

## Inspection report for children's home

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<b>Inspection date</b>	06/12/2011
<b>Inspector</b>	Mandy Williams / Sonya Robinson
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Full
<b>Provision subtype</b>	Children's home

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<b>Date of last inspection</b>	03/06/2011
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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

The home is owned by a national organisation. It offers accommodation for children and young people who experience autistic spectrum disorder and a possible learning disability. Most young people who access the service attend the organisation's school.

Placements in the home are generally provided during term time, with accommodation being provided on weekdays and some weekends. Periods of short break care are agreed on an individual basis.

### Overall effectiveness

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

Young people stay in a children's home where they feel safe and are protected from harm. Young people make good progress in the care of the home, particularly in relation to their independence and social skills, as well as engagement in community activities. Feedback from both families and social workers comment on the progress the young people have made and on the commitment of the staff group.

Staff are enthusiastic about providing positive experiences for young people and are pleased to see them progress. Individualised care plans ensure that everyone is working towards the same goals for each young person. Young people both enjoy and benefit from the positive relationships that they have with staff and are encouraged to give their views in a supportive environment.

The home works well with young people's families and there is a close relationship with school. This is of particular benefit for young people who access this service, where a consistency of approach is essential.

As a result of this inspection there are some areas identified for improvement. These relate to staffing in the home, particularly about having clear lines of responsibility in the absence of the Registered Manager and to the supervision and appraisal of staff. In respect to the policies and procedures in the home, a number of these were completed some time ago and new standards and guidance have been introduced since their completion. The children's guide, whilst appropriate does not include the contact details for the Children's Rights Director. Some general maintenance work in the home would also add to the 'homely' feel that staff work hard to promote.

### Areas for 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 person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
25 (2001)	ensure that there is at all times a sufficient number of suitably qualified, competent and experienced persons working at the children's home and that there are clear arrangements for a member of staff to deputise or lead a shift in the absence of the Registered Manager (Regulation 25(1))	31/01/2012
27 (2001)	ensure that all persons employed receive appropriate training, supervision and appraisal. (Regulation 27 (4)(a))	31/01/2012

## Recommendations

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

- ensure that the home's missing from care procedures are updated and that they are compatible with the procedures maintained by the local authority for the area where the home is situated (NMS 5.6)
- ensure that the home provides a comfortable and homely environment and is well maintained and decorated (NMS 10.3)
- ensure that the children's guide includes contact details for the Children's Rights Director (NMS 13.5)
- ensure that the manager regularly monitors, in line with regulations, all records kept by the home particularly with a view to reviewing and updating the homes policies and procedures, including safeguarding. (NMS 21.2)

## Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people are provided with good opportunities to develop their personal and social skills. The young people's self-confidence has improved considerably and they are able to take part in activities in the community linked to both leisure and independence skills. Activities regularly enjoyed by young people include going to the park, swimming, arts and crafts, using the computer and hand and foot massage, as well as social and independence skills such as shopping or eating out. One parent commented in relation to their child: 'they are able to access the community a great deal more and has learned to form friendships with peers. Independence skills and social skills have improved dramatically since placement.'

Young people have access to a range of health services that meet their needs. There is good communication between the home, family and school in relation to the best way to meet these in order to result in least anxiety for the young person. Staff also encourage young people to engage in appropriate levels of physical exercise both within and outside of the home, such as a walk to the park or supervised use of the gym equipment.

All young people attend school regularly. There is good communication between the home, school and family designed to promote continuity for the young person and lessen disruption. A 'home to school' diary is used as method of communication, as well as regular key worker meetings and reviews.

There is regular and meaningful contact between the home and the young people's family that helps to assure the young person and provide a consistency of approach. While young people live with their families, the home works hard to promote contact during the young people's stay with them. The young people, their families and other involved professionals, value this.

The staff group appreciate the diverse needs of the young people staying at the home. They work hard to help each young person progress and they celebrate their accomplishments. For example, certificates are given to acknowledge personal and academic milestones with a focus of helping prepare young people gain independence skills for later life.

### **Quality of care**

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

Staff members are committed to the young people in the home and work hard to build positive relationships with them. Young people are happy when at the home and enjoy the time that they spend with staff members. One parent commented, 'The staff are very friendly and approachable'. However, there have been a number of staff move on from the establishment in recent months, which has resulted in some inconsistencies of care and less stability. The behaviour of some young people has become more unsettled as a result.

The views of the young people are sought through regular young people's meetings and they are encouraged to express their views. Young people indicate that they would be able to talk to someone if they were unhappy and the home has good systems in place to deal with any complaints. Young people benefit from a key worker system and enjoy the time they spend with their key worker.

Appropriate care plans are in place and liaison between the home, involved professionals and families is positive. Young people are cared for in line with their plans, which identify their individual needs and the arrangements for meeting these on a daily basis.

Young people benefit from a varied meal choice, that promotes healthy eating and caters for those with special dietary needs. Young people are encouraged to contribute to menu planning and also in the purchase and cooking of foods if appropriate. Regular cultural themed evenings take place where different cultures are celebrated. This helps the young people consider how other communities live and encourages them to sample foods eaten in the region. Young people particularly enjoy these occasions. There are photographs around the home of the recent Indian, Spanish and German events that have taken place, as well as the young people enjoying a variety of other activities.

Health care plans, which are updated routinely, clearly outline young people's health needs. Medication is well managed and stored in a suitable locked cabinet. Safe procedures are followed, medical consents obtained and records are kept appropriately. Only those trained in the administration of medicine undertake this activity.

All young people who currently stay in the home access the organisation's school. Communication systems with the school are positive, which serve to promote the young people's educational progress, as well as consistency of approach. This is of particular significance in relation to the needs of the young people.

The home is in a residential area and comfortably furnished. The home is clean and well maintained generally, although some plastering work to the office ceiling and some minor repairs to flooring are outstanding and there is no lock on the door to the young people's bathroom, which has recently been replaced. This detracts from the general homely feel to the building.

## **Safeguarding children and young people**

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

The home has a number of policies and procedures in place designed to safeguard children in their care. Staff are aware of these procedures and implement them appropriately. However, these have not been reviewed following the introduction of new regulations and guidance for children's homes that have been introduced this year.

Staff are aware of safeguarding procedures and their child protection training is updated appropriately. Recruitment and selection procedures are satisfactory. Staff are appropriately vetted prior to commencing work with young people.

The home has a missing from care procedure, although this has also not been updated for some time. The home's exit doors are operated by means of a 'fob' with a view to protecting the vulnerable young people that stay here, some of whom have a lack of awareness of road safety and other dangers. Generally, the young people receive a suitable degree of supervision and staff are aware of the appropriate action

to take if an incident does occur. However, a recent event has highlighted this issue for the home. The organisation has since implemented a tighter staff policy on use of fobs and has planned additional staff training.

Young people benefit from individualised care plans and risk assessments that serve to both protect them and promote their development. These are reviewed regularly. However, some young people have been observed to be unsettled following changes to staffing and the group of young people using the service, over recent months.

Staff are trained in behaviour management, including the use of physical restraint. The need to restrain is however rare. Staff successfully use a range of de-escalation techniques to diffuse the situation and promote positive behaviour. The home does not promote the use of sanctions due to the level of understanding of the young people staying here.

Young people live in a physically safe environment. They benefit from the undertaking of regular health and safety checks on the building, including routine fire drills and environmental risk assessments.

## **Leadership and management**

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

This is the home's first inspection following registration as previously it had been registered as part of a multi-site registration. Hence, there were no specific requirements or recommendations to address.

The home has a suitably experienced and competent Registered Manager. The recently revised Statement of Purpose meets the aims and objectives of the home and reflects the changes to staffing within the home. Young people receive a children's guide that is appropriate to their needs and understanding but this does not contain all the required information, for example details for the Children's Rights Director.

Both the external and internal monitoring of the home are undertaken on a regular basis. Both highlight areas for improvement and actions required. However, the Registered Manager has not always been able to address identified issues. For example, they had identified that staff supervision was not being undertaken as frequently as required but the home had been unable to address this due to staffing shortages. A business development plan is in place with particular reference to the home, as well as one for the wider organisation. The plan includes goals and objectives for the forthcoming year, as well as staff training planned. This demonstrates that the home is looking to develop further, with a view to improving service delivery for young people.

The service has lost a number of experienced staff members over recent months. The small staff group that remains demonstrates a real commitment to the young



people that they care for and are supportive of the Registered Manager. However, it is not always clear who has responsibility for the home when the Registered Manager is not available. Staff supervisions and appraisals have also lapsed. This would serve to keep staff motivated, develop their skills and ensure that they are working in support of the ethos of the home and meeting the needs of the young people.

There is an established training plan for new employees and clear records are kept of what training staff have received. There is a willingness to train staff in new approaches designed to meet the needs of these particular young people.

Records in the home are maintained and kept securely. Staff keep detailed records of their work to illustrate the progress the young person is making, although they have struggled to keep on top of this in recent months due to staff changes in the home. The management of the home do have plans in place to address this issue.

The home has suitable systems in place to notify Ofsted and other appropriate agencies of any significant events relating to the protection of children should they occur.

Equality and diversity practice is **satisfactory**.