

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC409506
Inspection date	14/08/2012
Inspector	Deirdra Keating
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	14/03/2012
--------------------------------	------------

© Crown copyright 2012

Website: 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 home is run by a local authority and is registered to provide care and accommodation for seven children with 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**.

The home provides well planned long and short term individualised care. This has a positive impact on young people in both long term placements and taking a short respite break. Feedback about the quality of care from young people, their parents and professionals is positive.

The relationships between young people and staff are very good. Young people are attached to staff and enjoy their company. Young people say they have good relationships with the staff and they get on with each other and feel safe at the home.

The home has changed over the last year, expanding the remit to include long term placements. Good management and a consistent staff team has ensured that these changes have been implemented without any impact on the good quality of the care provided to young people.

There are some areas that require development. The shortfalls identified at the inspection include; the provision of keys for bedrooms and the number of vehicles which can have a direct impact on the quality of care that young people receive. Other areas identified, are the internal monitoring reports and the omission of one notification to Ofsted. These do not impact on young people directly.

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
34 (2001)	ensure that the system for the review of quality of care provides for consultation with children, accommodated in the home, their parents, and placing authorities (Regulation 34 (3))	21/12/2012
30 (2001)	ensure that any of the events listed in column 1 of the table in Schedule 5 takes place, the registered person shall notify HMCI without delay (Regulation 30 (1)).	17/08/2012

Recommendations

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

- ensure that home's transport arrangements supports its aims and proposed models of care for children and young people this is with reference to the number of vehicles available (NMS 10.1)
- ensure that physical restrictions for one child do not impose similar restrictions on other children (NMS 10.4).

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people at the service benefit from good long and short term care. Young people in long stay placements have formed strong attachments to staff and key workers, this has helped them to build trust and gives the emotional support. Young people are animated and happy as they anticipate staff members arriving on duty for the next shift.

Social workers report that young people have made positive progress since coming to the home and have developed good self-care routines that have impacted positively on their esteem and confidence. Young people enjoy a variety of regular activities in the local vicinity including swimming and horse riding. They have recently been on holiday and refer to holiday photographs with enthusiasm as they recall where they have been and the range of new activities they enjoyed.

Young people accessing the short breaks service are able to make choices about preferred activities during their stays. They plan with staff to include trips out, during the school holidays, that appeal to them and they can look forward to. The garden

provides a spacious healthy environment in which young people have fun using the climbing apparatus, swings and paddling pool. Young people also enjoy cooking, making play dough and eating lunch outside. They use a 'wish book' to make their ideas known to staff. Staff listen to and value their choices, such as, wanting a take-away meal or going swimming.

Young people all routinely attend school and further education routinely. Attendance is good and staff support young people with daily preparation and transport arrangements well. Home school liaison books help staff know of the day's events and promote good continuity of care.

Young people taking short breaks are usually brought by parents. Arrangements for contact during stays is managed well and tailored to each young person's level of understanding and needs. For long term placements contact is facilitated and supported well by staff. Parents and carers are warmly welcomed to the home and invited to celebrations and events. This helps staff understand young people's diverse family backgrounds and helps young people know their families are valued by staff.

Young people are encouraged and supported make a positive contribution to the wider community. They attend regular community-based activities and also take part in fund raising and national events with others in the community.

Young people moving from the service are supported well. Staff limit the impact of changes on their behaviour by supporting them through the transition. Planned visits and preparation for moves supports young people and their families to say goodbye.

Quality of care

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

Staff have developed good relationships with young people that are genuine and meaningful. They endeavour to get to know young people's individual characteristics and unique traits. For young people, with no verbal communication, staff use a range of formats and aids to ensure they understand young people's changing needs. This works well. On-going communication between staff from one shift to another ensures that staff are well-informed and vigilant about young people's needs. As a result, young people are settled and secure in their individual routines and this in turn promotes a calm and settled environment. There are incidents where frustrations for young people result in unsafe behaviours. Staff manage these incidents well with planned physical interventions, empathy and understanding.

Staff seek young people's views and value their ideas. This includes ideas for trips, menus and activities that young people would like to take part in such as sporting events or visits to a local restaurant. Young people are included in the interviews of new staff. Social workers report that this has helped young people feel included in the running of the home. Young people are signposted to the independent visitors and children's rights. Reports about the quality of home are shared proactively in

formats that young people are able to understand. This proactive approach ensures that all young people are equally provided with extra support and external safeguards in relation to the care they receive.

There are no complaints from young people, good two-way communication means that young people are always able speak to the manager and share their views. Young people say that this helps, staff always have time and are accessible. External complaints are received from time to time. These are processed and responded to in accordance with the complaints procedure in a timely manner.

Staff manage and support young people's health needs in accordance with individual health care plans. Staff are trained in a range of procedures to ensure they can meet the complex health needs of young people. Staff encourage healthy eating and exercise in accordance with individual health needs. Clear health care plans and advice from health professionals ensures that, overall, the health needs of young people are managed well. Placement plans detail how young people are cared for and include all required information to guide staff. Similarly, short break plans include a clear break down of routines in order that young people experience consistency of care which helps them feel familiar and at home.

Staff provide a wide range of activities. Young people go on holidays that give them opportunities to take part in experiences that they enjoy. Young people attending the short break service benefit from peer friendships that help them develop their social interaction skills. Days are planned well with a balance of planned activity outings and free time. Young people benefit from the range of activities offered, although, at times these are difficult to facilitate due to the service having only one vehicle.

Young people's diverse backgrounds are understood by staff and clearly evidenced in their written care plans. This includes cultural background, extended family, religious observance and sense of identity. Life story work has helped staff and young people understand more about their backgrounds and family origin. The work undertaken by staff and outside professionals is detailed and helpful. Young people refer to photos and their family culture as they talk about their families. This has helped young people with learning disabilities start to understand and accept one another's differences.

The home is located well to enable young people to use amenities in the town. Large back gardens promote healthy lifestyles and a variety of activities for all young people, including those accessing short breaks. The service is well maintained and bedrooms are spacious and pleasantly furnished. However, young people do not have keys to their rooms which are locked to prevent access to others. This means that access to bedrooms is restricted for some young people. The home is secured appropriately in line with young people's vulnerabilities and risk assessed for hazards. Appliances and fire prevention equipment are checked regularly to ensure young people's on-going safety.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people report that they feel safe at the service. High levels of supervision mean that staff are always on hand to support young people. Ample space makes the shared living areas easy to manage. Young people are respectful of one another's differences and live alongside one another with ease. In short breaks the layout of rooms provides space and quiet for those who need it. Staff carefully plan occupancy that enables young people who get on well to benefit from spending time with one another. Overall, there are no incidents of bullying or intimidation providing an environment which is safe and nurturing for young people.

Positive behaviour is promoted in accordance with young people's learning disabilities and level of understanding. Young people's complex needs and inability to communicate means that at times physical restraint is used in accordance with clear guidelines. This keeps young people and staff safe. Reporting is detailed and reflective providing an extra safeguarding measure for young people.

Young people are safeguarded against neglect and potential harm. Staff are vigilant and deployed carefully to ensure that each young person's vulnerabilities are supported and managed safely. There is a clear procedure for managing allegations which is followed by the manager. However, there has been one incident where most parties were notified as required with the exception of notification to Ofsted. This did not impact directly on the safety of young people.

There are safe recruitment procedures for new staff carried out prior to taking up post. New staff are appointed in line with organisational procedures and policies. As a result young people are only cared for by staff that are checked and assessed as being suitable to work at the home.

'Keeping Safe' plans for young people ensure that known and potential risks are identified and assessed in relation to each young person. These are used well and enable young people with high levels of need to access a varied range of activity and offer them equality of opportunity.

The environment is secure according to the needs of the young people. This is managed well in conjunction with the road and school transport arrangements. This ensures that young people are safe and protected from the dangers of the road.

Leadership and management

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

The home is managed well by a Registered Manager who has high aspirations for the service. Changes in the service provision over the last year have resulted in a busy home that provides both long and short term placements under one registration. The manager is supported well by the management team and leads a team of dedicated long serving staff. This promotes good continuity of care for young people.

The manager monitors the overall care and works occasional shifts. The service is also monitored by an independent visitor. While the quality of care is reviewed by the manager this does not include consultation with young people's parents and placing authorities. Feedback from parents is sought but not included in the review. The feedback includes; 'Good, wonderful job couldn't do better' and 'You make us smile, you care, you are very welcoming'. Comments also include the warm family atmosphere. Overall, parents feedback about the service including parents spoken to during the inspection is extremely positive.

The managers understand the key strengths of the service and the areas that require improvement. A number of requirements were made at the last inspection, all of which have been addressed. There has been improvement to the soft furnishings in the home, staff have received training in medication administration and care plans have been changed to include more detail as specified. The statement of purpose has been updated and the format for recording physical interventions has been changed. As a result of these changes, there is improvement that impacts positively on young people's care.

The established staff team is diverse in age, race and gender and this provides a range of positive role models for young people. Staff undergo a wide range of mandatory training courses and this ensures that they are competent in their practice and able to meet the complex health needs of young people attending respite care. Supervision of staff is up to date and the storage of all other records ensures the confidentiality of young people's life history. Generally notifications are made to Ofsted as required, however, on one occasion the notification was not made.

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.