

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	26/09/2012
Inspector	Stephen Graham
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	20/12/2011
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This local authority children's home provides short-break care for up to six young people with physical or 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 who visit the home, their parents and their carers receive outstanding encouragement and support from the staff team to discuss their individual care needs. They are closely involved in helping to plan and agree how these needs will be met. The staff team at the home work closely with a range of health care professionals to ensure that young people receive outstanding support and advice regarding their personal health care needs. The staff team support young people to participate regularly in a range of leisure activities in their local community. Older young people are supported to practice their self-care skills. All young people receive outstanding support to help them enjoy their education and to attend regularly. The home and its gardens are very well presented and equipped. The interior of the building is decorated and furnished to a very high standard. The environment overall is safe and very comfortable for the young people who come to visit.

The staff team work well with young people, parents and carers to ensure that young people are cared for safely and feel safe during each visit to the home. The home is well managed and there are good arrangements to plan and implement further improvements to the service. There are some shortfalls within the monitoring records and other records available at the home. However, these shortfalls impact in only a limited way on the good quality care that young people receive from the staff team.

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 report on all matters required (Regulation 33 (4) (b))	30/11/2012
7 (2001)	ensure that an individual is appointed to be in full time day-to-day charge of the children's home and that they apply for registration with Ofsted. (Regulation 7 (1) and section 11 of the Care Standards Act 2000)	03/12/2012

Recommendations

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

- review the Statement of Purpose for the home to ensure that it describes the service accurately (NMS 13.1)
- provide Ofsted with a copy of each monitoring report completed by the manager. (NMS 21.2 and Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 5: Children's Homes, statutory guidance, paragraph 3.14)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

The outcomes achieved by young people visiting the home are outstanding. They, along with their parents and carers discuss their care plans with the staff team at the home very regularly. These arrangements work very effectively to help ensure that the care young people receive during each visit is personalised and meets their individual needs. The individual development and good outcomes achieved by each young person visiting the home are documented very clearly and shared very effectively by staff with parents, carers and social care professionals involved in their care. One parent commends how the service 'is run fantastically', and adds 'every single member of staff has my child at heart, they listen and respect, support, care, I really can't say enough about how fantastic the home is.'

Young people enjoy a very healthy and active lifestyle during their visits to the home. They participate in an outstanding range of healthy activities within the local community. The staff team work very closely with parents and health care professionals to help maintain good health outcomes for the young people using the service. The staff team access a good range of specialist support, advice and

training. This helps to ensure that young people have access to the health services and support that they need. Social care professionals with links to the home believe that young people visiting the home benefit from appropriate access to health care services that meet their needs. One describes how the home works to meet the individual needs of young people through the 'tailored package of care put in place for each individual child.'

Young people also enjoy outstanding outcomes in their education. The staff team work closely with parents, carers and specialist education staff effectively to support and improve educational outcomes for young people overall. Social care professionals 'strongly agree' that the learning of young people is supported by the care they receive at the home. One commends the 'pro-active approach of staff at the home in their communication with schools.' Young people enjoy very good opportunities to practise and develop their self-care skills. The facilities created at the home to support and encourage this are outstanding. This helps the young people who use the service to make a very positive transition to adult care services as they grow older.

Quality of care

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

Young people coming to visit the home receive outstanding levels of care from the staff team. Detailed care plans are prepared by managers and staff at the home in close partnership with parents, carers and placing social workers. These demonstrate very clearly how the individual care needs of each young person have been assessed. Young people are also encouraged to give their views on how their care needs can be met by staff during each visit they make to the home. Social care and other professionals with close links to the home believe the quality of the service provided to young people overall is 'good' to 'excellent'. The staff team provide very detailed reports to the regular care review meetings held with parents, carers and other professionals. These meetings work very effectively to monitor the quality of the care plans in place. Young people receive outstanding encouragement to participate fully in their review meetings and to give their views in person. They are also supported to contribute their views in writing should they prefer.

Initial introductory visits are organised for young people, their parents and carers to help them become more familiar with the service to be provided in advance of their first stay. The home has very detailed admission procedures, which are used very effectively each day by the staff to admit young people safely on every occasion they visit. The home is very welcoming. The gardens and accessible outdoor play areas are very well maintained and presented. The building is furnished, decorated and equipped to a very high standard and comfortably meets the needs of all the young people who come to stay. One professional with close links to the home commends the 'good equipment in place and accommodation provided, fully accessible to all young people using the service.' Another describes the home as a 'respected community resource.'

Young people enjoy a very healthy diet during each visit they make to the home. The care staff and dedicated cook work very hard to engage and involve young people in menu planning and food preparation where this is possible. Good choices of food are provided, including very healthy options and food from a variety of cultures. An independent dietician assesses the menus in place to further ensure that the choices available are healthy. The care staff team also receive training in food safety, as well as first aid and the safe administration of medication. They also have very good access to a range of external health care professionals who provide them with additional advice and support. They work very closely with them as well as with parents and carers to ensure that their individual health care needs of each young person are fully assessed, clearly understood and are recorded in detail.

The staff team work very effectively to promote and sustain very positive and supportive relationships with the young people who come to visit as well as with their parents and carers. There are written plans in place, agreed for each young person. These help the staff team to manage behaviours and relationships within the home very positively and consistently. Young people are highly encouraged and very well supported to give their personal views on how the service is provided and organised. One social care professional describes very positively how the staff team use 'specialist communication methods to support the involvement of young people in decisions about how the home is run.' Parents and carers are also regularly encouraged to give their views on the quality of the service provided overall, both in person and in writing.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

There are outstanding arrangements in place at the home to safeguard the young people who come to visit. The staff team work very closely with parents, carers and placing social workers to complete detailed individual care plans. These plans clearly identify any risks and agree the protective factors required with each young person. They are subsequently monitored and reviewed very regularly to ensure that they remain effective in helping to keep young people safe. The home also has agreed safeguarding procedures in place and the staff team receive training to help them protect young people from abuse. One social care professional describes how in their experience the staff team 'reassure children and parents during their stays. This, the staff do this well and sensitively.'

Young people do not go missing from the home. Staff have a detailed understanding of what they must do if a young person ever goes missing from the home, to ensure they would be found and kept safe, as quickly as possible. Staff effectively use a range of incentives and sanctions to promote and encourage positive behaviour. The use of agreed sanctions is very rarely necessary at the home. The staff team are trained to use physical restraint if this were ever necessary to keep young people safe. There has been no use of physical restraint at the home. Overall young people enjoy very positive and supportive relationships with the care staff team.

The home provides a very safe and comfortable environment that meets the needs of the young people who live there. Regular health and safety checks are completed to help minimise any risks to young people. The staff team regularly practice what to do in any emergency with the young people who come to visit. There are good arrangements in place to complete checks on new staff team members to ensure they are suitable to work with children. Young people themselves are involved in interviewing potential new staff members and share their views on the suitability of applicants to work at the home. 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 home does not currently have a Registered Manager. However, the registered provider is taking urgent action to fill this position in agreement with Ofsted. There are good arrangements in place to lead and manage the service. The acting manager monitors the quality of care provided to young people very effectively. There is a Statement of Purpose in place for the home which describes the service to be provided to young people, their parents and carers. However, some of the information it contains is currently inaccurate. Young people receive their own summary guide to the home. The guide is very well presented and contains useful information.

The home has a very experienced and qualified staff team. They participate in a range of additional training opportunities needed to help them care for young people successfully. Their work is regularly supervised. The acting manager closely monitors daily staffing levels at the home to ensure that young people who visit receive the care and support that they need.

The acting manager uses the established systems in place to monitor the service and to create reports regarding the quality of care provided to young people. However, summary copies of these reports have not always been provided to Ofsted at the frequency recommended. The information gathered through this monitoring is used to help plan further improvements to the service. Independent monitoring visits to the home are completed on behalf of the registered provider. However, these visits do not always report on all required matters; for example, any complaints received at 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.