planned and sensitive manner.

There are good quality placement plans recorded which help to ensure good outcomes for the young people. These are supported by the use of behaviour management plans, target sheets, communication plans, daily routines, personal care guidelines, contact plans and leisure plans. The plans are comprehensively written and staff confirm that they know what action is required of them to meet the needs of the young people. The daily diary records reflect the content of the placement plans and show the actions taken by the staff, to meet the identified needs of the young people. Key workers monitor the care plans and produce monthly summaries of progress. Therefore, young people have their needs assessed effectively and comprehensively and written placement plans outline how these needs will be met and are implemented. There is a system for reviewing the placement plans of the children and young people at the home. This system includes internal reviews and participation in the statutory reviews. Statutory case reviews have taken place within the required timescales. This ensures that the young people's needs and development are reviewed regularly, in the light of their care and progress at the home. The planning and reviewing procedures and practice are a notable area of outstanding strength.

Young people's contact is promoted and facilitated. Staff confirm that young people can keep in touch with people that are important to them and that they can have family come to visit them.

Staff describe ways in which young people are encouraged to make decisions about their lives and influence the way that the home is run. This includes key worker sessions, visits from young people's rights and advocacy services and young people's meetings. Young people have been

involved in anti-bullying training, recruitment panels and youth debates. An annual disco event is chosen and organised by the young people.

No child is assumed to be unable to communicate their views. The staff make a lot of effort to ensure that young people are enabled to make choices about their care by using individualised communication methods. Regular team meetings are held which concentrate solely on improving staff's communication skills. Young people's participation is very well supported by staff who explore their individual choices, likes and dislikes. Therefore young people's views are sought and acted upon. This is a notable area of outstanding strength.

The manager makes every effort to achieve continuity of staffing, such that young people's attachments are not overly disrupted.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Children are taught day to day life skills, according to their level of maturity and understanding. The children learn skills through taking part in the tasks of running the home, such as shopping, cooking, handling money and completing learning opportunities in line with their personal targets, such as making drinks or snacks. They are also given guidance and support with social skills, laundry, table setting and clearing. Transition plans are recorded and implemented. This process is very well supported by staff who often accompany young people and parents, to see adult services during the transition period. Staff describe the process as good. Therefore, young people receive care which helps to prepare them for adulthood.

There is a good maintenance and repair programme for the building, furniture and equipment and any damage is repaired promptly. The interior and exterior of the home are maintained in a good state of structural and decorative repair. The gardens are well maintained and safe. The home is kept clean and there are homely touches throughout.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

An up to date statement of purpose is available, to inform professionals and members of the public about how care is provided at the home. There is a very good children's guide to the statement. It is available in a variety of formats. Before admission, the staff provide as much information as they can about the home to young people, so that they know what to expect if they come to stay there.

There is a consistent staff team, which has a broad range of skills and experience among its members. The young people benefit from being looked after by a staff team that is both cohesive and adaptable. New members of staff receive good quality induction training before commencing work with the young people. Staff refer to written guidance frequently during discussion and give examples of how it is implemented in practice. Staff supervision is good.

All staff are trained in a wide variety of safety and childcare subjects. An ongoing programme of refresher training is provided in a range of subjects, to enhance the staff's competency to meet the needs of the young people. The target of 80% of staff having achieved National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) at level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People has been met. Staff highlight access to diverse training at all levels as a particular strength of the

employing organisation. Therefore, the young people are receiving care from sufficient, competent staff that are experienced and qualified to meet their needs.

The provider undertakes monthly, unannounced monitoring visits to the home. This is to ensure that the care of children can be adapted, in the light of information about how the home is operating. Action points are identified to be followed up by the manager. The manager has a system established and maintained, intended for improving the quality of care provided in the home. However, the format of the system used to monitor the required matters is disparate and therefore it needs to be reviewed in order to make it clear what is checked and what the outcomes of the checks are.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. There are good approaches to promoting equality and diversity detailed in all outcome areas. Examples highlighted include choice, communication, cultural preferences, diet, participation and personalised targets.

What must be done to secure future improvement?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions, which must be taken so that the registered person meets the Care Standards Act 2000, The Childrens Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

Standard	Action	Due date
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Recommendations

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

- review the format of the system used to monitor the matters detailed in schedule 6 in order to make it clear what is checked and what the outcomes of the checks are (NMS 33)