

## Inspection report for Children's Home

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<b>Inspector</b>	Monica Hargreaves
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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**

This home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to five young people of either gender who are aged from five to 17 years and who have learning disabilities.

The home is a spacious detached property situated off a main road in a residential area of the town. To one side and the front of the property, there is an area for car parking. To the other side and the front of the home, there is an enclosed private garden.

On the ground floor of the home are two lounges, kitchen, dining room, utility room, relaxation room, toilet, and manager's office. On the first and second floor are the young people's individual bedrooms, two bathrooms, staff sleep-in rooms and staff office. The home is situated within easy access to local community and leisure facilities.

At the time of the visit there were three young people present.

## **Summary**

The overall quality rating is good.

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

This was an unannounced key inspection. All key standards in all outcome areas were assessed. The actions and recommendations made at the last inspection were also considered. Information about these is detailed in the section below.

The home provides a good standard of care overall and has a number of strengths. Young people are given a very high level of individual support. Their health needs are exceptionally well met and they are supported very well with their education.

Safeguarding has a high priority in the home. Young people are protected from abuse, from bullying and from going missing from the home. Challenging behaviour is managed at the lowest level needed to protect young people.

Young people are cared for by an enthusiastic team of staff. Staff are trained for their work and are well supported by the manager and senior staff who are qualified and experienced. Staff have an excellent understanding of the young people they look after and are committed to ensuring that they are well cared for and make good progress in the home. They encourage young people to make their views known and are adept at communicating in a variety of ways with young people who have complex needs and who do not use speech.

Two good practice recommendations have been made as a result of this visit. These relate to staff qualifications and a bullying risk assessment.

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

Actions made at the last inspection are all met.

Evidence from this inspection confirms that there is no inappropriate physical restraint of young people and that physical intervention is only used as a last resort and at the lowest level necessary to protect young people and staff. This ensures that young people are cared for in a safe way.

Evidence from this visit confirms that the manager makes regular checks on all records, including the effectiveness of sanctions and restraints. These checks are effective in identifying any shortfalls in the care that is given to young people. This scrutiny of the work of the home ensures that good standards are maintained.

Three of the four recommendations from the last inspection are also met.

Systems for the storage and administration of medication have been reviewed. These are robust and protect young people. Water temperatures are regulated to ensure that they are at a safe level for young people. Art work on the walls in communal areas contributes to the homely feel of the service.

One recommendation is not fully met. The organisation expects staff to gain a qualification that is relevant to their work, but due to recent staffing changes, there are not sufficient qualified staff to ensure that the target of 80% is met. This recommendation is carried forward.

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

The provision is outstanding.

The arrangements for the promotion of young people's good health are excellent which means that young people's general and specific health needs are exceptionally well met. Thorough assessments and comprehensive plans ensure that young people's health needs are identified and met. Staff receive appropriate training in a number of areas linked to promoting good health and they demonstrate an excellent understanding of the specific and complex health needs of the young people they look after. Young people are registered with a doctor, dentist and optician and staff support them at all their appointments. They work closely with health agencies outside the home, which means that general and more specialised medical care and advice is readily accessible for young people.

Staff understand that good nutrition is important to maintaining good health and they encourage young people to eat a healthy, balanced diet. Meals are planned around the preferences and specific requirements of young people and include foods from different cultures to broaden their experiences. Young people and staff eat

together and meal times are seen as pleasant social occasions. Good records are kept to show what young people have eaten so that their diet is monitored.

The service has robust medication procedures that are effective in protecting young people and promoting their welfare. For example, young people are only given medicines that are specifically prescribed for them. This includes homely remedies. There is an accountable system for monitoring medication and all medicines are stored securely. Staff are well informed about the medication they administer because they are trained and are given clear guidance. There are agreed plans in place for specific issues that affect young people, for example, rescue medication for epilepsy.

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

The provision is good.

Good care practices ensure that the privacy and confidentiality of young people is respected. For example, staff provide personal care to young people in a way that protects their personal dignity. They make sure that they knock on young people's bedroom doors before entering and they manage information about young people in a way that protects confidentiality. The home has separate bathrooms for boys and girls which enhances their privacy.

Young people are cared for safely. They are protected from abuse because staff are trained in safeguarding issues and there is a sound child protection procedure that staff understand. The home has a clear protocol for managing unauthorised absences, although there have been no instances of a young person going missing from the home. Due to their complex needs, young people are closely supervised by staff who know their whereabouts at all times and therefore they are not able to leave the home without the knowledge of staff. Close supervision of young people also protects them from the risk of bullying and there is good evidence to confirm that this is not an issue in the home. However, the home does not have a specific assessment of the times and places where the risk of bullying might be greatest, to ensure that all risks are addressed.

There are good systems in place for managing complaints. These ensure that concerns are responded to promptly and investigated thoroughly. Staff understand how young people who do not use speech communicate their feelings, so that they know if they are unhappy with any aspect of their care and can take prompt action to resolve problems.

Staff enable young people to develop behaviour that is socially acceptable and there is good evidence to confirm that young people benefit from the strategies that are put in place to support them. Each young person has a positive handling plan. These are comprehensive and provide clear guidance to staff about the most effective way of working with young people to support and protect them. Staff demonstrate a very good understanding of the individual young people they look after and interact with them very well. They are trained to respond appropriately to behaviour that is

challenging, including in the use of physical restraint. There is good evidence to confirm that this is only ever used as a last resort and at the lowest level needed to protect young people and staff.

Young people are protected by the home's robust arrangements for managing health and safety matters. For example, all equipment and installations and water temperatures are checked regularly. Staff are trained in evacuation procedures and young people take part in regular fire drills to ensure that they practise leaving the building safely in an emergency.

The arrangements for vetting staff and visitors to the home are sound. The organisation undertakes thorough checks on prospective staff before they start work and the identity of visitors is checked before they are allowed in. These systems protect young people from individuals who may pose a risk to them gaining access to the home.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Young people receive a very high level of individual support. Staff are very well informed about young people's complex needs because these are clearly identified in detailed care plans. Plans are developed from the thorough assessments that take place at the time a young person is referred for a service. Staff have an excellent understanding of the specific needs of all of the young people in their care and of how they communicate if they do not use speech. This enables them to support young people very effectively. Young people benefit from the established key working system, which ensures that there is a named individual who takes responsibility for progressing their care plans. There are very good levels of multi-agency working which means that young people have prompt access to any additional service they may need.

Staff in the home actively promote the value of education. They support young people to develop their skills and to learn and achieve. There is good liaison with schools. Staff contribute fully to education reviews, so that they have up-to-date information about young people's progress and so that they can support young people's education in the home. There is clear evidence of the success that staff have had in supporting young people to improve their attendance at school and also of re-integrating young people into education after a period of exclusion. There are excellent facilities in the home to promote learning, for example, a computer, books and games.

Young people are given excellent opportunities to develop their interests and to broaden their experiences. Staff support them to take part in activities that they enjoy, both inside and out of the home. Recent examples of activities include arts and crafts clubs, a theatre club and trips out to the coast and theme parks. Staff are keen to involve young people in activities locally to promote their inclusion in the community.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Excellent care planning and reviewing systems ensure that young people's assessed needs are met. Staff develop a range of holistic care and support plans for young people that clearly identify their needs and show how staff will work to meet them. These are underpinned by robust individual risk assessments. All plans are reviewed on a monthly basis in the home and also through the formal looked after children reviewing process. This ensures that there is good oversight of the placement and that decisions are made about the young person's ongoing care needs.

Young people are very well supported to maintain positive contact with their families. Staff work closely with placing authorities in relation to contact issues. They welcome families into the home and support young people when their families visit. They supervise meetings, when this is an agreed part of the young person's plan and they provide feedback about contact issues to placing authorities to inform future care planning.

There are excellent arrangements in place to ensure that young people move into and leave the home in a planned way, that is sensitive to their individual needs. These systems include a thorough assessment of the young person's needs and of the likely impact on other young people of their admission to the home. Clear plans are put in place to support young people when they move on from the service. These systems benefit young people and promote the smooth running of the home.

Consultation with young people, their families and professionals is a real strength of the home. Staff promote choice as a matter of course in their work and spend considerable time with young people identifying their wishes and feelings using their preferred methods of communication. They advocate well on behalf of the young people in their care. Of particular note is the success staff have had in supporting young people to develop their individual skill in language and communication.

## **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is good.

None of the young people currently living in the home are of an age where they are preparing for leaving care so there are no pathway plans in place. Staff support young people to develop life skills to their individual ability. They work at the pace of young people and take opportunities when they arise to promote learning, for example, in relation to self-care skills, preparing food and simple household tasks.

Young people benefit from living in a homely environment that is kept safe. The home is spacious and appropriately equipped for the needs of the young people who are accommodated there. It is well maintained internally and externally, comfortably furnished, clean and tidy. Young people have access to two lounges and a play room,



where they can spend time together and with staff; they can also spend time in private in their own room if they wish. Bedrooms are personalised according to the young person's wishes and needs. The home also has an sensory room where young people can spend quiet time.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Good information about the service is made available to young people, their parents and professionals, so that they can see how the home works and how young people are cared for. This is in the form of a Statement of Purpose that is regularly reviewed and kept up to date and a young person's guide that gives information about the service in a form that is suitable to the needs of the young people looked after.

There are appropriate arrangements in place to cover for the manager so that the home continues to be well managed in her absence. Staff are expected to have or to gain a National Vocational Qualification at level 3 and are given support to achieve this. Due to some recent staffing changes, there are not currently sufficient staff who hold a qualification to meet the required target of 80%.

In addition to undertaking mandatory training, such as safeguarding, managing challenging behaviour, first aid and medication procedures, staff are trained to understand the specific and complex needs of the young people they care for. For example, they have additional training in autism and the management of epilepsy. They also have regular opportunities to develop their knowledge further and to discuss the needs of the young people in their care. This is done through monthly meetings with a consultant professional who is independent of the home and who is experienced in working with young people with complex needs.

Staffing arrangements are good. Numbers of staff on each shift are set in line with individual risk assessments for young people. As a minimum there is always one member of staff to care for each young person and often there are two. This ensures that young people are kept safe and are provided with a good standard of care.

The service keeps clear information about young people that fully meets the regulations and standards. This is stored in individual files that are well ordered and kept in secure facilities to protect confidentiality.

Regular checks of the service are undertaken by the home's manager and the responsible individual. These ensure that the work of the home is scrutinised and therefore that the welfare of young people is monitored.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Staff are trained in the principles and the service has appropriate policies to inform and guide their practice. Staff have an excellent understanding of the young people in their care. Detailed holistic plans that address young people's specific and diverse needs ensure that young people receive care that is individually tailored to meet their needs. Young people are valued

as individuals and are supported to make choices in their lives. Staff demonstrate a strong commitment to ensuring that disability is not a bar for young people, for example, by supporting them to have access to resources and activities in the community.

## **What must be done to secure future improvement?**

### **Recommendations**

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

- undertake a risk assessment of the times and places within the home where the risk of bullying is greatest (NMS 18.5)
- ensure that a minimum of 80% of all care staff have a National Vocational Qualification at level 3 or an equivalent qualification. (NMS 29.5)