

Inspection report for children's home

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| Unique reference number | SC013402 |
| Inspection date | 20/11/2012 |
| Inspector | Emeline Evans |
| Type of inspection | Full |
| Provision subtype | Children's home |

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| Date of last inspection | 21/03/2012 |
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This children's home is a purpose-built complex run by a registered charity in partnership with a local authority. The home provides short stay services to children and young people who have high support needs. The home is split into two units; it provides services for up to 12 children and young people at any one time.

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 are supported by an experienced staff team who are committed to improving outcomes for young people. A strength of the service is the positive relationships young people have with staff. The staff are sensitive to young people's wants and needs and work in partnership with parents to ensure young people have fun during their short break visit. One parent commented, 'The service has proved that caring for disabled children can be a shared experience.' Another parent explained, 'The service provides excellent care for children with complex needs and thereby ensuring as a parent I can entrust them with looking after my very precious child.'

Staff use imaginative ways to gain the views of young people; this practice enables child-centred care planning to be implemented. Staff support young people in making progress across many aspects of their lives. Achievements have been seen in young people's behaviours, social interactions and independence.

Safety is central to all aspects of the young people's care. Young people comment that they feel safe and parents re-iterate this. Young people live in a secure environment. However, an area of improvement is to review the fire safety arrangements presently in operation and to consider the location of the controlled medication cabinet. Young people's individual risk assessments also require some attention.

Young people and staff are now being supported by a new management team. Staff

remain positive despite recent changes and re-structuring within the organisation; they are committed to further improve the quality of care provided.

A number of shortfalls have been identified and requirements and recommendations made. These include areas relating to records and ensuring they comply with regulation and to enhance the monitoring processes within the home to ensure there are no shortfalls in the quality of care provided.

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 |
|---------------|---|------------|
| 4 (2001) | update the Statement of Purpose to ensure that it includes all of the required information (Regulation 4(1), Schedule 1) | 31/12/2012 |
| 17B (2001) | ensure that all incidents of restraint and discipline recorded contain all of the required information (Regulation 17B (3)(a)-(i), (4)(a)(b)) | 31/12/2012 |
| 32 (2001) | take adequate precautions against the risk of fire, including the provision of suitable fire equipment; and ensure by means of fire drills, that persons working at the home and, as far as practicable, children accommodated there, are aware of the procedure to be followed (Regulation 32 (1)(a)(e)) | 31/12/2012 |
| 33 (2001) | supply a copy of the report required to be made under this Regulation to HMCI; and the registered manager of the children's home (Regulation 33 (5)(a)(b)) | 31/12/2012 |
| 37 (2001) | ensure that Ofsted is notified in writing about the interim management arrangements and proposals for appointing another person to manage the children's home. (Regulation 37 (1)(b), (2)(a)-(e)) | 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 location for the storage of the controlled medication cabinet (NMS 6.13)
- ensure risk assessments are carried out on all children who have medication cabinets in their rooms and these risk assessments identify any potential sources of harm (NMS 10.8)

- produce a written policy that sets out how electronic listening devices should be used, how they promote the welfare of children, how children will be informed of their use, how legitimate privacy of children will be protected and how children will be protected from potential abuse of such measures (NMS 10.5)
- ensure that sufficient information (written or electronic) is retained at the home, demonstrating that the recruitment and selection of staff consistently follows good practice, and all applicable current statutory requirements and guidance (NMS 16.2)
- improve the learning and development programme so that it demonstrates training data more effectively, this is with regard to staff training completion dates (NMS 18.2)
- undertake a review of matters set out in Schedule 6 of the Children's Homes Regulations 2001. Reports of these reviews should be completed at six monthly intervals and a copy of every report should be sent to Ofsted within 28 days of completion. (Volume 5 Statutory Guidance Children Act 1989 Children's Homes para 3.14)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people have made measurable progress in many areas of their development due to the individual support they receive during their short break visits. Staff, parents and professionals recognise the achievements young people have made and are able to give numerous examples of how young people have progressed because of the care offered by the service. Young people's confidence and self-esteem are developing well as a result of realistic goals being implemented by staff. Young people have made progress in their behaviour, social interaction and in personal care skills. Young people are now able to sit at the table, help prepare meals and respond to and accept peer interaction. One parent commented, 'My daughter has benefited enormously from her overnight stays, she is now able to socialise in a relaxed environment.'

Staff fully support young people's educational needs; there is good communication with the schools. There are books in place to maintain regular contact; this is ensuring a holistic approach is maintained. Staff work closely to support young people with the transition to and from school. This allows young people to be more relaxed at stressful transition times and maintains good attendance levels at school.

Young people are engaged in an array of community-based activities. Young people enjoy taking part in the range of activities and these opportunities are allowing young people's experiences to be further enhanced. Young people are encouraged to learn and try new experiences. One young person commented, 'We try lots of things here.' Staff ensure the young people are supported to access a range of stimulating and appropriate opportunities both within the home and in the local community. This practice enables young people's social and emotional development to progress.

There is a focus by the service in developing young people's independent living skills; this has resulted in young people learning new skills such as shopping, cooking, self-help skills and using public transport. Young people are developing well in this area and this is contributing to enhancing their self-esteem. These achievements are enabling young people to be equipped with some of the necessary skills for the transition to adult life.

Quality of care

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

Young people say the care and support at the home is good. Young people benefit from positive relationships with experienced and committed staff members. Young people are supported to develop and enhance their skills through consistent messages and positive role modelling. Parents and professionals describe the staff as, 'Dedicated, approachable and fantastic.'

Staff demonstrate a good understanding of young people's behaviours and work in a proactive manner to reassure young people when they demonstrate distress or upset. Staff interact with young people using appropriate verbal skills and alternative methods of communication. This ensures young people are able to make individual choices during their stays in relation to food and personal care needs. This assists in developing independence skills. Staff support young people to make their views known about the running of the home. They are able to plan menus and choose activities in which they would like to be involved. This results in young people feeling their views are actively sought and they can see the result. Young people are supported to be able to make a complaint and there is a child-friendly complaints form available. Since the last inspection, no complaints have been made.

Young people's care plans are consistent with their assessments and admission criteria. They provide an abundance of vital information, which promotes all aspects of the young person's life. Staff are very familiar with the young people's care plans and they are used as working tools on each shift. This practice promotes consistency in the quality of care received, and young people's preferred routines are carried out. Where possible young people's views are sought about their care plans. This is achieved by young people indicating preferences and staff observing ways in which young people express their likes and dislikes.

Arrangements for dealing with medication are safe and appropriate and managed by experienced staff. However, controlled medications are currently stored in a medication cabinet in a communal living area. This practise does not allow this medication to be administered and stored in a secure environment. Other young people have their medication stored in cabinets in their room. This practice allows more independence and privacy when taking medication. However, individual risk assessments do not reflect this practice and enable staff to be aware of any identified risks.

There are presently two separate houses providing accommodation across the site. Each house is comfortable and young people enjoy a pleasant environment. There are photos of the young people having fun displayed around the houses. The accommodation provides ample space for group and individual activities. The sensory development for young people is enhanced through the use of a new sensory room and large outdoor space.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

The home has systems in place to ensure that young people's welfare is protected. Staff are vigilant in maintaining a safe environment at all times. Staff receive training in safeguarding and they recognise the particular vulnerabilities relating to the needs of children with disabilities.

Comprehensive risk assessments and behaviour support plans identify the risks associated with each young person and strategies for managing these. Staff are vigilant but sensitive in their supervision of young people and are aware of individual vulnerabilities. Early intervention and re-direction is used and staff attempt to understand how young people are feeling before incidents escalate. A bound volume and incident forms are used to record physical interventions and the action taken. However, the bound volume does not capture all the required information as detailed in the relevant regulation and this makes it difficult to fully monitor the effectiveness of interventions.

Written procedures are in place for responding to incidents if a young person is missing from the home. These procedures reflect a proactive approach to minimise the risk of this occurring. This has resulted in no related incidents since the last inspection.

The management team confirm that all the necessary recruitment checks are completed before a member of staff starts work. Information relating to Criminal Record Bureau Checks is contained within the service and accessible to the appropriate people. However, other evidence of recruitment checks are not maintained at the home. Therefore, it is not possible to ascertain the processes undertaken for the recruitment of staff and their suitability to work with children and young people.

Some of the young people have listening monitors in their bedrooms due to their complex health needs. The use of these listening monitors is for the purpose of safeguarding certain young people. However, there is not an up to date policy in place to guide staff on the appropriate use and management of such devices and how they promote the welfare of the young people.

Generally, there are sound health and safety systems in place to minimise unnecessary risks to the young people, staff and visitors. Regular fire alarm drills take place and are recorded. However, it is not clear if staff and young people are

regularly involved in this process. This does not allow young people and staff to be clear on the actions to take in the event of a fire or emergency. Across the two houses, a number of doors are being propped open and some bedroom doors do not fully close unless pulled shut. This means that if there were a fire, the doors would need to be released manually in order to provide full protection.

Leadership and management

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

Young people benefit from a management and staff team who are committed to improvement and have high aspirations for the young people they support. However, recent changes within the organisation have resulted in a re-structure of the staff team. There is currently not a Registered Manager in post. This post became vacant in recent times. The organisation has interim management arrangements in place, Ofsted have not been formally notified of these arrangements. The new management and staff team are positive about changes and are in the early stages of identifying and reflecting on current practice and development needs of the service.

A comprehensive Statement of Purpose is in place but this lacks information in some areas. The document does not contain the current staffing structure, details of staff or management qualifications or if the home takes emergency admissions. The young person's guide is informative and explains what young people can expect from the home. This guide is personalised and adapted for each young person's level of understanding.

Monitoring visits under Regulation 33 take place. However, recent reports following these visits were not readily available in the home and have not been received into Ofsted. This could mean shortfalls in the care of the young people are not being recognised by the home and areas for improvement not being addressed. The management team completes statutory monitoring of the service. However, this monitoring does not identify any trends or concerns to enable a review of the quality of care to be achieved. A review is also not forwarded to Ofsted.

Young people are supported by a staff team who are knowledgeable and experienced. Staffing levels are good and the staff team work together to cover gaps. This allows for continuity of care. Staff benefit from regular supervision and staff meetings, this ensures they have the opportunity to raise any issues as they arise. Staff have undertaken a number of training courses which are specific to the young people currently accessing the service. The learning and development programme is in the process of being updated. Presently, it is not clear when staff have completed training and when they are due to attend refresher courses.

Young people's files are stored securely and contain documents, which are clear and comprehensive. This helps staff in supporting young people to understand their background.

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.