

## Inspection report for children's home

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<b>Inspector</b>	Judith Longden
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<b>Provision subtype</b>	Children's home

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## Service information

### Brief description of the service

This home is operated by the local authority. It provides a residential service for six children and young people, and a short-break service for six children and young people. All the children and young people have severe learning disabilities and challenging behaviours.

### 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**.

This home provides outstanding, personalised and well-planned care based on the individual needs of young people. Young people are fully involved in their care and the running of the home, making decisions about their lives and the care they receive. Parents and social workers are very positive about the quality of care provided and the impact the service has on improving the outcomes for young people.

Young people make exceptional progress in all areas as a result of the care they receive; especially in communication, social skills, and access to a range of activities they would not otherwise benefit from. Staff and young people enjoy excellent relationships.

Young people are kept safe by a staff team who have a comprehensive understanding of safeguarding practices underpinned by robust and proactive policies and procedures. The home is exceptionally well managed and the manager has a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the service. The home has a clear and comprehensive development plan in place to continue to improve the service to young people.

No requirements or recommendations are made as a result of this inspection.

### Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people make excellent progress in achieving positive outcomes in all areas. The home has had a significant impact in supporting this progress, especially with regard to young people improving their communication skills, developing social skills and accessing activities they would not otherwise benefit from. One social worker said, 'The young person's language skills have really developed as a result of the care received and this is mirrored in the home and at school.' Progress and achievement is recorded and evaluated with young people, parents and social workers in key work updates and in photo and achievements folders. These provide young people with a record of their time at the home. As a result they make exceptional progress towards developing a positive self view and increased confidence. A parent said, 'Our child is more relaxed and confident in their own ability. It is brilliant to see them do things.'

Young people benefit from a varied and healthy menu that provides a balanced diet and takes into account their medical dietary needs and their preferences. Young people learn to sit together round the dining table to eat and this encourages social interaction and the development of personal skills. Outdoor activities and exercise are encouraged in order to promote healthy living. Young people also benefit from quiet time and relaxation opportunities which encourage their emotional well-being. One social worker commented that the home had supported a young person in the reduction of their self-harming behaviour. Young people's health is further promoted by the implementation of daily personal hygiene routines. Young people are making significant progress in achieving responsibility for their own hygiene and health needs. One parent commented that their child is now able to shower themselves when they come home.

Young people benefit from access to a wide range of activities that provide new and challenging experiences. They are encouraged to engage in community activities such as youth club and community discos as well as enjoying activities in the home. This supports young people to feel part of their wider community and enjoy the activities and social life this provides.

Young people achieve excellent outcomes in their education and this is complemented by the provision of learning activities in the home. Staff praise young people's progress and this encourages them to achieve their educational potential. Young people learn life skills such as shopping, household chores, handling money, interaction with the public and self-care skills that they would not have the opportunity to learn at home. As a result, young people learn skills appropriate to their age and understanding and learn to make decisions and choices. Staff help young people to prepare for change and adjust to living in different environments such as the adult care service. For example, young people spend time discussing what their ideal home would be like, who they would like to be with, and what things are important to them such as being close to a town. As a result young people receive care to help them prepare for transition to adult care.

Young people benefit from excellent contact with their parents and families. Staff

communicate very effectively with parents and social workers. As a result, people who play an important role in young people's lives are actively involved in the care they receive.

## Quality of care

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

Young people receive outstanding quality of care from a motivated staff team who have high aspirations for all the young people. One parent said, 'The care is second to none; all our child's needs are met.'

Young people are made to feel welcome to the home. A thorough pre-admission plan enables them to meet their key worker in their family home prior to their first visit. Short visits and a tea time stay are planned with parents prior to the first overnight stay. This ensures young people and parents are happy about the provision and service offered.

Care is highly personalised, well planned and based on the individual needs of the young person. A parent stated 'although all the young people using the service have similar disabilities the home provides personalised care, staff know the individual and their specific needs.' Excellent residential action plans provide detailed information on the needs and wishes of young people and enable staff to support the young people in the most appropriate way. Sensory plans support staff to consider sensory aspects of the young person's care such as the importance of the smell of food for one young person, and how the young person can then become agitated if they do not know when they will eat. The plan identifies ways staff can support the young person through meal times, alleviating any anxiety or distress.

Parents, social workers, schools and care staff review care plans through regular case management meetings and key work updates. This ensures that the care plan remains relevant to the young person's needs.

Young people are able to express their feelings, share their views and voice their opinions in all aspects of their care and in the running of the home using various formats and communication methods. Young people use their 'my views' folder to make requests and express their feelings and this has influenced how they are cared for. For example, one young person drew their likes and dislikes about living in the home and indicated they did not like cleaning staff entering their room. A timetable was therefore developed with the young person, enabling them to complete their own tidying and vacuuming.

Young people complete symbol strips with the events of the evening such as tea, clearing away, having a bath and bedtime. They also use these strips to indicate what activities they would like to do that evening such as using the ball pool or computer. This means young people are able to participate in making choices about routines, activities and life in the home.

Young people are supported if they wish to complain. Good information in a variety of formats is available to young people on how to complain or comment on the care they receive.

Parents' views are regularly sought and good communication is maintained through telephone contact prior to each short breaks visit. The planning of the short breaks is fully inclusive of the parents and takes into account the friendship groups that have been established.

Young people benefit from excellent relationships with staff and each other. Staff work hard to encourage young people to communicate and improve their social skills.

Young people are supported to access various medical professionals to meet their holistic health needs. The home has an excellent medication policy and procedure. Staff are trained in medication and first aid. This means the arrangements for the storage, recording and administration of medication are highly effective and safe. Staff support young people to understand health issues and encourage young people to adopt a healthy diet and lifestyle. As a result, young people's physical, emotional and psychological health needs are all promoted in a positive way.

Young people take part in a variety of activities and leisure pursuits within the home and extensive gardens. This includes access to the sensory garden, music room, soft play areas, art and crafts and sensory rooms. Staff encourage young people to engage in a variety of activities such as trips to the park, disco, cinema, swimming and shopping. This enables young people to enjoy their interests as well as engaging in the community. As a result young people benefit from access to a wide range of activities and events they would not otherwise have the opportunity to experience. One parent said 'The home does so many things we would not be able to do; lots of activities, group activities that encourage socialisation.'

The home provides an environment where learning is encouraged through play and activities. Staff are proactive in supporting attendance at school and communication between education providers and staff is excellent. This means there is continuity in the learning for young people.

Young people live in a home that provides a safe but stimulating environment. The home is extremely well maintained and decorated. The home offers excellent facilities and resources that provide a variety of stimulating activities and also areas where young people can relax. The home is in a rural location with access to the local village and its amenities.

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

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

The home provides an environment of care and support where bullying is not tolerated. A high staff ratio to young people helps to reduce the likelihood of

bullying. Staff and managers recognise particular vulnerabilities and behaviour of young people and group young people together ensuring the mix of the group does not pose a risk to others.

Positive behaviour is encouraged by providing consistent boundaries and clear expectations. Staff work closely with schools, social workers and parents to ensure behaviour management is consistent. This is supported by strong positive relationships between young people and staff. The use of sanctions is in accordance with the understanding of the young person and includes mild verbal reprimand, removal to a calm environment, increased supervision or reparation such as an apology. Staff are trained in managing challenging behaviour and only use physical restraint as a last resort. Any use of intervention is recorded appropriately and is reviewed by the manager to ensure it is effective. As a result young people interact positively with staff and each other and behave appropriately.

The home has excellent policies and procedures for safeguarding practices which are implemented by a knowledgeable and well trained staff team. The safeguarding policy includes strategies to ensure child protection is responsive to the needs of disabled children. Staff are trained in safeguarding including training on recognising abuse in disabled children. Staff are clear on their role in the safeguarding process. Communication between the home and the local safeguarding team is excellent and any concerns are managed robustly and recorded extremely well.

The home operates a robust recruitment process that involves parents in the selection of staff. Parents have commented that the robust recruitment process has shown them just how safe our child is. The recording and monitoring of visitors to the home further ensure young people are protected from significant harm. Risk assessments are proportionate to enable young people to experience new challenges and develop new skills while remaining safe. Young people are encouraged to understand how to keep themselves safe with work on topics such as 'stranger danger' and 'road safety'. Young people are safeguarded by high levels of supervision and there have been no incidents of young people going missing from the home. Staff are aware of the procedures to follow should a young person be absent.

Young people live in a home that provides the appropriate level of security to ensure their safety and well-being. Regular fire, maintenance and equipment checks further promote the safety of young people. Regular fire drills are held and young people have individual evacuation procedures and risk assessments. Young people who have previously set off fire alarms in order to see fire fighters have been supported to engage with the fire service at community events such as the car wash at the fire station to support an appropriate relationship with the emergency services.

## **Leadership and management**

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

Young people benefit from a home that continues to demonstrate improvement since

the last inspection. The home has a history of providing outstanding care while continuing to develop and strive to improve the lives and outcomes for young people. The recommendation made at the last inspection has been met and the young person's guide now contains all the information as required. There are no requirements or recommendations as a result of this inspection.

Staff, parents and the placing authority are clear about the objectives and ethos of the home. Staff provide an excellent quality of service for young people in line with the home's Statement of Purpose.

The home is managed by suitable personnel who are qualified and extremely experienced ensuring a service that is efficient and effective in caring for young people and developing them to reach their full potential. The manager understands the strengths and areas for development and has a detailed development plan in place to ensure the home continues to improve and develop.

Staff have a range of skills, qualifications and experience and bring different strengths to the service. Some staff are increasing their responsibilities and taking a lead role in specific areas such as medication, training, communication and key work. The staff rota ensures young people's needs are met through the provision of sufficient staffing. Staff with certain skills are matched with the needs of young people accessing the short breaks service. Young people are aware of who is working with them at all times with photographs displayed of all people working in the home on a particular day. This includes photographs of: 'who is cooking for us today', 'who is mending things' and 'who is in the office' as well as photographs of the care staff on duty and the 'family' cat. This enables young people to feel safe and part of a family environment where they can identify who to turn to if they need help or support.

Staff receive a good induction into the home and are supported by a mentor in addition to their line manager. Staff continue to develop their skills and knowledge through the provision of an extensive range of training and development opportunities. Staff say they receive good quality support from each other and from a strong management team. One member of staff said that supervision and support is excellent. Supervision is effective and held regularly. This ensures the service provided to young people remains of a high quality.

Rigorous monitoring procedures examine the quality of the service provided, the progress of young people and ensure young people are kept safe. The registered provider undertakes visits to the home in accordance with regulations and carries out checks to ensure the welfare of young people is monitored. The registered provider observes interaction between staff and young people and consults young people where possible to identify any areas for development to improve the quality of care provided. The manager monitors records kept by the home to identify any concerns, patterns or trends. Reviews of the quality of care and progress made are sent to Ofsted as required. Records are clear and kept securely and contribute to an understanding of the young person's life. All significant events relating to the protection of young people in the home are notified as appropriate and actions taken



as required. As a result the quality of care and the welfare and protection of young people is monitored effectively.

## 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* and the evaluation schedule for children's homes.