

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Caroline Wilson
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This home provides care and accommodation for up to six young people who have a learning disability. It is operated by a private organisation and provides short breaks in addition to longer periods of care.

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 home provides an adequate service for young people. Young people enjoy good emotional and physical health; have good education and a wide range of opportunities to enjoy their childhood. This helps them to have every chance to grow up into successful and well-rounded adults. The home provides a positive, supportive and caring environment and the freedom for young people to develop their coping strategies and respect for other individuals. However, the home does not effectively make use of its Registered Manager. She is heavily involved in the day-to-day running of the home and has not fulfilled some the management duties. For instance, no clear decisions have been made about the number of young people who should be provided with either short break or long term placements. This has affected safe recruitment of staff, training and supervision, particularly relating to bank and agency staff.

Statutory requirements have been set with regards to, recruitment, training, staffing and the management of the home.

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
26 (2001)	ensure that a person is not employed to work at the children's home unless full and satisfactory information is available (Regulation 26 (3) (d))	30/11/2012
25 (2001)	ensure that at all times there is a sufficient number of suitably qualified persons working at the home (Regulation 25 (1) (b))	31/12/2012
34 (2001)	ensure that the system for the review of the quality of care provided in the children's home is effective in improving the quality of care. (Regulation 34 (1) (b))	31/10/2012

Recommendations

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

- ensure there is a good quality learning and development programme which staff and volunteers are supported to undertake (NMS 18.1)
- ensure that staff are provided with regular supervision by appropriately qualified and experienced staff; with specific reference to agency staff members. (NMS 19.4)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people participate in a full range of activities which meet their social and health needs. Young people are well integrated into the local community. They participate in a number of activities, including, swimming and going to the library. These activities promote young people's good physical and emotional health. During the school holidays, young people enjoyed regular days out in activities of their choice, including days out at theme parks and a weekend away. This was beneficial in helping them to develop constructive relationships with each other and staff. Young people are also provided with opportunities to model positive behaviours from staff in social settings.

Young people learn independence skills that are appropriate for their age and level of understanding. They learn how to undertake household chores and self-care skills that help them to develop and build their self-esteem. This helps young people to reach their potential to successfully transition into adulthood.

Young people attend school regularly and are supported to achieve the highest possible educational standards that they can. Young people build on the skills that they have learnt at school while they are at home. Their literacy and mathematical development, such as writing their name or doing calculations is developed through undertaking daily activities, such as signing their key work records.

Young people have a say on daily life and aspects of their care plan. They use residents' meetings and key work sessions to make choices with regards to activities that they wish to participate in and food that they would like to eat. Young people have effective communication with staff. They use Picture Exchange Communication Systems which enable them to share their wishes and feelings about a range of issues which enables staff to promote every aspect of their individual welfare.

Quality of care

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

Good structures are in place to ensure that staff effectively meet targets that are set out in young people's care plans. Staff have a good understanding of young people's behaviours and how to respond to these in a positive way. Robust behaviour management plans provide staff with specific strategies to reduce the incidences of any negative behaviours exhibited and account for young people's needs relating to their disability. Behaviour management plans are routinely monitored to ensure their effectiveness. Staff focus on rewarding positive behaviour. Some young people have 'star charts' in place which promote the behaviours expected of them. Staff are supported by the Registered Manager to intervene constructively so that young people have the right kind of support to develop positive behaviour. As a consequence, restraints are only undertaken to protect the young person, others or property. These are clearly recorded to ensure that the measure of restraint is proportionate and that the minimum amount of force is used to avert injury or damage to property.

Staff maintain good communication with people who are important in young people's lives, including relevant family members and social workers. Social workers are updated regularly about young people's progress through emails and telephone conversations. Good contact arrangements are in place which enables young people to maintain positive and constructive contact with family members. Staff facilitate contact between young people and family members when supervision is required. Contact arrangements are promoted in accordance with guidelines set out in care plans. Good links are maintained which strengthen the bond between young people and significant people in their lives.

Staff ensure that they attend relevant meetings with school and actively work with the school in order to overcome any difficulties that prevent young people from receiving good quality education. Staff understand their responsibilities to help young people progress within the educational system. They have the skills to support young people with this and creatively help young people to develop their literacy and

numeracy through art work and to learn essential life-skills by including them in participating in everyday tasks, such as cleaning and shopping.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people are not adequately protected by current recruitment practice. Full and satisfactory information is not available for all staff in relation to their recruitment. While background checks are undertaken by agencies, regarding agency staff, the home has not had proper sight of original documents to ensure that they are safe to work with young people. Background checks undertaken for permanent staff are not robust enough. Staff have Criminal Record Bureau checks in place, but gaps in employment histories have not been adequately accounted for and risk assessments are not in place to evidence that risks were considered where staff have been given offers of employment.

Staff have good knowledge of indicators of abuse and where there are concerns, prompt and immediate steps are undertaken to ensure young people's immediate safety.

Good arrangements are in place in the unlikely event that a young person may go missing. There is a sufficient number of staff on shift to provide effective supervision of young people. Staff have a close relationship with the local police which ensures an immediate response in the event that a young person may go missing.

All health and safety inspections are undertaken at appropriate intervals. This keeps the environment physically safe and secure and takes into account the needs and characteristics of the young people being cared for.

Leadership and management

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

The management of this home is adequate. There are shortfalls in relation to safeguarding young people in their care. This particularly relates to recruitment processes, the reporting of safeguarding incidences and the lack of training and supervision of agency and some bank staff.

The Registered Manager has the relevant skills and knowledge that should enable her to provide a good service to young people. The Registered Manager is heavily involved in the day-to-day care of young people. This ensures good outcomes for young people in respect of their health, education and in enjoying and achieving. However, staff rely on the Registered Manager's intervention, particularly in the restraint of some young people. This has meant that the Registered Manager does not have sufficient time allocated to complete some of her managerial duties. As a consequence, the home provides a reactive rather than proactive service. For

instance, there is no projected training programme for staff. Decisions about specific training, such as Buccal administration training, is only made as a reaction to a young person with epilepsy being accommodated, rather than as a routine part of staff training. Staff who care for young people are mostly agency or bank staff. There is no set routine for accommodating young people who receive short breaks, therefore, it is unclear what staff are needed for what time.

Care is taken to ensure that the same staff are provided to ensure some consistency for young people. However, agency staff are not supervised by the Registered Manager. This means that they miss out on the opportunity to discuss various methods of working with young people and getting a clearer understanding of the day-to-day running of the home. This has also led to some difficulties with regards to ensuring that all staff are suitably trained, as bank or agency staff are not always available for the training dates that have been set. The home is in the process of ensuring that all staff have completed their Level 3 Children and Young People's workforce Diploma or equivalent. Most permanent staff have these, to enable them to provide each young person with the high quality care that they will need.

The Registered Manager has oversight of the operation of the home. Permanent staff have a good understanding of the challenges that young people with disabilities face in order to promote their welfare, although there are gaps in this knowledge being shared with some agency and bank staff. Regular monitoring takes place in relation to Regulation 33 and 34, where the Registered Manager and an independent party review how the home is operating in accordance with its statement of purpose. These were not effective in identifying the serious shortfalls in the safeguarding of young people.

The home evidences an adequate capacity for continued improvement. The statutory requirements at the last inspection have been met. Records of restraints now provide full and satisfactory information. Young people and staff also know the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire at night. Regular discussions take place with staff with regards to young people's progress and practice issues during supervision and team meetings. Supervision sessions with permanent staff take place at intervals that are in accordance with national minimum standards. Supervision for these staff is of good quality and enables staff to respond well to the needs of young people and highlights any developmental needs that they may have.

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.