

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Stephen Graham
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This children's home provides short breaks for six children who have a learning disability. The home is operated by the local authority.

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**.

The outcomes for young people staying at the home are good. The support they receive from the manager and staff team is personalised to meet their individual needs. They benefit from good help with their personal health care needs. They attend their education very regularly and are encouraged by staff to participate positively in a range of leisure activities in the community. Young people can practice their self-care skills. They, along with their parents and carers, receive outstanding support and encouragement from staff to discuss their care needs. The building provides a homely and comfortable environment for young people to visit.

The staff team provide young people with outstanding support to help keep them safe. Young people feel safe living at the home. The home is well led and managed. However, visits to monitor the service on behalf of the registered provider do not always take place at the frequency required. There are some minor shortfalls within the documentation available at the home and in recommended staff training. However, these shortfalls have only a limited impact on the good quality care that young people receive from the staff team and 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
33 (2001)	ensure that visits to monitor the conduct of the home take place at least once a month and report on all matters required. (Regulation 33 (3) (a))	30/09/2012

Recommendations

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

- ensure that the children's guide to the service includes all of the information recommended, particularly how a child can contact their Independent Reviewing Officer and the Children's Rights Director (NMS 13.5)
- ensure that all care staff attain a minimum level 3 qualification. (NMS 18.5)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

The staff team at the home work well with parents, carers and social work professionals to achieve good outcomes with the young people who come to visit. Young people receive good individual support. They and their parents and carers talk very regularly with the staff team and their placing social workers. This helps ensure that the care they receive is personalised and meets their individual needs. Social care professionals describe how the staff team 'listen carefully to what parents have to say'. One gives their view that 'parents feel close to the staff'. Another that 'staff work with parents very well, they take on board what parents have to say'. The staff team maintain clear records which demonstrate how good outcomes are being achieved with each young person.

Young people also enjoy a very healthy and active lifestyle during each visit to the home. They participate in a range of healthy activities within their local community. Young people themselves believe that the best things about visiting the home include the trips out organised by the staff. Young people continue to have access to the health services and support that they need during each visit. The staff team have access to a good range of information, resources and independent advice which helps young people to maintain good health. Social care professionals agree strongly that young people receive appropriate health care during each visit to the home.

Young people enjoy good outcomes in their education. Social care professionals agree strongly that their learning is supported by the care they receive at the home. They attend their arranged education very regularly. The staff team work closely with parents, carers and school staff to ensure that information regarding the education of each young person is shared effectively and supports good educational outcomes. Young people can practise and develop their self-care skills during each visit. They are also supported to maintain contact with family and friends as agreed in their care plans.

Quality of care

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

The support and care provided to young people visiting the service is outstanding. Parents, carers and young people themselves discuss and agree their short break care plans with the staff team. Regular meetings are organised to help review the effectiveness of these plans and young people, parents and carers are encouraged by staff to participate fully in these. The manager and staff team also provide detailed written reports to these meetings which demonstrate the quality of the support and care they provide to young people. Equality and diversity issues are identified within care plans and are positively addressed in daily living arrangements during each visit to the home. The staff team works effectively with a range of social care professionals to help ensure that young people receive good quality care. Social care professionals describe the service provided at the home as 'excellent' or 'good'. All confirm that staff 'work well' with them and strongly agree overall that 'children speak well of the staff.'

The staff team has detailed admission procedures available to them which are used to help young people coming to live at the home to settle in quickly. Young people take part in a series of well-organised introductory visits. These help ensure that young people are well matched both with the home and the service it provides as well as with the other young people who come to stay. The admission documentation is completed in detail with the help of parents, carers and placing social workers. This helps to ensure that young people are admitted safely.

The home is comfortably furnished and decorated and meets the needs of the young people who come to visit. Young people each have their own bedroom. These are prepared and personalised for each visit they make to the home. There is very good access to a broad range of local community facilities and local public transport. There are extensive, well-presented gardens and outdoor play facilities for young people to enjoy immediately adjacent to the home.

Young people are supported by the staff team to enjoy healthy diets and they are regularly involved in menu planning and food shopping. Their individual food preferences are recorded for reference within their care files. The food provided at the home includes healthy choices and examples of food from different cultures. The staff team are trained in first aid and the safe administration of medication. They keep clear records of any medication, treatment and first aid given to children during

their visits.

The staff team develop very positive and constructive relationships with each young person coming to visit the home. They use the staff guidance in place and the individual agreements reached with parents, carers and young people themselves to manage behaviours very positively and effectively. Young people, parents and carers are encouraged by the manager to share their views on how the home is run and to give their suggestions on any further improvements the service might make. The manager maintains clear records which demonstrate how ideas and suggestions received, are considered and incorporated into overall care arrangements at the home.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

There are outstanding arrangements to safeguard the young people who visit the home and to ensure that they are cared for safely. The staff team receive training to help protect young people from abuse. They have access to detailed safeguarding guidance and have clear reporting procedures in place. Care plans and risk assessments are completed by the manager and staff in partnership with parents, carers and placing social workers. These identify any risks and protective factors clearly and are monitored and reviewed regularly. Social care professionals with links to the home confirm that the staff team understand how to protect children and safeguard their welfare. They also believe that they work well with children to help them understand how to protect themselves.

The staff team have access to clear procedures which they can use to help ensure that should young people ever go missing from the home, they would be found and kept safe, as quickly as possible. Young people visiting the home enjoy close supervision from the staff team which helps to keep them safe. These arrangements are very effective and there have been no instances of young people going missing or being absent from the home. The use of restraint or any sanctions are very rarely necessary. Young people enjoy very positive and constructive relationships with the staff team.

The manager and staff team work to maintain a safe environment that meets children's needs. They are trained to know what to do in any emergency and they practice this regularly with young people. Health and safety risk assessments are used to help minimise any risks. Regular checks are completed on the safety equipment in place at the home. These arrangements work to ensure the home remains a safe place for young people to live.

Young people benefit from a stable staff team. Arrangements are in place to complete checks on any new staff team members to ensure they are suitable to work with children. Visitors to the home are supervised by staff to help ensure that children are kept safe when they are present.

Leadership and management

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

The management arrangements in place at the home are good. There is a Statement of Purpose in place which has been recently reviewed. It provides some good information about the service provided. Young people receive their own summary guide to the home which also contains some good information. However, the current version does not contain all of the information recommended, for example, details of how a child can contact their own Independent Reviewing Officer, or the Children's Rights Director, so limiting their ability to do so should they wish to.

The staff team overall are experienced and well trained in working with children and young people. They have the knowledge and skills required to care for young people successfully and participate regularly in a range of additional training opportunities. However, some staff members need to commence and complete their additional recommended training. The staff team receive regular supervision and their performance is appraised annually. Daily staffing arrangements are closely monitored by the manager to help ensure that young people receive the care and support they need.

The home has a good relationship with the local community and neighbours. No complaints have been received at the service. The manager has good systems in place which they use to monitor the home's records and to create reports regarding the quality of the service being provided to young people. Monitoring visits to the home are completed by the registered provider. However, these visits do not always take place at the frequency required and do not always report clearly on all of the matters required. The information gathered through the overall monitoring arrangements is considered in detail by the manager and is used to help plan further improvements to the service. Social care professionals believe that improving outcomes for children who use the service is the clear priority of the manager and staff team.

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.