

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC059203
Inspection date	08/07/2011
Inspector	Leonard Hird
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	04/03/2011
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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 to assess the effectiveness of the service and to consider how well it complies with the relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the *Inspections of children's homes – framework for inspection* (March 2011) and the evaluation schedule for children's homes.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: a service that significantly exceeds minimum requirements

Good: a service that exceeds minimum requirements

Satisfactory: a service that only meets minimum requirements

Inadequate: a service that does not meet minimum requirements

Service information

Brief description of the service

This children's home is located near to the centre of a rural town. It provides a short break service at weekends and for identified periods during school holidays, for up to six children from the age of six to 17 years who have a learning disability. It is a service provided by the local authority.

Overall effectiveness

The overall effectiveness is judged to be **good**.

Young people who use this respite service receive good levels of care and support. Members of staff receive appropriate levels of training, support and supervision from the local authority and the Registered Manager. Members of staff work closely with young people, their parents and other agencies to enable young people to enjoy their short but planned respite stays at the home. Team meetings take place regularly at the home to ensure that there is a consistency of approach to care practice when dealing with a regularly changing group of young people. Many of the young people using this facility have done so for a considerable length of time and benefit from this long term stability. New admissions are well-planned and the young people concerned meet with their peers on a regular basis before commencing a full placement. Young people communicated positively about their life at the home and that they felt happy and cared for.

Areas for improvement

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for children and young people are **good**.

Young people using the home's respite services have a dedicated placement plan in place that addresses their very complex needs. Staff actively encourage young people of every ability to ensure they can, if they want, contribute to their own placement plan. This input by staff is helping to ensure the plan is reflective of the young person's complex needs. Close working relationships have been developed by the home between the families, the school and other partner agencies to ensure that the information contained in a young person's plan is up to date and representative of the young person's needs. A parent commented that there are very good communications occurring between the home and themselves about their child.

Regular meetings occur between the young people and residential staff. These interactive group and individual meetings help to ensure that enjoyable and effective use is made of young people's precious time while staying at the home. Young people during the inspection were observed to be working and communicating in

their preferred communication format with members of staff in a professional but friendly manner. It is apparent that young people have no problem in raising issues or problems with either their key worker or other members of staff.

The home is situated in its own grounds a short distance from the centre of the town. The home is located on the first floor of the residential school building and is pleasantly decorated, furnished and maintained. The accommodation is arranged on two floors with access by the main staircase with no available lift. Children are provided with their own individual bedroom on the first floor. Individual bedrooms are personalised where ever possible by the young people. There are good levels of accessible bathing and toileting facilities available in the home for use by the young people. The bathrooms, toilets and showers have appropriate locks and are private. All of the home's communal areas are spacious and well used by the many different members of the user group. Young people were observed to be enjoying the homely and comfortable facilities in these rooms and they indicate they really did like them.

The health and physical well-being of young people is well promoted by the quality of catering and physical activity being provided at the home. Specialist dietary needs can be catered for as necessary and staff who prepare the food have the appropriate qualifications in food hygiene. Menus are planned in conjunction with young people and can be easily adjusted to suit the needs of the individual young person. Young people indicated they enjoy the food they eat and that special events such as birthdays are celebrated at the home.

Members of staff and young people interact and work well together in a very friendly though professional manner. Young people indicated that they have very good caring and working relationships with members of the staff team. A parent commented that members of staff look after their child in a friendly, caring and professional way.

Quality of care

The quality of the care is **outstanding**.

There are excellent levels of individual care, support and guidance in place to assist young people to enjoy and benefit from their planned respite stays at the home. Young people attend a residential special school during the week and good working relationships have been developed between the home and the school to ensure that relevant information is shared.

Members of staff positively encourage and support young people to fully engage with the local community by taking part in a number of different activities such as shopping at the local shops and supermarket, attending local community events and visiting local tourist sites. The home is involved with young people, their families and other partner agencies in helping to develop a plan for independence and adulthood. All of the young people who completed Ofsted's Children's and Young People Survey indicated that members of staff help them to develop skills that could be of benefit in later life.

The home provides guidance for members of staff on the management of the health care of young people through its corporate health policy and procedures. Young people's health planning and care is managed by the young person's key worker and this is fully supported by the Registered Manager as well as by other members of the staff team. Each young person's health file contains a medical consent form from the parent or guardian to ensure that emergency medical treatment and medication can be given. Members of staff have received training in dealing with epilepsy as well as being first aid trained. If a young person becomes unwell while staying at the home they are looked after by members of staff until collected by the young person's parents. Members of staff have received training in the safe handling of medication. The safe storage, administration, recording and disposal of medication helps to keep young people safe.

There is a dedicated keyworker for each young person who provides the support and guidance necessary for young people to achieve success while using the home and its services. Key workers and other members of staff liaise with families and other partner agencies to ensure the care needs of the young people have been appropriately addressed. Young people have an individual care, health and education plan and these are subject to regular formal recorded reviews and updated accordingly by the home, where necessary.

Safeguarding children and young people

The service is **good** at keeping children and young people safe and feeling safe.

All of the staff team receive regular recorded training in child protection, safeguarding and behaviour management. The welfare of young people is protected through the application of the home's corporate safeguarding policy, risk assessments and reporting procedures by members of staff. The staff team have a clear understanding of their responsibilities and roles in keeping young people safe while staying at the home. The home works closely with its partner agencies to ensure that if any safeguarding issues arise they are addressed.

The home has a very positive approach to addressing any bullying behaviour that may manifest itself and this helps to protect young people from bullying. Members of staff follow the home's anti-bullying policy and procedure in practice and ensure that young people are made aware of what they should do or who they should contact if they are being bullied. Information is made available in the home for young people on how to contact outside independent agencies for support or information on how to deal with bullying or complaint issues. The rights of young people and parents are protected through the home's and local authority's complaints procedure. It is clear that members of staff are aware of how to raise any concerns or complaints and that these, when raised, will be taken seriously and dealt with accordingly. A parent confirmed they knew how to raise concerns and that they felt they would be listened to and the issue dealt with appropriately.

There is a clear corporate policy and procedure on behaviour and discipline available in the home for use by the staff and this is followed in practice. Members of staff

receive regular training in behaviour management this also takes account of physical intervention and the formal recording of any incident of physical intervention. Sanctions are rarely given but they are recorded and monitored, when given. There is a detailed policy, procedure and protocol on action to be taken if young person goes absent without authority and this is being followed by members of staff. Young people benefit from the positive and supportive relationships that have been built up between themselves and staff at the home over a long period.

Young people's welfare is protected by home's corporate recruitment process. The home follows a clear policy on recruitment in line with the Department of Education (DfE) guidance. A detailed record of the employment process showing CRB checks, written references, verbal reference checks, and a formal interview process is followed. Relevant records are maintained on staff's personnel files.

The home and young people are protected by effective monitoring of electrical appliances as well as the safe storage of substances hazardous to health. Maintenance issues are identified and dealt with quickly by staff and the site manager to ensure young people are protected from possible hazards. Young people's welfare is promoted further by the use of comprehensive risk assessments in their day-to-day lives including the transport used by the home.

Leadership and management

The leadership and management of the children's home are **good**.

There is an informative corporate Statement of Purpose available for use by parents, partner agencies and young people about the home. The young person's guide has been individualised by the home into a format that is easy to understand and enables young people to be aware of the services that are available to them. Information is also contained in these documents that details how external support services such as ChildLine and the local authorities Children's Rights Officer can be contacted for support and independent advice.

Members of staff receive good levels of training, professional supervision and support to assist in their professional development from the local authority and where appropriate from home's Registered Manager. The suitably qualified and experienced management team is providing effective leadership of the home's staff team to enable them to assist young people to make good progress while staying at the home. Currently staff levels are meeting the needs and numbers of young people living at the home, but if necessary, they can be increased by the Registered Manager as and when required. There is a very stable and experienced staff team working at the home that are fully committed to meeting the complex and diverse needs of the young people using this respite service. Members of staff are actively encouraging young people to take part in different activities and integrating fully with the local community where ever possible.

Unannounced monitoring visits are undertaken by the local authority's designated officer on a monthly basis and a written record of these visits along with its findings

is provided to the home, the local authority and Ofsted. The findings of these visits are shared with the Registered Manager to ensure the quality of service is maintained and if necessary, improved for young people. The Registered Manager, along with other members of staff, undertake weekly and monthly quality assurance checks to ensure the home is performing to the best of its ability and corrective action is undertaken where necessary. When recommendations have been made by Ofsted following an inspection, they have been quickly addressed.

The care records of young people are well managed and reflect the high levels of support being delivered at the home. The home's quality assurance systems ensure that young people's records are well managed, monitored, securely stored and reviewed on a regular basis.

Equality and diversity practice is **outstanding**.