

Inspection report for children's home

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<b>Inspection date</b>	20/11/2012
<b>Inspector</b>	Pete Hylton
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Full
<b>Provision subtype</b>	Children's home

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<b>Date of last inspection</b>	20/03/2012
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## Service information

### Brief description of the service

This service provides residential short-breaks care for up to 11 young people with learning and physical disabilities who may be aged from eight to 17 years. The home is run by a local authority and also offers a service to some young adults aged up to 19 years.

### 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**.

Young people make exceptional progress as a result of staying at the home. Their individual needs are carefully identified and met by an enthusiastic, committed and highly skilled staff team. Relationships between young people and staff are excellent.

Complaints are rare and where they do occur, they are appropriately handled. Young people are encouraged to voice their concerns and take part in regular consultation meetings with the staff. A young person's guide is given to all young people when they first come to the service. However, the telephone number for Ofsted is missing from this document.

Young people are safe. The behaviour of young people is safely managed and restraint is used only where absolutely necessary. The views of young people are not recorded when sanctions are given. The physical environment is well maintained and appropriately adapted to meet the differing needs of young people.

Although the quality of care and outcomes for young people are excellent, there are shortfalls in the management of the home. Not all staff are regularly or formally supervised. The organisation does not routinely seek the views of young people when they complete their monthly visits. These shortfalls do not adversely affect the outcomes for young people. Two requirements and two recommendations have been made as a result of this inspection.

## 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
27 (2001)	ensure that all persons employed by the registered person receive appropriate training, supervision and appraisal. This specifically relates to the supervision of staff (Regulation 27 (4) (a) )	21/12/2012
33 (2001)	ensure that the person carrying out the visit interviews, with their consent and in private, such of the children accommodated there, their parents, relatives, and persons working at the home as appears necessary in order to form an opinion of the standard of care provided in the home. (Regulation 33 (4) (a) )	21/12/2012

## Recommendations

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

- ensure that where sanctions are used, children are encouraged to have their views recorded in records kept by the home (NMS 3.18)
- ensure that the children's guide includes the contact details for Ofsted. (NMS 13.5)

## Outcomes for children and young people

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

Excellent relationships with families underpin young people making exceptional progress in all areas of their lives. Comments from parents and carers include; 'I'm very happy with the service', 'I have no hesitation about my child staying at the service', 'they do lots of activities' and 'he's happy when he is there.' Young people experience improved outcomes as a result of accessing the service. For example, they may have better sleep patterns, improved behaviour and access to a wide range of experiences and opportunities. A member of staff commented that, 'a strength of the home is that we are flexible and make sure that we can accommodate the needs of the young people.'

Regular visits to local youth clubs, parks and recreational facilities ensure that all young people are able to develop a broad range of community based interests. A

parent commented that their child does, 'lots of socialising in the community.' All young people are encouraged to spend time with their peers and develop their social skills. As a result, young people enjoy spending time at the service and look forward to staying. A social worker commented, 'a lot of the activities they do are things that the children wouldn't usually do.'

Young people benefit from equality of opportunity. As a result, they develop a wide range of skills as part of their growth and development.

All young people are actively engaged in school and educational activities. They are supported in maintaining excellent attendance and any concerns are swiftly resolved. Parents feel supported by the service and are able to seek advice and guidance where necessary. A parent commented in relation to their young person, that the service, 'meets his needs really well.'

Young people benefit from excellent relationships between the staff, parents and carers. Continuity of care and routines ensures that the change between staying at home and the service is exceptionally well managed. This ensures that young people feel settled and have familiarity and predictability in their daily routines.

Where appropriate to do so, young people are developing age-appropriate independence skills. For example, older young people are supported in independently accessing public transport and in planning and preparing their own meals. A parent commented that their young person is, 'getting a lot more independent.' As a result, young people feel ready, able and confident to start living their adult lives.

## Quality of care

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

A highly skilled, well trained and caring staff team are committed to meeting the complex needs of young people. Relationships between young people and staff are excellent and young people enjoy spending time at the service. Complaints from young people, parents or carers are rare. Where they do occur, they are sensitively handled and quickly resolved.

Regular visits from an independent advocate ensure that young people are encouraged to voice their concerns and worries. The young person's guide is written in an accessible format. As a result, all young people are able to understand the contents and know how to complain. The use of photographs and symbols further enhances young people's understanding. However, the contact details for Ofsted are out of date, so young people may not be able to contact the regulator if they so wish.

Highly detailed short break planning ensures that the needs and vulnerabilities of young people are identified and met. Furthermore, social groupings are considered and peer relationships are actively promoted. As a result, young people enjoy spending time with peers who have similar interests and they have beneficial,

relaxing and enjoyable stays. Young people are encouraged to eat healthily and maintain active lifestyles. Food served to young people is healthy, balanced, nutritious and reflective of their dietary and cultural needs. Furthermore, young people are encouraged to eat together and socialise at mealtimes. This ensures that young people are encouraged to develop appropriate and meaningful social relationships.

A proactive staff team ensures that opportunities for young people are provided, irrespective of any barriers that they may face. For example, young people with mobility difficulties are supported in accessing outdoor activity holidays and are fully able to access the local community. This has led to significantly improved outcomes for young people. Furthermore, young people are encouraged to participate in youth forums and their views are actively sought in regular consultation meetings. This results in an open, inclusive atmosphere where young people feel that their views are respected and acted upon. An innovative and forward thinking staff team ensure that all young people, irrespective of their disability, are able to communicate their wishes, views and feelings. Young people are encouraged to explore topical themes, for example, national sporting events, elections, religious festivals and local events. As a result, young people develop a broader understanding of the wider world and enjoy taking part in fun and educational activities.

Young people benefit from a service that is well presented, homely and attractive. Communal areas are comfortable and very well appointed. As a result, young people are able to explore the environment and choose from a range of interesting and stimulating activities. The provision of sensory and quiet areas means that young people exercise choices in their activities and are able to maintain and develop their interests. Young people's rooms are pleasantly decorated and personalised to the individual tastes of young people. Photographs and young people's art work is on display around the home and this further adds to the warm, homely feel.

The staff team maintain highly detailed records for each young person. These records detail the individual preferences of young people, their dietary and cultural needs and any specific risk factors. Where able to do so, young people are encouraged to share their views about their care and these views are recorded and acted upon. Where young people are unable to do this, the staff team consult with parents, carers and social workers. A parent commented that there is 'excellent communication with the staff.' Young people make considerable progress as a result of a diligent staff team who meet their individual needs, wishes and preferences.

Excellent relationships with external agencies ensure that the needs of young people are at the forefront of staff practice. The staff team maintain highly effective dialogue with parents, carers, schools, social workers and health professionals. This ensures that progress is shared, concerns identified and agreed plans are followed. A social worker commented in relation to the staff; 'they bend over backwards to make young people's visits unique and they fully meet young people's needs.'

The health needs of young people are extremely well met by the staff team. This is further enhanced by all staff having regular access to a dedicated professional who

provides training, advice and support on a range of health matters.

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

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

Young people are safe and feel safe when they stay at the service. A vigilant staff team ensures that the individual needs and vulnerabilities of young people are identified and catered for. Where young people pose specific risks, suitable adaptations are made to ensure their safety. For example, staffing levels are increased and improved security measures are put into place. A key strength of the service is the attention given to providing a safe and appropriately secure environment. A member of staff commented, 'planned and effective risk taking enables young people to have the same opportunities that other young people their age experience.' Young people are therefore enabled to take risks to maximise their progress, develop their interests and nurture their talents.

Restraint is used in exceptional circumstances and only for the purpose of keeping young people safe. Where restraint does occur, the staff team ensure that records contain all the required information and the views of young people are thoroughly explored. This enables the Registered Manager and senior team to review these incidents and the methods used to support behaviour. Sanctions are similarly rarely used in managing behaviour. However, where sanctions are given to young people, the staff team do not record the views of young people. This means that the staff team are unable to fully assess the impact of these measures when reviewing incidents.

Since the last inspection, there has been one occasion of a young person going missing from the home. This incident was brief in duration and appropriately managed by the staff team, ensuring the young person's welfare and safety. As a result of this incident, the staff made changes to risk assessments and staffing numbers and there has been no repeat occurrence. This shows that the staff are keen to reflect on incidents and further improve young people's safety. Furthermore, changes to the physical security of the service have further enhanced the safe environment.

Effective pre-employment checks ensure that only suitable adults have contact with young people at the service. This ensures that young people are protected from harm. Fire safety is appropriately managed in the home. Fire drills are regularly conducted and young people are encouraged to develop their safe evacuation skills. This ensures that all young people and staff are fully practised in emergency escape procedures. The home environment is safely maintained and any defects are identified and quickly resolved. All required checks on electrical and gas appliances are up to date. Mobility equipment is similarly tested and further enhances the safe environment. The home environment is safe and adapted to meet the differing and often complex needs of young people.

### **Leadership and management**

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

The home was judged to be making satisfactory progress at the last inspection in March 2012. One requirement and two recommendations were made at that time. These have been fully met; young people now benefit from a freely available telephone, the recording systems for staff supervision have improved and there have been improvements to window coverings and decoration. These improvements have enabled young people to maintain contact with their families and friends and benefit from an improved environment.

The Registered Manager now works part-time and an appropriate recruitment process is underway for an additional manager. The organisation is fully aware of the need to submit an application for registration with Ofsted. A team of assistant managers support the Registered Manager in monitoring and managing the service. The Registered Manager remains contactable on their non-working days and provides advice and support to staff where necessary. He maintains a good overview and is aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the service. Therefore, there is no demonstrable impact on young people and they do not suffer negative outcomes as a result.

All records kept in the home are securely stored, fully updated and regularly audited. This ensures that the progress that young people make is accurately recorded and any concerns are identified and resolved. The Registered Manager and assistant managers employ a range of quality checking systems to ensure that the needs of young people are appropriately met. The service's development plan clearly lists areas of improvement and is regularly reviewed. This information is used to further improve the service given to young people.

In addition to the management team's own monitoring, the organisation regularly visits the home to check the standard of care and condition of the premises. The resulting report is shared with the staff team at the service and is used to further drive improvements to the quality of care. However, these visits often occur when the young people are at school. As a result, they do not regularly include consultation with young people. This means that the organisation is not able to make a fully informed opinion about the standard of care. Furthermore, young people are not able to voice their opinions, wishes and feelings to the organisation as required by the regulations.

Serious incidents are rare at the service. Where they do occur, the staff team ensure that they are reported to the appropriate bodies. Where safeguarding concerns are identified, the Registered Manager takes appropriate action to ensure the safety of young people at all times.

A good quality training program ensures that staff are up to date with the required skills and knowledge. The training needs of staff are identified and all staff are either working towards or hold the required level of qualification. The arrangements for the formal supervision of the staff team are not wholly effective. Not all staff are



regularly supervised. There is no demonstrable impact on young people's outcomes at this time as a result of this shortfall. However, the potential exists for poor care practices, because staff performance is not regularly or formally reviewed and checked.

## 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.