

## Inspection report for children's home

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<b>Inspector</b>	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>	06/12/2011
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## Service information

### Brief description of the service

The home is owned by a national organisation. It offers accommodation for seven 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. Children and young people who access this service can be aged between five and 19 years.

### The inspection judgements and what they mean

**Outstanding:** a service that significantly exceeds minimum requirements

**Good:** a service that exceeds minimum requirements

**Adequate:** a service that only meets minimum requirements

**Inadequate:** a service that does not meet minimum requirements

## Overall effectiveness

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

Young people who stay at this service live in a safe, caring and supportive home environment that enables them to make steady progress in all aspects of their lives. Young people feel safe and are protected from significant harm. Young people are happy with the quality of care and the support they receive from the staff. This is reflected in the positive relationships and trust that exist between young people and staff.

All aspects of care planning and practice are personalised and tailored to meet the individual needs of each young person and take into account their disabilities. Staff work in a coordinated way with young people, their family, social workers and the school. This ensures that young people continue to get the right help, guidance and advice they need on a daily basis. Young people's needs and views are sought in the running of the home. Staff use communication and observation skills to seek young people's views about aspects of the care.

The home is adequately managed. The management and organisation place emphasis on the promotion of good childcare practice and they are working hard to improve the service and steady progress is noted within this report. As a result of this inspection, issues were raised around the medication policy and medication

refresher training for staff, the frequency of young people's meetings and staff meetings, along with key work undertaken and documented with young people. The safeguarding policy has been updated but some errors still remain and the maintenance of the environment is raised as the home are in the middle of some scheduled works.

## 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
21 (2001)	ensure there are suitable arrangements for the recording, handling, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of any medicine received into the children's home and for example, that the policy is regularly reviewed and updated (Regulation 21)	30/06/2012
16 (2001)	update and maintain a written policy which is intended to safeguard children accommodated in the home. (Regulation 16)	30/06/2012

### Recommendations

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

- ensure that all children communicate their views on all aspects of their care and support, for example through key worker sessions and regular young people's meetings (NMS 1.3)
- ensure that the home provides a comfortable and homely environment and is well maintained and decorated (NMS 10.3)
- ensure that there is a good quality learning and development programme which staff are supported to undertake, such as attending refresher training on medication (NMS 18.1)
- ensure that staff are easily able to access the advice needed to provide a comprehensive service for children and young people, for example by having regular staff meetings. (NMS 19.7)

### Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people's enjoyment of school is reflected in their continued attendance while they stay at this home. They have a sense of pride over their achievements which is equally recognised and celebrated by the staff. For example, when sharing homemade cakes baked at school and brought home. This means that young people are developing self-worth and confidence building during their stay.

The staff support young people to have opportunities to develop their personal and social skills to take responsibility for their own health and well-being, now and in the future. For example, they are developing personal care skills and positive social interaction. This level of support is enabling young people to be more prepared for adult life. Young people also make a positive contribution, in learning about budgeting, shopping and undertaking simple household chores where appropriate.

Young people have house meetings and spend time with key workers that provide them with opportunities to contribute to the running of the home during their stay. These meetings cover a range of topics that includes discussing activities, outings and expressing feelings. Recognition is given to young people's identity and diverse needs. This extends to demonstrating how cultural needs are met on a day-to-day basis. However, the young people's meetings and key work undertaken with staff are not consistently maintained and documented.

Individual needs are assessed and addressed in a way that promotes dignity and privacy. Support, which is detailed within young people's placement plan, is provided to ensure that young people have their needs acknowledged and that they feel included and valued. Parents are also fully involved with this process.

## Quality of care

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

Young people experience a caring and secure relationship with staff. This is validated in the positive regard young people hold towards the staff supporting them. Staff ensure that meals reflect the heritage and personal preferences of young people. This includes young people being actively involved in writing shopping lists and, with support, going to the supermarkets to purchase their own food. Care planning embraces equality and diversity issues. This includes recognising young people's identity and formatting responses to these needs that are then brought into everyday care. For example, each week the home celebrates a different culture which the young people are encouraged to take it in turns, to choose. Recently, they celebrated with 'pie and mash' with regards to a northern town in Britain and they have worn sombreros and played with piñata with regards to a Spanish theme. This helps young people to respect the identity and culture of others in a fun environment. Other activities have included swimming, dancing, playing with balloons and horse riding, all of which have been enjoyed by the young people.

Health plans, like care plans, are tailored to individual needs of young people during their stay at the home. The home has positive relationships with parents and carers

to ensure that information is shared so that young people's health and well-being is promoted. There are arrangements in place for dealing with medication. However, the policy has not been updated for some time and does not make any reference to current legislation or guidance regarding children's homes or give specific information regarding medication that has been lost or mislaid. This has not directly affected the outcome of young people placed.

The learning and development opportunities offered to young people assist them in developing their self-esteem. For example, young people have a positive self-image from being able to learn skills, such as undertaking personal care tasks. Staff also have positive links with the school attended by young people, which is part of this organisation, including contributing to meetings to promote continuity.

The rapport between staff young people and is caring. This means young people's feelings are respected and they can influence decisions over the running of the home. There are systems to enable young people to make a complaint which includes information about how to contact Ofsted directly and other helping agencies.

The home is appropriately located to help young people to build social networks that promote a sense of belonging and identity. Young people's care plans reflect their needs for stability and protection, while still ensuring they have the opportunity to sustain attachments and relationships important to them.

Young people stay in an environment that promotes their well-being. This includes regular safety checks being carried out on fire precautions and hot water temperatures plus annual checks on electrical and gas safety. However, the home is currently undergoing a maintenance upgrade, including some decorating of the communal areas and bedrooms. There are also additional works planned for the kitchen and work on one of the bathrooms is currently on going.

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

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

Through working together with parents, social workers and other agencies, the staff help young people to stay healthy and to feel safe. All care staff receive regular safeguarding training. Safeguarding is steered by the leadership to ensure the quality of provision is maintained in the best interests of young people. This includes being protected from hazards associated with fire, water, electrical safety and also from going missing. However, the safeguarding and whistleblowing policy although recently reviewed, contain incorrect information.

Staff appreciate the vulnerability of young people and the serious implications bullying can have on their welfare. There is a commitment by staff to be vigilant to any signs of potential bullying. Young people surveyed both report feeling safe and also free from being bullied.

Written guidance on safer recruitment practice is in place to ensure the recruitment and selection process of new staff remains robust. In addition, regular repeats of Criminal Records Bureau checks are completed to ensure staff continue to be suitable to work with children.

Behaviour management techniques are used which take into account the child's age, understanding and the seriousness of the situation at any given point. This support helps children to cope with their emotions. Where care staff need to give additional help, they use diversion, re-direction and de-escalation. Physical intervention is used as a last resort to protect the safety of the young person and others. Care staff demonstrate in their care of young people that they are sensitive to individual needs and respond if a child is showing any sign of becoming distressed so they can intervene before it escalates.

Young people do not routinely go missing from care. If this does occur, procedures for safeguarding are in place to protect young people from harm. Supportive risk assessments clearly identify risks specific to individual young people. The environment is safe and appropriately secure, taking into account the needs and characteristics of young people.

## **Leadership and management**

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

The relationship between young people and staff is evident within their everyday interaction. There is a nice rapport that enables young people to experience fun and the development of their social skills during their short break. There is a clear, accessible and comprehensive Statement of Purpose that sets out its aims and objectives of the home. These objectives are being utilised in everyday practice, including ensuring children stay safe, feel safe and are cared for during their stay.

There were two requirements and four recommendations made at the last inspection and these have been addressed. As a result, there are shift leaders in place in the absence of the Registered Manager and staff receive appropriate supervision and appraisals. Additionally, the missing from care protocol has been established, maintenance work to do with plastering and bathroom privacy locks have been attended to. The children's guide has been updated to include details of Ofsted Children's Rights Director and the Registered Manager has updated some policies and procedures as highlighted on that inspection. This means that the home is making steady progress.

A representative on behalf of the organisation undertakes regular monthly visits to look at the overall effectiveness of the home and copies of these reports are regularly sent to Ofsted. Monitoring of records is also undertaken by the Registered Manager and helps to identify some of the strengths and weaknesses within the service.

Young people's records are securely stored and provide a picture of each child's stay

at the home, including their likes and dislikes. Partnerships are forged with the school and parents by working together in the best interests of the young people. Additionally, there are systems in place to notify relevant people if significant events occur within the home.

Young people are supported by sufficient numbers of staff to meet their needs all of which have completed, or are undertaking, an appropriate qualification in childcare. Staff receive regular supervision in which their performance is monitored. However, regular staff meetings where staff may seek additional support and advice are not consistently undertaken and documented; some refresher staff training, such as medication, has also lapsed.



## 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.