

Inspection report for children's home

---

<b>Unique reference number</b>	SC034900
<b>Inspection date</b>	21/12/2011
<b>Inspector</b>	Tracy Murty
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Full
<b>Provision subtype</b>	Children's home

---

<b>Date of last inspection</b>	28/01/2011
--------------------------------	------------

---

© Crown copyright 2011

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

## 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 service provides residential short-breaks care for up to 11 young people with learning and physical disabilities aged eight to 19 years old. The home, which is run by a local authority, is located in a residential area close to the city centre.

### Overall effectiveness

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

Young people enjoy a wide range of stimulating and diverse activities and experiences during their short break stays. They are able to continue to attend their educational provisions, which further promote continuity of care and routine. Young people enjoy positive relationships with the staff team as well as with each other. They clearly look forward to coming to the home and are cared for by staff who ensure they are kept safe. Individual plans are detailed, and chart young people's progress during their stays. Monitoring of the home is good, but requires some additional attention in order to further improve the good standard of care currently provided.

There are some shortfalls within the service mainly around records and documentation, and as a result one action and four recommendations have been raised.

## 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
34 (2001)	ensure that the registered person supplies to the HMCI a report in respect of any review conducted by him. (Regulation 34(2))	06/01/2012

### Recommendations

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

- ensure the guide includes a summary of what the home sets out to do for

children, how they can find out about their rights, how a child can contact their independent reviewing officer, the Children's Rights Director, Ofsted if they wish to raise a concern with inspectors, and how to secure access to an independent advocate (NMS 13.5)

- ensure that the registered person has a written development plan, reviewed annually, for the future of the home, either identifying any planned changes in the operation or resources of the service, or confirming the continuation of the home's current operation and resource (NMS 15.2)
- ensure regular monitoring, in line with regulations, of all records kept by the home to ensure compliance with the home's policies, to identify any concerns about specific incidents and to identify patterns and trends. Specific attention to be given to risk assessments, references, photo identification and driving licence details (NMS 21.2)
- ensure a written or electronic record is kept by the home detailing the time and date and length of each supervision held for each member of staff, including the registered person. (NMS 19.5)

## Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people receive a high quality short breaks service from a highly committed and dedicated staff team. Whilst staying in the home, young people attend their usual educational provision on a daily basis, with transport provided. This ensures that their routines are not affected and provides continuity of care and education.

Young people are supported by the staff team to develop a positive self-view and increased confidence. A range of social activities is provided for young people, including swimming, attendance at a local youth club, canal boat and outdoor pursuit's holidays and day trips. Inclusion in such activities has led to increased confidence and happiness for those young people staying in the home.

One parent of a young person stated, 'I like the fact that they take my son out and about on different activities/places in the community.' Another parent stated, 'They always concentrate on a young person's strengths and are brilliant with their behaviour.'

Young people are encouraged and supported by the staff team to take part in as many local activities as possible. They are supported to grow vegetables at the local community garden and have had artwork and photography displayed at a local art gallery. A local artist has worked closely with the staff and young people over the past year and produced some excellent art features in the home garden. The artwork depicts images, which young people had worked on.

The staff team have worked very hard to develop a positive relationship with the local community. Young people are fully integrated into the local community during

their stays at the home. Some of them attend a local youth club; others regularly use the local shops to purchase groceries. Staff support young people to use public transport where appropriate and access local leisure centres and other resources on a regular basis.

Staff keep in close contact with family during the short breaks stays. This ensures that parents and other family members are reassured that their child is being well cared for and that all of their complex needs are being met. The service offers a much-needed break for immediate family members, with a highly committed and well-trained staff team looking after young people to a very high level. One parent stated 'I have complete confidence in them. They keep me informed about what my child has done during his stay and how he has been.'

Staff devise a transition plan for those young people approaching eighteen years of age, who will be leaving the provision. This plan contains detailed and individualised information about each young person, which is then passed on to the relevant adult service provision. This ensures that young people make a smooth transition to their new services, and that new staff can meet their individual needs with confidence.

## **Quality of care**

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

A highly motivated and dedicated staff team cares for the young people. Because of this, young people thoroughly enjoy the time they spend at this short-breaks provision. An Independent Reviewing Officer stated, 'I speak with young people regularly and they are always impressed with the home and staff, as are the parents.' Young people's behaviour is generally positive, taking into account their complex needs. Use of physical restraint and sanctions is very low, with staff being able to use distraction and de-escalation techniques to support young people.

Young people are involved in weekly meetings with staff, where their wishes and feelings are discussed about how the home is run. The records from those meetings are then taken into the staff meetings, to ensure that appropriate action is taken wherever possible. Some of the young people have also been members of the local parliament and been supported by staff to attend meetings. This has enabled them to represent their wishes and views to leaders of the local council and ask questions about the services they receive.

Young people are supported by staff to make complaints in a manner appropriate to their level of ability and functioning. Parents and carers are also encouraged to discuss any concerns with the staff team. Parents and carers feel confident in being able to discuss any concerns or issues with the staff team and rarely use the formal complaints process. Where the process has been used, all issues have been dealt with at the informal stage of the process, to the satisfaction of the parent or carer. Young people are provided with a personalised children's guide on arrival. This includes easy-to-understand information about complaints and who they can talk to, if they have any worries.

An independent advocate visits the home every month. This provides young people with an opportunity to discuss any concerns or issues they may have with someone independent. This person would be able to ensure that any issues were formally dealt with and oversee that this was to the satisfaction of the young person and their family.

Young people have a residential action plan devised and overseen by their key worker. This contains detailed information about their individual needs and how they will be met whilst they are in the home. Transport is provided so young people can attend their usual educational provision whilst in short-breaks. A wide and imaginative range of activities is available to young people during their stay, which they clearly enjoy and benefit from. One parent stated, 'There are plenty of opportunities for my daughter that I wouldn't be able to do and staff are always friendly.'

The Home employs a full, and part-time cook, who provide highly nutritional and healthy meals for the young people. Menu planning takes into account the varied cultural and religious needs of young people and involves consultation with parents and carers. Young people celebrate various religious events and festivals whilst at the home. The cooks provide imaginative and exciting meals for such occasions. One social worker stated, 'The cooks provide very healthy and balanced meals for the young people.'

Young people have access to their own health professionals whilst staying in the home. A clinical training co-ordinator also provides additional training and advice to the staff team. Young people are cared for in a very well-maintained house, which provides a very homely environment to meet their needs. Residential action plans take into account each young person's specific cultural, religious and dietary needs. Care staff work closely with catering, social work, education and other involved agencies to ensure consistency of care.

### **Safeguarding children and young people**

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

A committed and skilled staff team keep young people safe from harm in the home and when out on trips or activities. Young people present as feeling safe and happy during their short break stay. The home is maintained to a good standard with attention given to security at all times by the staff team. High staffing ratio's further ensure that young people's whereabouts are known at all times and that they are supervised and monitored closely.

There have been no reported incidents of young people going missing from the home since the last inspection. A joint protocol for children missing in care is in place and used in the event of a young person's whereabouts not being known. Staff report a good understanding of the relevant policies and procedures and ability to follow them if necessary.

Positive behaviour is promoted by the staff team for young people at all times. The use of physical restraint in the home is minimal. Any restraints used are only undertaken by suitably trained staff and recorded in line with the legislative framework. Staff speak with young people following the use of any restraint and their views are recorded as a significant event on their individual case files.

Staff employed to work in the home have been carefully selected prior to taking up their positions. Recording of all necessary information and checks has not always been placed onto individual staff member's files however, and a number of actions have been made for the Registered Manager to address. There have been no allegations made since the last inspection and a very small number of complaints, all of which were addressed promptly and resolved. Recording of complaints is to a good standard and in line with national and local requirements.

The home is physically safe for the young people. Staff supervision of young people at all times ensures their continued safety whilst in the home. The gardens are also secure and prevent the risk of young people being able to leave the property. Staff provide very high levels of support and supervision to the young people at all times. There are also monitoring systems in place to enable staff to know if young people have left their rooms during the night. Staff receive regular training in relation to safeguarding and demonstrate a detailed awareness of their roles and responsibilities in this area.

## **Leadership and management**

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

The Home is effectively and efficiently managed by a very committed and dedicated staff team. The staff team demonstrate a strong commitment to ensuring that young people enjoy their short break experience. Young people take part in a wide range of activities during their stay, which promotes positive social, cultural and emotional opportunities. The home has a diverse staff group who demonstrate real enthusiasm and commitment in their work with the young people.

Staff meetings are held on a regular basis to discuss practice and performance matters, as well as individual young people. Handover meetings take place each day, in order to ensure full and detailed information is passed to the next staff shift. A detailed Statement of Purpose is in place, which sets out the aims and objectives of the home. A children's guide is also in place, devised in a format, which young people can understand. The children's guide does not have details of how children can contact their independent reviewing officer or access an independent advocate. This has been raised with the Registered Manager and will be addressed.

Young people's meetings take place on a regular basis in the home. Young people are actively encouraged to raise any issues or wishes they may have. A record is taken from those meetings, which is then discussed in staff meetings and actions agreed. Young people's views are actively encouraged and sought by the staff team



on a daily basis. One young person had requested a trip to London with some of their peers. This was facilitated by staff recently and photographs of that trip are on display in the home. Some young people have also been members of the local youth parliament, enabling them to raise issues with local council leaders.

Staff have access to a wide range of training opportunities and have are all qualified to the required level. Supervisions take place regularly, and are recorded and signed by staff and supervisors. The duration of the supervisions is not recorded currently. This has been raised with the Registered Manager and will be addressed. The Registered Manager oversees the completion of quality assurance monitoring exercises each month in the home. Assistant managers complete action plans, which the Registered Manager oversees. The Registered Manager is aware that monitoring reports should be sent to HMCI on a regular basis.

The home does not currently have a development plan in place to assist the staff team to be clear as to the short and longer terms goals and objectives for the home. This has been discussed with the Registered Manager. The Registered Manager and staff team understand the strengths and weaknesses of the home and demonstrate a real commitment to improving the services they offer. Records relating to young people are set out in a very clear and contemporary manner. They are easy to read, and have full and relevant information relating to each young person. Residential action plans enable staff to meet individual needs of young people and provide high quality care and support.

Records relating to the staff team require further attention in order to ensure consistency. Not all relevant documentary evidence is on each staff member's files and checks of certain documentation are not always reviewed and updated regularly. A range of risk assessments are in place for the home, although these are not sufficiently reviewed and updated. These documents have been discussed with the Registered Manager who plans to address them.

One social worker stated, 'The staff are committed to the young people, provide detailed reports and always attend review meetings.' An independent reviewing officer reported, 'They give a really good level of service.' Such comments reflect the staff team's commitment to the young people they work with. Imaginative and dynamic practice ensures that young people look forward to coming to the home and have a positive experience each time. One parent stated, 'It will be a sad day when my son turns 18 and no longer goes there, as they have been a big part of his life.'

Equality and diversity practice is **good**.