

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Bill Drumm
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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

The children's home provides short break care for up to six young people of either sex aged from eight years to 17 years of age with physical or learning disabilities. Young people on occasions can stay at the home beyond the age of 18 year in line with their care planning.

The home is a large detached property standing in its own spacious grounds. It is situated a short distance from a range of local amenities. Young people have access to an outdoor play area, shared lounge, study area and dining room. There is a new sound and light room. Each young person has their own bedroom and access to bathrooms with a range of additional adaptations to ensure that their individual needs can be met.

Summary

This was an unannounced inspection of the home that looked at all key standards and examined all outcome areas, in addition, to recommendations made at the previous inspection. All outcome areas were judged as good.

Overall the home provides a good service to all the young people who receive respite care and has strengths in all outcome areas. Three good practice recommendations have been made as a result of this inspection. Children's needs are comprehensively assessed prior to admission and an individual plan is developed to meet their needs. Members of the staff team are knowledgeable, skilled and committed to delivering a high quality service to children. Monitoring processes are thorough and ensure high standards are maintained, with any shortfalls addressed quickly to improve provision to children. There are clear implemented systems and procedures for keeping children safe, for their health and welfare to be promoted and their needs to be met. Young people, their parents and placing social workers are regularly consulted about what the home does and how high standards and quality can be both maintained and improved.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last inspection the manager of the home has ensured that the parents of all young people who stay at the home have given written permission for the administration of first aid. Fire drill records have also been updated to record comments about the execution of drills and any deficiencies in the process. Written records also show the actions taken to remedy any deficiencies. A system has been introduced whereby the home's manager seeks the views of placing social workers on the care of young people and the overall operation of the home.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Nutritious meals are provided and, where they are able, young people help in the planning of menus and in the purchase of food items. Some young people living at the home have specialist healthcare needs for which they need an individual, specialised diet. Members of staff work in close partnership with dieticians and other healthcare professionals to ensure young people remain well nourished, fit and healthy. Those young people who are old enough are able to learn skills associated with daily living by using equipment within a separate training facility

attached to the building. In addition, regular exercise and keeping fit are actively promoted. Young people living at the home enjoy an extremely healthy and well-balanced diet and are encouraged to take regular exercise.

The healthcare needs of young people are promoted and members of staff provide exceptional levels of care. Some of the young people living at the home have complex healthcare needs. Each young person has a comprehensive healthcare plan, which identifies their specific healthcare needs and what help they may require. Members of staff have developed excellent working relationships with healthcare professionals to ensure that each young person receives a consistently high standard of healthcare. This helps young people to stay fit and healthy.

Young people living at the home are not fully protected by the home's medication administration systems. All members of staff have attended a suitable course in first aid and in the safe handling and administration of medication. The home's manager has introduced a system to ensure that the parents of all young people living at the home have given their written consent to the administration of first aid, should it be needed. No individual young person's medication is routinely retained within the home. Written records inspected showed that they had been completed comprehensively and accurately, and members of staff sign their name to show that medication has been dispensed. The home also has a refrigerator for the cold storage of certain medicines. The home's policies and procedures do not provide sufficient guidance for members of staff with regard to for the safe handling and administration of all medication used within the home, including controlled drugs. Consistent, good practice may not be achieved and young people could be at risk.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Young people are able to keep in touch with their families and personal information is stored securely. Young people living at the home are treated with warmth, dignity and respect. There are sufficient bathrooms, showers and toilets to meet the needs of the young people accommodated. Personal care needs are dealt with in both a sensitive and discreet manner. Each young person has their own bedroom and they are enabled and supported, where possible, to attend to their own personal care needs.

There are policies and procedures in place for dealing with complaints in an effective and timely manner. There have been no complaints made since the last inspection. A high number of compliments have been received from satisfied parents. Young people living at the home have access to complaints information, which is written in a style that they are better able to understand. Young people are actively encouraged and supported to make their needs known. All members of staff working at the home have received training in the complaints process.

Young people living at the home are protected from exploitation and abuse. A copy of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) procedures are available in the home and the home has policies and procedures in place relating to child protection. There have been no child protection referrals made since the last inspection. All members of staff working at the home have undertaken formal training in child protection and regular update training is available. Young people living at the home are kept safe and protected from potential abuse.

The home has policies and procedures with regard to countering bullying and young people are fully protected from being targeted by bullies. The young people's guide to the home is

written in a clear format and makes full use of pictures and graphics to aid understanding. All members of staff working at the home have received training in countering bullying and there have been no recorded incidents of bullying since the last inspection. The home's manager has carried out a countering bullying risk assessments of the times, places and circumstances when bullying might occur. This risk assessment is regularly updated and reviewed. These measures help to ensure young people are protected from bullying.

The home has policies and procedures in place with regard to what action staff should take if a young person is absent without authority. There have been no occasions since the last inspection when a young person has been absent without authority. Members of staff provide consistently high levels of supervision and quality care to young people to help keep them safe.

The home has policies and procedures in place, relating to the safe holding or restraint of young people, and members of staff have received appropriate training. Training is regularly reviewed and kept up to date. Restraint records are retained within a separate bound and numbered book used specifically for that purpose. The manager and members of staff promote socially acceptable behaviour through encouragement and rewards. The home also has policies and procedures in place relating to the sanctions that can be used to help young people improve their behaviour. Members of staff prefer to use less punitive measures to help young people change their behaviour, such as encouragement, support and the use of diversionary techniques. As a result sanctions for unacceptable behaviour are rarely used.

Young people are protected from fire and other hazards within the home. Written records of all fire drills carried out also record comments about the execution of the fire drill, any deficiencies are noted and subsequent actions taken to remedy. There are robust systems in place to ensure that young people, members of staff and visitors to the home are kept safe and free from hazards with health and safety risk assessments carried out at regular intervals.

The home has a very stable, consistent and committed staff team. There are good recruitment and selection processes in place and safety checks are carried out to ensure the suitability of each applicant. Each member of staff has provided references from previous employers or those that know them. This helps to ensure young people are well looked after, kept safe and free from harm.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people living at the home receive high levels of individual support when they need it. Each young person has their own link worker and meetings between them take place at frequent intervals. Link workers review each young person's stay at the home following each visit, in order to ensure essential information is recorded and, where necessary, services adapted to meet their needs at future visits. Link workers remain in regular contact with each young person's parents. This helps to ensure that the changing needs of young people are quickly highlighted and services adapted to meet those needs.

All young people living at the home attend school. The manager and staff at the home, offer daily practical support and ongoing encouragement to young people to help ensure their regular attendance at school. Practical help with developing skills for daily living is provided to all young people living at the home. In addition, young people are encouraged and supported

with their hobbies and interests. Young people are encouraged and assisted to develop their own community presence. These measures help to prepare young people for adulthood.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Young people living at the home are appropriately placed. Each young person has a thorough and detailed placement plan, which outlines what their exact needs are and how they will be met. The admissions process is needs-led and specific to each young person. Staff members talk regularly with young people, to discuss issues affecting their lives, to make them feel at ease and to see if they are happy living there. Regular contact takes place between members of staff at the home and the parents of young people living there. This helps to ensure that the placement remains appropriate.

The needs of young people are continually reviewed. Summary reports are written following each young person's stay at the home and liaison regularly takes place with parents to ensure essential information is shared. The manager and members of staff regularly attend review meetings with partner agencies, changing needs are quickly highlighted and appropriate action is swiftly taken.

The service provided at the home is a short break service and young people continue to live at home with parents. Contact between staff at the home and parents is both positive and essential in order to meet the needs of individual young people. Members of staff are in frequent contact with parents to ensure that young people have a very positive experience from staying at the home.

The home has a comprehensive admissions policy and procedure, this includes arrangements for children to visit the home before a placement is agreed and their wishes and feelings will be discussed. The admissions process to the home is very thorough, it is needs led and it remains flexible, to meet the diverse needs of all the young people who live there.

Meetings with young people take place at regular intervals. Records examined show that these meetings actively seek the opinion of each young person. The use of plain English in this manner is good. Records show that the home listens to the opinions of all young people and their parents, about what the home does well and what can be improved. The home's manager has recently introduced a system that actively seeks the opinions of placing authority social workers on the care of young people and the overall operation of the home. These measures help to ensure the continued development of the home and ongoing improvements in the care of young people who live there.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

The manager and members of staff work hard to encourage and support young people to take responsibility for their actions, to develop socially acceptable behaviour and to develop adult responsibilities. Each young person is encouraged and supported, within their capabilities, to learn independence skills and activities for daily living. Those young people who are old enough, do not all have up-to-date transition plans to aid their transition from the home and children's services into adult services. Young people may not, therefore, be fully supported for their transition into adult services.

The home is adapted and equipped to meet the needs of young people with a disability. Young people enjoy homely accommodation that is decorated, furnished and maintained to an extremely high standard. The home's grounds have been developed to provide a safe and secure place where all young people can play and enjoy themselves. Ancillary staff employed within the home work hard to keep it clean, tidy and very pleasant.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The promotion of equality and diversity is very good. All members of staff support and enable young people to participate in community based activities on an equal basis and to develop their own individual identity. The Statement of Purpose accurately describes what services young people can expect from living there. The staff profile accurately reflects the experience and high level of skill and competency staff have developed in caring for young people with a disability. However, the Statement of Purpose does not describe or explain the use of electronic surveillance equipment used within the home.

Young people are looked after by members of staff who are very well supported and properly managed. All members of staff, including those who work flexible hours, receive regular formal supervision. The manager is also available to talk with members of staff should they need to do so. Staff meetings are held regularly and written records of all decisions made in these meetings are retained.

Young people receive the care and services they need from skilled and competent staff. Nearly all residential members of staff are trained to a minimum National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) at level 3 in caring for children and young people. There are clear arrangements in place for members of staff to deputise in the absence of the manager. Staff rotas have designated handover periods built into them.

Staff are sufficient in number, experience and qualification, to meet the diverse needs of the young people living at the home. No agency staff are employed to work in the home.

Young people are looked after by staff who are well trained and fully competent to meet their needs. Training is provided at frequent intervals to ensure staff have the necessary skills, confidence and ability, to meet the diverse and changing needs of the young people living at the home. A record of all training received by members of staff is maintained within the home.

The care of young people living at the home is monitored regularly. A system is in place to ensure performance is monitored and any patterns or issues requiring action are quickly highlighted. The opinion of the young people themselves, their parents and placing social workers is actively sought in order to continue to improve and develop the service provided at the home.

Written records are retained within the home following each young person's stay there. Records record the development and progress of each young person as well as any difficulties they may have experienced. Written records are kept safe and secure within a lockable cabinet.

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 home's procedures for the safe handling and administration of medication (NMS 13)
- ensure that each young person who is old enough, has a comprehensive plan in place to enable a successful transition into adulthood (NMS 6.1)
- review the home's statement of purpose to include a description of any electronic surveillance used within the home. (NMS 1)