

## Inspection report for children's home

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<b>Inspector</b>	Angela Whiteley
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<b>Provision subtype</b>	Children's home

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<b>Date of last inspection</b>	07/02/2012
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## Service information

### Brief description of the service

This privately run Children's home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to five young people who have learning disabilities.

### The inspection judgements and what they mean

**Outstanding:** a service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements

**Good:** a service of high quality 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 **good**.

Young people live in a caring and supportive environment. They make good progress across all aspects of their welfare and development. Effective policies and procedures underpin the knowledge and practice of staff in ensuring that young people are protected from harm and feel safe. A committed and well-trained staff team have detailed knowledge of each young person. Dedicated care teams allow young people to develop strong relationships with a smaller staff group who can meet their complex individual needs.

There is good communication between young people, staff and others who have an interest in securing positive progress for young people. Staff use a range of communication methods to ensure the views of young people are gathered and that they are able to contribute to the running of the home. Parents say that their children are well cared for and placing social workers note that young people are, 'doing really well,' at the home. Staff ensure individual support and attention is provided to young people. They help young people to develop new skills and emotional resilience at their own pace, in preparation for adult life. However, there is no system for planning and monitoring this progress. The use of physical restraint has significantly reduced, however, the methods of de-escalation used are not clearly recorded. It is therefore not always clear whether the use of physical restraint was necessary.

Staff promote young people's individuality and this helps them develop a positive self-image. They ensure individual needs are met through personalised, well-planned care plans and detailed risk assessments. However, not all documents are up to date and signed and some are missing from the file, so young people do not have a full

picture of their care journey.

Four requirements and six recommendations are made to improve practice and outcomes for young people. These relate to minor shortfalls in auditing and quality assurance systems, the content of the Statement of Purpose, the review of the development plan, the review of the children's guide and notifications of outcomes of significant events. These breaches in regulation mainly relate to administrative procedures and have minimal impact on young people. Staff act in accordance with policies and procedures and this promotes the safety and welfare of young people.

## 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
5 (2001)	Review and update the statement of purpose to contain up to date details of the staffing arrangements. (Regulation 5 (a))	26/07/2012
17B (2001)	ensure that the record of physical restraints includes details of any methods used to avoid the need to use that measure (Regulation 17 (4) (b))	26/07/2012
28 (2001)	ensure records for each child who is accommodated include the information, documents and records specified in Schedule 3 of this regulation. Also ensure they are kept up to date and signed and dated by the author (Regulation 28 (1) (a-c))	26/07/2012
30 (2001)	ensure that if any events listed in column 1 of the table in Schedule 5 takes place, the registered person shall without delay notify the persons indicated in respect of the outcome of the event- this refers particularly to informing Ofsted of the outcomes of child protection enquiries (Regulation 30 (1); schedule 5)	26/07/2012
33 (2001)	ensure the registered provider supplies a copy of the report completed of each visit conducted under this regulation and paragraph (4)(c) to both Ofsted and the Registered Manager of the children's home (Regulation 33 (5) (a) (b))	26/07/2012
34 (2001)	ensure a report in respect of any review conducted for the purpose of paragraph (1) of this regulation, is provided to Ofsted (Regulation 34 (2))	26/07/2012

### Recommendations

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

- encourage children to take appropriate risks as a normal part of growing up (NMS 4.4)
- ensure children's independence skills are promoted so that they can reach their potential and achieve economic wellbeing, in particular ensure planning and monitoring systems are in place (NMS 12.1)
- review the Children's Guide to include the contact details of Independent Reviewing Officers, the Children's Rights Director, Ofsted and how to secure access to an independent advocate (NMS 13.5)
- ensure there is a written development plan in place, reviewed annually. (NMS 15.2)

## Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people enjoy good health and have access to a broad range of health services. They attend appointments with specialist health professionals which enable individual health needs to be met. Medication is robustly monitored and safely administered to ensure young people receive their correct medication in line with their individual health plans. Young people are encouraged to understand the importance of good personal hygiene and the use of picture boards supports them with their daily routines.

Staff encourage young people to lead a healthy lifestyle through the provision of healthy foods and encourage appropriate meal choices. Young people are taught independence and social skills that take account of their abilities and understanding. They undertake simple tasks with staff support which develops their self-esteem and confidence such as, learning to make snacks and how to use public transport. However, this does not form part of a formal independence programme that is reviewed and monitored in preparation for adulthood. Additionally, not all young people are encouraged to take appropriate risks as part of their development and growing up as they need high levels of supervision and support.

Staff work individually with young people helping them to understand and address the impact their life experiences have on the behaviours they exhibit. Some young people have made good progress which is closely linked to individual positive behaviour management strategies. They are beginning to recognise triggers to their emotions and can remove themselves from presenting situations without becoming angry.

Young people have made good educational progress from their starting point in the home and have excellent school attendance. The home has strong links with school and communicates daily to monitor progress and enable a consistent approach to young people's care. Their achievements are celebrated and recognised through praise and rewards. Young people participate in physical activities that benefit their

well-being such as swimming, walking, climbing. They receive close supervision and support from staff to enable them to take part and stay safe. Photographs displayed in the home show young people taking part and enjoying a variety of activities, which indicates the level of trust they have developed in the staff.

Young people have a strong sense of identity, reinforced by regular contact with their families. Individual contact plans contain arrangements for some young people to visit their family overnight in preparation for moving on. There is good communication between the home and families, which helps to inform care planning.

## Quality of care

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

Young people receive a good quality care and have positive relationships with staff. A parent said, 'staff do a fantastic job' and another felt that her daughter had, 'bonded well with some staff'. The staff have a broad range of experience and knowledge and are able to demonstrate a good understanding of young people's needs. They work proactively to provide opportunities for young people to succeed within the home and in the local community. Young people's views and feelings are central to the planning and day-to-day running of the home.

A range of communication methods are used so that all young people are able to contribute their views about their care. They make decisions about the clothes they wish to wear, the activities they wish to pursue and the meals they like to eat. Storyboards and picture cards help young people to communicate their wishes and feelings and inform the planning of their day. Detailed placement plans and positive behaviour management plans are in place and provide details of individual needs including identity and cultural needs. Plans are reviewed, often alongside young people, placing social workers, parents and education staff as a result of which they accurately meet individual needs.

Staff support and promote young people's education and have much success in returning young people to full-time education. Staff have good communication links with education professionals and address any areas of concern quickly. Young people have good access to a range of services that promote health and well-being. These include specialist mental health services, a learning disability nurse, the speech and language team and medical consultants. Staff have good knowledge and training in specific medical conditions, such as complex epilepsy care and support young people to manage their condition as they approach adult life.

Young people and their families have access to the home's complaints procedure. They have key worker sessions and access to independent advocates to discuss any concerns they have and receive support to make a complaint. Records are maintained as required and these demonstrate there have been no complaints since the last inspection.

Young people live in a spacious and well-equipped home that takes full account of

their complex needs. The home is well-maintained and young people benefit from a thoughtfully planned and safe outdoor play area.

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

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

Systems are in place to support and safeguard young people. The staff team are fully trained in safeguarding issues and are confident in implementing the policies and procedures. They attend regular refresher training to keep them up-to-date. Young people are safe in the home and community and can identify an adult in the home that they can talk to if they have any concerns. Staff recognise the particular vulnerabilities relating to the diverse needs of young people and take appropriate action to address them.

All young people have individualised comprehensive risk assessments in place, which help to keep them safe. The home has no episodes of young people being missing. The staffing levels at the home provide a minimum of one-to-one support. This minimises any incidents of bullying and staff are aware of the signs and symptoms to look for. The home implements robust and thorough recruitment procedures to assess the suitability of new staff to work with young people. Similarly, the safety and welfare of young people is promoted by the arrangements for checking and supervising visitors to the home.

Young people are supported to develop positive relationships and behaviours. This is achieved through individual behaviour management plans, which focus on incentives and rewards. These help young people self-regulate their behaviours. All staff are trained in the appropriate use of physical restraint and this is only used when a young person is at risk of harm to themselves or others. There is an indication that behaviour management strategies are effective as incidents of physical restraint have reduced over time. Although de-escalation techniques are used to good effect in practice, records do not contain this level of information. The home is therefore unable to fully demonstrate why the use of physical restraint was necessary.

Records are held in respect of any sanction that is issued. However, the use of sanctions is minimal as their effectiveness for young people is limited by their cognitive development and complex needs. Staff work individually with young people to help them develop skills and better manage their own challenging behaviour and that of others around them.

Young people enjoy a safe and secure environment. There are good safety systems in place within the home through regular testing of electrical, gas, and fire equipment. Young people are involved in fire evacuation practices so they know how to leave the home safely in the event of an emergency.

### **Leadership and management**

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

The home benefits from an enthusiastic and appropriately qualified Registered Manager. The organisation has introduced a deputy manager post as part of their development plan. This has presented the manager with additional time to develop and implement systems to effectively monitor and evaluate the standard of care young people receive. This assists with the smooth running of the home and identifies areas for further improvement.

An external manager also monitors practice by conducting visits to the home. Reports completed in line with these visits are not consistently forwarded to Ofsted and outcomes of child protection enquiries are not notified as required. Although representing a breach in Regulations, these actions have not had a detrimental impact on young people as issues are appropriately identified and addressed. The current review of the homes monitoring systems is intended to make these processes more effective. Similarly, a review of the development plan is intended to drive forward improvements for the benefit of young people. Some recommendations from the last inspection have not been fully implemented. These were addressed during this inspection.

The home is resourced well with a high staff ratio. A minimum of one-to-one staffing ensures young people are safe, fully supported and supervised. This meets the aims and objectives of the home's Statement of Purpose, however the staff information is not clear and up to date. Although this does not have a direct impact on care delivery it does not inform people about the experience, qualifications and competency of the staff team.

The staff team are well qualified. They receive a broad range of training and this equips them with the skills needed to provide high quality care to young people. Staff receive regular supervision and support which ensures they have the opportunity to develop their practice to meet young people's needs. Staff say they feel well supported by their management team.

The children's guide provides information in a child-friendly format, including a pictorial version. However, it does not contain all the relevant contact details that are required such as, the independent reviewing officer and how to access an independent advocate. This means that young people, or anyone acting on their behalf may not be aware of the actions they can take to seek independent advocacy.

Young people's records generally present a good overall picture of their experiences at the home, however some records such as, pathway plans, care plans and personal education plans are unsigned and not up to date. This is primarily the responsibility of the placing authority but the absence of this information hinders staff in supporting young people, particularly with their educational needs. Young people are encouraged to contribute to their care plans using a range of communication techniques and parents are involved in the process. This makes them relevant to the individual.





## 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.