

Inspection report for children's home

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<b>Inspection date</b>	3 August 2010
<b>Inspector</b>	Brian Mcquoid
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<b>Date of last inspection</b>	21 January 2010
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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 service is a respite unit that offers short breaks for up to 12 children and young people with severe learning difficulties that may include physical disabilities and additional health problems. It is run by a registered charity which provides support and information services to children, young people and their carers throughout the area. The service is available to children and young people, of both sexes, aged between two years and 17 years. The unit consists of two residential areas located within a modern purpose-built complex that also contains a school and the offices of the charity. All those using the service are subject to a full pre-admission assessment aimed at identifying their care needs. This information is then used to determine if the service is able to meet their specific needs.

### **Summary**

The unit continues to care extremely well for young people who have varied and complex needs. The unit is well managed, is very child centred, and has a caring and committed staff group who are a close knit and supportive team. They are provided with training which equips them well to meet the needs of young people extremely effectively. Young people enjoy being at the unit, they do things they like doing and have positive relationships with the staff providing care for them. They are provided with a safe and secure environment and staff ensure they are suitably protected from harm at all times. Individualised care of a very good standard is provided within a unit that is very well stocked with specialist facilities and equipment.

The unit provides accommodation of a high standard which is very well maintained and which is made as homely as possible. There are established links with external agencies which benefit young people.

The two actions arising from this inspection relate to young people needing to have moving on plans as part of their care plans, and for all care plans to provide evidence of having been reviewed regularly.

The inspection was carried out on an unannounced basis and the unit was inspected against all of the key National Minimum Standards for children's homes.

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 arising from the previous report.

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

There is good provision for meeting the varied dietary requirements of young people. The cook has a very good awareness of young people's individual dietary needs and plans menus according to who is staying at any one time. Young people are encouraged to eat a healthy diet and to try different foods. Fresh produce is used as much as possible and fresh fruit is available at all times. There is a choice provided at main mealtimes and special dietary needs associated with both allergies, and religious and cultural needs are well met. Young people are able to access

the kitchen areas to prepare snacks and drinks, or packed lunches when required. Staff are trained in food handling and hygiene and provide support at mealtimes for those young people who need it. Recent hot weather has seen young people frequently enjoy meals in a shaded area of the unit's garden.

There is good provision for identifying and addressing the health needs of young people accessing the unit. Parents retain primary responsibility for meeting young people's routine health needs; however there are a significant number of young people with varied and complex health conditions. Thorough assessments ensure all health related information is obtained prior to a young person visiting the unit, and comprehensive care plans identify how specific health needs are to be met. There are very good links with external health professionals, staff are trained to undertake specialist health tasks, and the unit has the specialist equipment required to meet young people's specific health needs.

Provision for the management and administration of medication is excellent and provides adequate safeguards for the welfare of young people. A dedicated medication room and specialised medication trolleys ensure secure storage, and meticulous records provide a clear audit trail of all medication. Additional spot checks are carried out and all staff are trained in medication administration. Senior staff always assume responsibility for medication administration during each shift, and the process is witnessed throughout by an additional staff member in order to reduce the risk of any errors. Young people's emergency medication always accompanies them on trips out, however individual protocols for administration currently do not. This is an issue being addressed by the unit manager.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

The unit provides a safe and secure environment for young people within which they are protected from harm. Staff are very aware of their responsibility to safeguard young people and receive appropriate training to support them in doing so. There is a child-centred culture operating where young people are treated as individuals and have their dignity and privacy respected. The staff group are caring and committed and skilled in meeting the diverse needs of young people. They successfully develop positive relationships with them and manage isolated incidents of challenging behaviour well. Staff do not use any form of sanction or physical intervention to manage behaviour.

Young people feel safe while staying at the unit and bullying is not a problem. Social interaction is encouraged by staff and programmes of respite are scheduled so that groups of young people are as compatible as possible. This was observed to be the case during the inspection. Staff are acutely aware of how individual young people communicate and act appropriately as advocates for them. Complaints procedures are available to young people in an accessible form utilising symbols. The unit complaints log showed a very low level of complaints received, all of which had been addressed and resolved satisfactorily. Records of compliments are also maintained alongside complaints with a number having been received since the previous inspection.

The unit provides a safe and secure physical environment for young people within which there is good provision for managing risk. Designated staff have responsibility for health and safety within the units and comprehensive written risk assessments address the risks associated with the premises and with all activities undertaken by young people. Specialist equipment is subject to maintenance as required. Fire safety arrangements are good with an up-to-date and

comprehensive fire risk assessment and checks and tests being carried out and recorded as required. Evacuation practices are held regularly also.

All staff employed at the unit are subject to recruitment procedures which provide the necessary safeguards for the welfare of young people. These are rigorously applied and effectively monitored.

## **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Young people benefit from good levels of individual support being provided for them according to their needs. Levels of staffing for individual young people are indicated within care plans and these were seen to be maintained during the inspection. This includes one-to-one staffing for some young people at all times and two-to-one on occasions such as during transitions. Staff are extremely well aware of young people's needs and abilities, and while providing support when necessary also encourage young people to be as independent as possible. Young people are very much treated as individuals while being cared for, they are valued and treated with respect, and have comprehensive plans which address all aspects of their needs on an individual basis.

Staff at the unit are good at supporting young people's education. School attendance is maintained during young people's stay at the unit with transport being provided when necessary. Working relationships are good with schools attended by young people. Collaboration takes place whenever necessary to ensure a consistency of approach with young people most notably in relation to communication and behaviour. Staff attend and contribute to educational reviews whenever possible and recognise the importance of a consistency of approach with young people in both settings. Art and craft materials are available to young people and their work is displayed throughout the unit.

## **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

The unit has established procedures which ensure that young people are appropriately placed there and that their needs are able to be met. Thorough assessments are a pre-requisite to any young person being placed and comprehensive care plans are seen to address all areas of identified need. Individual staffing levels are established as part of an initial assessment. Young people benefit from extremely close monitoring of their care needs. However, not all individual care plans showed evidence of having been regularly reviewed or having been agreed to by parents and placing social workers. Staff contribute to the statutory reviewing process for young people and help to ensure young people continue to receive the support they need. Some young people have attended their reviews, however the majority have their views represented by their parents and staff from the unit.

Staff work very closely with the parents of young people. Parents feel they are kept informed and consulted appropriately and they are made welcome when visiting the unit. A communication book travels with each young person between the unit and home and provides an effective means of communicating. Young people referred are introduced to the unit in a gradual manner which is sensitive to their needs and which allows them to become familiar with the facilities and meet staff prior to staying overnight. Transitions to adult services for young people are fully supported by staff upon request from the placing authority.

Staff get to know young people extremely well and develop positive relationships with them. They have an acute awareness of how young people communicate and are able to respond accordingly. Providing young people with choice in their daily lives is integral to how the unit operates and this was clearly observed during the inspection.

## **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is good.

Young people are encouraged and supported to be as independent as possible during their stays at the unit. Staff promote young people's social development by providing good access to community facilities and by supporting and encouraging social interaction within the unit. Staff provide support for the transition to adult service placements when it is requested by placing authorities, however not all young people or young adults have clear plans for their future care incorporated into their care plans.

Young people benefit from having accommodation which is decorated, furnished and maintained to a good standard. The unit is brightly decorated and provides a child-centred environment that is made as homely as possible. There are colourful murals on walls, photographs and young people's artwork are displayed and bedrooms are able to be personalised for each young person during their stay. The majority of young people are accommodated in single rooms with just two rooms being shared occupancy. Young people are able to bring personal items with them when they come to stay. The unit provides a safe and secure environment for young people with a range of specialist equipment and facilities that enable their needs to be appropriately met. These include specialist baths, hoists, a sensory room and a hydrotherapy pool. The whole unit is wheelchair accessible including a large garden which has play equipment, a sensory area, and shaded provision where young people frequently have meals.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Parents and placing authorities receive comprehensive information via the unit's Statement of Purpose. All young people undertake a very gradual introductory process which is sensitive to their needs and which provides them with opportunities to get to know the unit and its staff before commencing overnight stays.

The promotion of equality and diversity within the unit is good. Documentation shows a clear commitment to providing equal opportunities, to promoting diversity and to tackling discrimination of any form. An extremely diverse range of needs is catered for, gender issues are addressed appropriately, and there are excellent opportunities enabling all young people to access community facilities. Events are held regularly which celebrate the culture of countries from around the world.

There is a very child-centred culture within the unit, which stems from a staff group who are extremely caring and committed to the young people they care for. The unit is well managed and staff operate very effectively as a close knit and supportive team. There is a good blend of youth and experience amongst the staff and they are all provided with training that enables them to meet the varied and complex needs of young people. Staffing is being maintained at the prescribed level to successfully care for young people. Agency workers are being used infrequently and there is a good continuity of care. Staff receive regular supervision and are subject to annual appraisal. Communication between staff is extremely good with regular staff

meetings and an established system for handovers between shifts. Regulation 33 visits take place at the required intervals and provide effective monitoring of the unit's operation. Written reports are available within the unit.

## 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
2	ensure that all young adults, and where appropriate young people, have regularly updated and reviewed moving on plans as part of their overall care plan (Regulation 12)	1 October 2010
2	ensure that all individual care plans are regularly reviewed and provide evidence of such. (Regulation 12)	1 October 2010

### Recommendations

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

- provide evidence of individual care plans having been agreed to by the parents of young people and by placing social workers (NMS 2)
- ensure that individual emergency medication protocols are accessible during trips out from the unit. (NMS 13)