

## Inspection report for children's home

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<b>Inspection date</b>	28/06/2012
<b>Inspector</b>	David Martin
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Full
<b>Provision subtype</b>	Children's home

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<b>Date of last inspection</b>	05/03/2012
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## Service information

### Brief description of the service

The home is registered to provide accommodation and care for up to 12 children, boys and girls, between the ages of six and 17. Children who use the home generally stay there for 35 days per year. These days are spread over a number of short breaks at regular intervals through the year which provide parents and families with some respite care.

The home is designed and purpose built to provide care for children with a range of disabilities. It has specialised equipment, aids and adaptations to support children with physical disabilities. Part of the home is a designated self-help unit for older and more able young people to develop their life skills and support their transition to adulthood.

### 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 **adequate**.

This service provides young people with good outcomes and ensures that their social and emotional needs are met well. Young people have good school attendance and their health needs are met as required. The home has had several changes of manager since registration in 2010 which has resulted in inconsistent leadership and slowed progress in improving the service. The current manager has begun to create solid foundations on which to take the home forward, but is due to leave the post in the near future. The line managers for the home are taking action to resolve the situation and ensure that a new manager is appointed as a matter of priority. This inspection identified a number of areas for improvement and recommendations have been made accordingly. They include concerns about the quality of record keeping, the participation of young people in decision making, monitoring processes and the appointment of a Registered Manager.

## 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
7 (2001)	appoint an individual who is fit to manage the home and make an application for them to be registered to do so. (Regulations 7 & 8)	03/09/2012

## Recommendations

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

- ensure that the participation of young people in decision making in the home is evidenced in case records (NMS 1)
- ensure that case records contribute effectively to an understanding of each young person's life; in particular short breaks care plans, day-to-day records and keyworker sessions (NMS 22)
- ensure that medicines are handled safely; in particular identify and implement any specific requirements regarding the way in which the use of controlled medicines is recorded (NMS 6.13)
- ensure that safeguarding training for all staff specifically addresses the needs of young people with learning disabilities (NMS 4.6)
- ensure any restrictions on the freedom of movement of young people have been considered in the light of their individual needs and addressed in their short breaks plan (NMS 3.19)
- submit Regulation 34 reports to Ofsted every six months as a matter of good practice (Children Act 1989 Volume 5: 3.14)
- ensure there is a written development plan, reviewed annually, for the future of the home, identifying planned changes in the operation or resources of the home. (NMS 15.2).

## Outcomes for children and young people

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

Many of the young people have a limited capacity to understand their own personal histories. Nonetheless they have established strong relationships with staff and have made lasting friendships with other young people using the service. The home provides them with a familiar and settled environment in which they are able to

grow, develop confidence and enjoy a sense of well-being. One social worker commented that the young people 'benefit really well from the care that is offered'.

Overall responsibility for ensuring that the health care needs of young people are met is retained by parents and main carers. However, the staff actively support young people to lead healthy lifestyles during their short break stays at the home. Young people are encouraged to eat well, taking into account their personal preferences. There are exercise machines and well equipped play areas enabling young people to enjoy a range of physical activities. The individual health care needs and medical history of each young person are set out in case records. This ensures that young people are looked after safely and consistently.

Young people's overall educational needs are also the responsibility of parents and carers. Young people have excellent school attendance and are supported to and from school by staff as the need arises. Young people have good opportunities to continue their learning at the home, having access to computers, a soft play area and other specialist equipment.

The majority of young people have communication difficulties and are unable to express their opinions other than through simple choices and non-verbal signals. While young people are encouraged to participate in day-to-day decision making in the home this is not evidenced well in the home's records. This does not enable the staff to demonstrate that young people are being consulted or that individual young people have made progress in their ability to make decisions or to share their views.

All young people live with their families and attend the unit only for short breaks care.

Young people of all ages are assisted to develop self-caring and independence skills in accordance with their ability. Young people who are approaching adulthood are well supported to make the transition to adult provision. Where appropriate, young people participate in activities such as meal preparation and baking. This contributes to their sense of well-being and helps them to develop their confidence.

## Quality of care

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

The home has a relaxed but lively atmosphere and young people clearly enjoy the time they spend in the home. They are warmly welcomed by staff when they come in from school. The young people interact positively with each other and have been well matched to ensure a compatibility of age, ability and interests. Staff supervise the young people closely to ensure that they are engaged in safe, constructive activities. This also helps to promote positive behaviour and keeps the impact of negative behaviour on others to a minimum.

As noted above, evidence that young people are encouraged to share their views is not well recorded. All young people have individual keyworker sessions in which they

can develop practical skills and spend time on their own with staff to explore their feelings and wishes. The sessions are not always written up and do not always offer evaluation of the way in which the work has contributed to young people's personal development. This does not provide a full account of the young person's journey through short breaks care.

Similarly, some of the day-to-day recordings, relating to the way in which a young person has spent their time in the home, are repetitive and lacking in observations that assist in the development or adjustment of care plans. The home has acknowledged that care planning is an area that requires improvement to ensure that young people's needs and daily routines are clearly identified and met. The standard of recording and planning does not always make a significant or effective contribution to young people's care.

Some of the young people have complex health care needs that require invasive procedures. This is carried out safely and only by staff who have had sufficient training to do so. In general, all medication is stored and administered safely. Some medications used in the home are classed as controlled drugs. While they are stored securely, the home has not identified whether there are any specific requirements in relation to the way their use is recorded. This does not always ensure that medicines are handled in an accountable way.

While parents are responsible for ensuring that young people's educational needs are met, the home is fulfilling its role in supporting young people to do well in school. It provides transport and escorts to ensure young people arrive and return safely. The staff regularly liaise with education professionals and parents to ensure a consistency in approach.

The home is purpose built and provides a safe and secure environment for young people. There is a wide range of play and leisure equipment for young people who want to be busy and ample space in which to relax or spend quiet, private time. The home makes good use of leisure facilities and organised activities in the local and wider community. This ensures that young people can participate in their favourite activities and have opportunities for new experiences.

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

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

Young people said they feel safe and well cared for. One young person said that they had been coming to the unit since they were little and 'always feels safe'. Staff have a good understanding of their responsibilities to safeguard young people and to manage the environment and daily activities in a way which protects young people from harm. Staff are confident about reporting any child protection concerns. They have completed safeguarding training but it did not examine the needs of young people with learning disabilities and limited communication and comprehension. This does not fully protect vulnerable young people.

None of the young people go missing from the home. When they are out in the community staff closely supervise young people to ensure that they are made aware of potential dangers and do not go off on their own. This helps to protect young people from harm.

The staff have undertaken behaviour management training which included an additional module used to look specifically at the needs of young people with learning disabilities. This was valued highly by staff and has provided them with an excellent insight into the triggers to challenging behaviour. The staff have been able to implement their learning and have modified the way they work with individual young people. They promote positive behaviour without the need for the use of physical intervention. The use of sanctions is not considered appropriate given the limited capacity for most young people to understand. None of the young people are involved in offending or anti-social behaviour.

All staff have been robustly vetted and are suitable to work with young people. This helps protect young people from harm.

The environment is safely maintained. At the last inspection a recommendation was made concerning the use of internal door locks. The home was asked to include in each young person's short breaks plan an assessment of the impact of limiting access to parts of the building. To date this has not been achieved. The home is not able to fully demonstrate that the personal safety needs of young people have been considered on an individual basis.

## **Leadership and management**

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

The home has had several changes in manager since its registration in 2010 and has had inconsistent leadership through most of this period. The current acting manager has provided stability during the last six months but is due to leave the post in the near future. The vacancy has been advertised and a permanent appointment is expected by the end of August 2012. The absence of a Registered Manager has not enabled the home to develop or consolidate progress. This is not in the best interest of young people.

The Statement of Purpose has been reviewed and is up to date. It provides an accurate and detailed account of the service offered by the home. This enables placing social workers to make a considered judgement as to whether the home can meet the needs of young people. The quality of service is monitored through Regulation 33 visits which are used to identify areas for development and improvement. Currently, Regulation 34 reports, the manager's assessment of the way the home is operating, are not submitted to Ofsted which does not fully allow the regulatory authority to monitor activity in the home. No complaints have been received concerning the quality of provision.

The manager has undertaken work to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the

home. This contributes to the overall development of the service. However, as yet a written service improvement plan has not been finalised. This does not enable the home to fully demonstrate measurable progress or engage staff in collective ownership of the standard of service provided for young people. In addition, the home has yet to fully implement the recommendations made at the last inspection in March 2012 and all are repeated in this report.

There are sufficient numbers of qualified and experienced staff on duty each shift to enable close supervision and individual interaction with young people. The staff have completed mandatory training and have access to ongoing training provided by the local authority. This enables staff to keep their practice up to date. All staff have regular supervision which provides them with an opportunity to reflect on their work and identify personal development needs.

All case records are stored securely which ensures that young people's personal information is held confidentially. Young people's reviews are up to date and young people have regular contact with their social workers and reviewing officers. This ensures that young people have access to and can share their views with individuals who are independent of the home.



## 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.