

## Inspection report for Children's Home

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<b>Inspector</b>	Helen Walker
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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 outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for the service.

### 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 home is run by a local authority as part of its service to children with disabilities and their families. It is a single storey building, which provides a respite care service for up to seven children between the ages of eight to 18 years old, with physical or learning disabilities.

The facilities include one lounge, a dining lounge area, a dining kitchen, sensory room, a bathroom, a walk-in shower, separate toilet, laundry and seven single bedrooms. The home has specialist lifting equipment and other aids and adaptations to support young people in their daily lives. There is a play area to the rear of the home, which is securely fenced to keep the children safe when at play. The home is easily accessible by car and public transport. There is parking for staff and visitors to the home.

Several young people talked to the inspector during the inspection.

### **Summary**

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

At this full, unannounced inspection, all the key national minimum standards were considered. The action and recommendation made at the previous inspection were followed up and details are outlined in the improvements section of this report.

The home has weaknesses in the outcome areas of organisation and economic well-being. However, the other outcome areas are good. Young people's health needs are positively promoted. Young people especially enjoy the meals provided in the home. A consistent and competent staff team understand young people's needs and communicate well with them. The young people describe staff as 'never miserable and they are always happy'.

Since June 2010 there has not been a Registered Manager in post but an acting manager is employed. This is not an effective management arrangement. There are times when staff numbers are insufficient to meet the needs of the young people who use this service.

Staff take all reasonable steps to keep young people safe from harm and know how to respond in the event of any allegation or serious concern about a young person's safety.

The accommodation is spacious with recent refurbishment and decoration to some areas of home. This includes two en-suite bedrooms.

Three actions and two four recommendations have been made to further promote the well-being of the young people. Actions relate to effective management of the home, numbers of staff on duty and the home environment. Recommendations are for; periodic safety checks of gas and electrical equipment, also storage facilities in the home.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection one action and one recommendation were made. The provider was asked to ensure records of measures of control are kept up to date. The records are now monitored by the acting manager and deputy manager so that accurate records are maintained.

Staff maintain young people's files which contain relevant documentation to show their needs, development and progress at the home.

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

The provision is good.

Meals are of good quality and young people's dietary needs are well-met. A cook is employed and meals are produced on site. Young people consider there is a great improvement in the quality and variety of the meals provided. Staff receive training to support young people with more specific nutritional needs, such as tube feeding.

Mealtimes are social and inclusive occasions. Staff support young people who require assistance at mealtimes, whilst mindful to encourage independence skills, such as using cutlery. A breakfast/dining kitchen is additional to the main dining area. This allows those young people who are more able, to learn skills such as preparing simple snacks and to make drinks under staff supervision.

Staff actively promote young people's health and well-being. Health care plans are informative and parents consider staff competent to meet the health needs of their child. As this is a short-break service, the primary health care responsibilities for the young people remain with their parents.

Good links exist with outside agencies and include the epilepsy nurse and as required the child and adolescent mental health service. Staff receive training to support young people's more specific health needs, for example, guidance on moving and handling, and caring for those with epilepsy. Suitable aids and adaptations are in place and available for young people to use in the home. These include specialist baths, adjustable beds and hoists.

Staff are qualified to administer first aid treatment as required and well-stocked first aid boxes are readily available in the home. There are facilities in the home for medicines to be stored safely and securely. However, equipment such as syringes

that are used to support tube feeding, are not always stored appropriately in the home.

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

The provision is good.

Good systems are in place so that young people's privacy and confidentiality is respected. For example, staff knock on bedroom doors before entering and also ensure young people have privacy when using the bathroom facilities. Staff are familiar with the home's personal care policies and follow them to ensure young people's dignity is maintained.

The home's complaints procedure is made known to parents, carers and others involved in the home. There have been no complaints in the period since the last inspection. Staff know young people's different communication needs which helps to ensure young people are listened to.

Young people say they feel safe during their stay at the home. They say staff are 'never miserable and they are always happy'. Staff take all reasonable steps to keep young people safe from harm and are aware of safeguarding procedures. They are confident to respond appropriately in the event of any allegation or serious concern about a young person's safety.

Bullying is not an issue and no young people have been missing from the home. Staff encourage young people's positive behaviour and their achievements are celebrated. For example, incentive charts allow young people to achieve a small gift of their choice. Young people consider staff are respectful and treat them fairly. Staff undertake training in managing challenging behaviour and have a range of appropriate techniques and skills to assist them.

Health and safety systems are in place with checks carried out on equipment and installations in the home. However, there is nothing to evidence that checks of gas and electrical equipment in the home occur within the recommended timescale. Lack of safety measures in the home puts people's welfare at risk.

There have been no new staff employed at the home since the last inspection. The acting manager confirms there are thorough recruitment and employment checks to verify staff are suitable to work with young people.

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

The provision is good.

Young people have the support of staff and other agencies, such as health and education. They have a key worker to provide them with individual support; this is in addition to support provided by other staff members. Staff have a very good understanding about recognising the needs of young people who have limited or no

verbal communication. Staff observe young people's body language which often indicates what they want and how they feel. A variety of specialist equipment in the home is also available for the benefit of the young people, for example, hoists and adjustable beds.

Staff have a very positive approach to education and its value for the young people. Given the nature of the service, parents maintain the responsibility for the education of their children. Reports for school reviews are provided and staff attend relevant meetings. A home/school diary is used for day-to-day communication. Prior to young people starting to use the service, staff talk with school about their needs to ensure continuity of care. Regular education reviews take place so that the educational needs of young people are met.

Young people enjoy their leisure activities both in the home and out in the community. There is an emphasis on personal choice and young people are encouraged in their abilities and interests. Different activities are offered and young people attend events and a youth club in the local area. The home is well-equipped with games, toys and electronic equipment. A range of vehicles allow staff to take young people out.

The 'outreach centre' attached to the home is also available to the young people. This has equipment such as computers adapted for specific needs and quiet rooms for relaxation.

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

The provision is good.

Young people's placement plans outline how their assessed needs are to be met during their stay. Staff encourage and welcome parents to visit the home, to discuss the arrangements and care planning process for their child. Staff are knowledgeable and familiar with the plans to enable staff to care appropriately for the young people.

Systems are in place for young people's placement and care plans to be reviewed at timely intervals. This means young people's placements are considered to ensure the service continues to be suitable for them. Good consultation processes enable young people and parents to make their views known. Their views are considered which assists to improve positive outcomes for the young people.

The majority of young people who use this service live at home and visit for short-breaks; many do not have contact with families during their stay. However, if young people want to telephone families, or if families want to visit their child during their stay then staff will ensure this happens. Parents comment that staff keep them well-informed about their child and contact them as necessary.

Introduction to the home is well-planned. Good practice enables young people to have a gradual introduction to the home. The process is managed at a pace that is appropriate to individual young people and staff recognise that for some young

people this involves more visits to the home. There is facility for emergency placements; however, this has never involved a young person unknown to the service.

Staff work well with young people, to enable their views to be heard. Arrangements are in place for the young people to contribute to decisions about their care and the home, for example, leisure activities and menus. A volunteer comes into the home to assist with a 'children's rights group' which meets fortnightly.

## **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is satisfactory.

The young people's disabilities are such that they will require continued support as they move into adulthood. Staff take account of young people's abilities and encourage and assist them to participate in activities that are part of everyday life at the home. This includes tidying their bedroom and choosing meals. Transition planning is in place to support and prepare young people into adulthood. Staff support young people well with the transition process and in to adulthood.

The home has undergone a programme of refurbishment which improves the home environment. This includes two bedrooms with spacious en-suite facilities, new floor-covering in bedrooms and some communal areas. Staff offices have also been relocated near the entrance of the home. Young people say they enjoy the new bedrooms because they are roomy, have more privacy and the beds are very comfortable. However, the other bedrooms are stark with little personalisation or individuality. The bedrooms and 'twinkle' room are lacklustre and dated. Overall, most bedrooms, corridors and some communal rooms are 'bland' and not overly welcoming to young people.

A lack of storage space in the home means items are stored in open communal areas. For example, commercial type water bottles are stored under a table in the breakfast/dining kitchen. A lack of shelves results in binders and files placed on top of cupboards. This gives the home an untidy look and not a homely feel.

Within the grounds is a large car park to the front of the home. To the rear of the home is an enclosed sensory garden. Young people say they enjoy using the garden in warmer weather.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

There has been no Registered Manager in post since June 2010. The interim arrangements are that the Registered Manager of the nearby 'sister' home is also the acting manager of this home. These arrangements are not sufficiently robust to ensure effective management of this home.



Recently the home was closed at short notice over a Bank Holiday weekend. There was insufficient staff available to maintain an adequate level of staffing over this period. Young people's expected overnight stays did not go ahead. This is disappointing for the young people who look forward to their planned visits to the home. Staff meetings take place to discuss the work of the home. However, these are not always well attended. For example, one meeting shows apologies from 12 staff members.

Duty rotas show there are times when there are shortfalls in the number of staff on duty. A weekend duty shift shows three staff to care for seven children. Risk assessments indicate some young people require two staff to help them with specific tasks which leaves one staff to care for six young people. The shortfalls were identified by the inspector and the acting manager then made arrangements for additional staff to work on these shifts.

The organisation of records and filing systems present as disorganised and information not readily to hand. For example, documentation to confirm gas safety checks could not be located. Additionally, the shortfall in staffing arrangements was not identified by management to ensure sufficient staff on duty to care for young people.

Monitoring of the work of the home is carried out by a monthly independent visitor and the acting manager. However, the acting manager's routine monitoring systems are not up to date which means there is no full overview of how the home is running. The independent visitor does provide a thorough report for the information and action of the provider.

A number of young people have received care at the home for some years. They enjoy their stays and say staff are very caring. Very good interaction and good humoured banter between the young people and staff was seen throughout the inspection.

Although agency staff do occasionally work shifts in the home, the majority of care is given by permanent staff who are suitably qualified, skilled and experienced in the care of the young people. This helps to ensure continuity of care to young people.

The home's Statement of Purpose reflects what the home offers and the care provided. This is made available to parents and social workers. Young people receive suitable information about services and facilities provided.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Young people are listened to and treated as individuals. Staff help to improve the life chances of young people, particularly through the promotion of education and health. Disability is not seen as a barrier in providing young people with experiences available to others.

Staff consider they have good access to training. This is varied and assists them to gain skills and competencies relating to their work with the young people.

Young people's progress is appropriately and permanently documented. Records are securely stored and contain good evidence of their history and development.

## 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/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Std.	Action	Due date
30	ensure that there is at all times, having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the health and welfare of the children accommodated in the home, a sufficient number of suitably qualified, competent and experienced persons working at the children's home (Regulation 25)	07/10/2010
24	ensure all parts of the children's home are suitably furnished and equipped, in particular, that there are adequate and suitable storage facilities, the home is reasonably decorated and maintained (Regulation 31.2)	19/11/2010
34	ensure the home is managed with sufficient care, competence and skill. (Regulation 9.1)	07/10/2010

### Recommendations

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

- ensure equipment relevant to young people's medical and nutritional needs is appropriately stored (NMS 23.3)
- ensure that gas installations are inspected at least annually and electrical equipment is checked at least every three years. (NMS 26.4)