

## Inspection report for children's home

---

<b>Unique reference number</b>	SC037986
<b>Inspection date</b>	16/08/2012
<b>Inspector</b>	Gavin Thomas
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Full
<b>Provision subtype</b>	Children's home

---

<b>Date of last inspection</b>	12/01/2012
--------------------------------	------------

---

© Crown copyright 2012

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

## Service information

### Brief description of the service

This is a short-break unit which provides day care and residential short breaks for children and young people with learning disabilities. It is owned and managed by a local council. There are 31 children and young people of either gender who currently use this service.

The home is registered to provide overnight accommodation for a maximum of 5 children and young people between the ages of 5 and 18 years at any one time. Additional numbers of children and young people use the service during the day only, as determined in the Statement of Purpose.

### 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 **outstanding**.

The vast majority of young people who use this service have done so over a number of years. This creates a strong bond between staff, young people and their families. Young people make outstanding progress as a result of using this service. The robustness of care planning, shift planning and short break bookings are all centred on the needs of the individual child/young person. Young people are received into a very warm and friendly environment. Staff are extremely skilled in creating an environment which is suited to the needs of children and young people with complex and challenging needs. This consistent and proactive approach ensures that children and young people cope and tolerate with change and transitions successfully.

Staff are extremely committed to supporting and encouraging young people to not only enjoy the social benefits of their short breaks but to engage in a range of opportunities for learning new skills. There are many success stories of what young people achieve as a result of the staff's persistence and enthusiasm for creating a learning and fun environment. Young people grow and excel in many ways; this is evident in their progress with communication, social skills, self-help skills, confidence and engaging in community-based activities.

The management team and staff work consistently in developing and providing a range of incentives and initiatives for supporting young people and their families. These opportunities include: outreach support, a sleep clinic, transitional work to adult services and tea time visits. The vast majority of young people are unable to communicate their wishes and views verbally. However, young people's capabilities are not underestimated and a range of communication systems are used effectively for ensuring that young people are appropriately involved in decision making and choices. Feedback from parents, social workers and some young people who completed surveys for this inspection, are all indicative of very high levels of satisfaction of this service. One young person said 'Thank you for everything'.

The partnership work with other agencies is extensive and well managed. As a result, young people's care and welfare needs are communicated effectively and incorporated into care planning processes.

Quality assurance and monitoring systems are wide ranging and comprehensive. Young people's care is central to these systems and this is reflected in ongoing monitoring and review processes. Recommendations identified from this inspection are to develop the administration of documents and record keeping.

## Areas for improvement

### Recommendations

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

- update the children's guide to include full details of the complaints procedure including Ofsted's contact details (NMS 13.5)
- ensure that the policy on the use of a key-coded door is located and accessible at all times (NMS 10.4)
- consider the inclusion of young people's achievements more in quality assurance and monitoring reports. (NMS 21)

### Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people are making great strides as a result of the personalised and structured service they receive. The robustness of care planning and reviews takes into account the minute detail of young people's needs and how these are met. The meticulous planning of young people's care is clearly defined and consistent. In turn, young people are very clear of boundaries and expectations during their short break visits.

Young people's targets and goals are realistic and achievable. Staff comment that they are motivated through their work with young people and sharing young people's success and achievements.

Work undertaken with young people in their preparation for moving on is exceptional. New initiatives are constantly being offered to help young people prepare for significant changes in their lives. This includes extensive work with social work professionals and adult placements. Young people are engaged in very stimulating activities and transitional work which helps familiarise them with arrangements for moving on.

Outreach work with families and contact with young people after they have moved on is provided according to individual needs and circumstances. This provision of service is well received and helps ensure that young people's care and support needs are consistently met. One-off events are hosted whereby former and existing young people come together for a social gathering. This is reported to be a great success and helps young people maintain established friendships with staff and their peers.

Young people have a strong presence in the community. They access a wide range of amenities and where possible, they participate in organised events. The teenage group is a very active and enthusiastic group; they are very proactive in exploring and planning a range of events and outings in the community. Photographs are indicative of young people's enjoyment and fulfilment from taking part in these activities.

Parents retain overall responsibility for young people's health and education. However, staff are very proactive in attending meetings and reviews when requested to do so. Staff also have excellent links with schools and specialist education and health professionals. These links help ensure that young people's care plans are kept up to date and support systems strategies are consistent. Young people's health and dietary needs are met according to their needs and preferences. Eating plans are clearly communicated among the staff team for ensuring that young people's diets are cooked and presented according to their wishes.

## Quality of care

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

Young people's communication needs are well known and understood by all staff and this supports opportunities for staff and young people to connect and sustain warm and positive relationships. Staff are very skilled in responding to subtle changes and gestures in young people's behaviours. This helps them to intervene and communicate promptly with young people about their wishes and feelings.

Young people thrive in an environment where they take part in a very wide range of activities and events. The photographic displays are indicative of young people's participation in a number of community-based events and learning opportunities. Activities are very creative and tailored to the needs of individual young people and groups.

The meticulous planning of short breaks and activities means that young people's

individual preferences and wishes are carefully considered at all times. This takes into account religious, cultural, and dietary needs. Young people with similar needs may be accommodated at any one time. Young people are encouraged to take up new challenges and activities such as travel training and attending youth club. These programmes are very structured and tailored to the specific needs of the individual young person.

Care planning is robust and young people's personal goals are very clearly defined and monitored. Young people are making extraordinary progress as a result of the staff's consistent and innovative approach towards helping young people achieve their goals.

Liaison and communication between staff, schools, parents and other professionals is very effective. Parents comment that they have no concerns about the ways in which staff communicate on behalf of their children. The effectiveness of partnership working means that young people experience and benefit from a very personalised, consistent and tailored service.

Young people enjoy the benefits of an environment which is maintained to very high standards. Appliances and apparatus are suitable for young people with a range of communication and mobility needs. The layout of the home enables young people to move around freely while spending quiet times alone if they so wish. Peer interaction is encouraged and supported. However, for some young people, their short break stays are arranged at times which allows them opportunities to enjoy quieter times.

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

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

Parents are very confident and assured that their children are safe. Young people who completed surveys also say that they feel safe.

Young people are well protected and safeguarded through the robustness of risk management processes. All community-based activities are thoroughly risk assessed, ensuring that young people's safety is not compromised.

There are no concerns regarding young people going missing from care. However, written procedures are in place for responding to any concerns that may arise. These procedures are compatible with and have regard to Runaway and Missing from Home and Care protocols. Staff are very vigilant of young people's whereabouts at all times and structured shift planning ensures that all young people are appropriately supervised.

Sanctions are not imposed on young people and staff are very prompt in responding to unusual behaviours or signs of distress exhibited by young people. Restraint and physical intervention is very rare. However, when this occurs, detailed records are made and vigorously monitored by management. When necessary, senior

management intervene for ensuring that the best possible action is taken in helping individual young people through difficult situations. Young people's behaviour plans are detailed and agreed strategies are monitored regularly for effectiveness.

Robust systems are in place for ensuring that prospective staff are thoroughly screened and vetted. This includes the checking of prospective staff via the Criminal Records Bureau and the verification of suitability references prior to offers of employment.

Health and safety monitoring systems are extensive and kept up to date. This includes the servicing of all appliances used by young people, fire safety checks and visual checks of the premises. Young people take part in fire drills at all times of the day including drills after dark. Staff are also taken through virtual fire drills for orientation purposes. Great care is given to the physical environment and layout of furniture and facilities for ensuring that young people are not placed at risk. This takes into account the vulnerability of young people who find it difficult to communicate their needs clearly and whose behaviours are often unpredictable.

One internal door is key-coded to maximise young people's safety. A written policy on the use of a key-coded door is reported to be in place, but could not be located at the time of the inspection.

## **Leadership and management**

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

Young people are cared for and supported by a very strong leadership and staff team. The Registered Manager is suitably experienced and qualified and keeps abreast of training and continuous professional development. The staff team is well established and vacant shifts are covered by regular bank and external agency staff. One sessional staff member describes team work as 'wonderful' and 'supportive' where everyone gets on extremely well together. The deployment of staff on duty at any one time ensures continuity of care and where appropriate, same gender staff work with young people.

Staff are motivated and empowered to utilise their skills and experiences purposefully. This includes staff having lead roles and responsibilities and making effective use of the keyworker system. Staff supervision and appraisal systems are well managed and all staff speak extremely positively about management support and intervention.

All but one staff member has achieved the required professional qualifications or equivalent. Staff attend a broad range of training courses including annual refresher courses. A comprehensive induction system is in place and this includes the completion of the Children's Workforce Development Council standards.

The aims and objectives of the service are well known by staff and embedded in practice. Extensive work with parents and families regarding young people's care and

welfare is ongoing. This increases opportunities for staff to plan young people's care efficiently and proactively. In turn, young people's short break experiences are consistent with their home arrangements and routines.

An up-to-date Statement of Purpose is in place and this is accessible to parents, staff, social workers and other interested parties. The children's guide is available in different languages on request; it is also available on DVD. Details of the complaints procedure are vividly displayed and accessible to young people. However, these details are not included in the children's guide.

There have been no complaints about the service since the last inspection. However, the service has received a number of compliments, mainly from parents about their high levels of satisfaction.

Vigorous monitoring is in place and these processes are wide ranging, involving a number of senior personnel overseeing the day-to-day running of the service. In addition to a detailed annual development plan, parents and families are consulted annually about the provisions of service and where possible, young people's views are constantly sought. Ongoing monitoring of the service is consistent with clear evidence of how the service addresses areas for development. Young people are central to all aspects of business planning with clear aspirations for providing a person centred and tailored service for each young person. Although young people's targets for achievement are clearly identified and monitored, the actual achievements are not always captured and included in monitoring reports.

## 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.