

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC430320
Inspection date	26/02/2013
Inspector	Joanna Heller
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	16/10/2012
--------------------------------	------------

© Crown copyright 2013

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

The Vine Respite Service is a short break and respite provision operated by a private company. The home is registered for five children with learning disabilities and physical disability, but does not have facilities for children who use a wheelchair. The service generally operates between Friday and Monday and in school holidays. The company also provides a day support service to young people 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 is very welcoming and well maintained. The residential service operates in school holidays and from Friday evening to Monday morning, as a consequence no young people were involved in the inspection. Young people's experiences of the short break service are highly positive and parents talk about how their child really enjoys their stay. All of the young people have learning disabilities with complex additional needs and require high levels of support. Young people enjoy highly individualised care in accordance with their particular needs, and equality and diversity is threaded through the care provided. High staffing levels mean that staff are able to respond to children's desires flexibly. A particular strength of the home is the commitment to providing young people with a wide range of activities during their stay.

Staff are well supported and trained. Staff display a solid commitment to ensuring young people have the best life outcomes possible. The provision of regular and familiar staff provides continuity of care and enables a thorough understanding of young people's needs. The service is highly flexible and delivered according to young people's individual needs. Staff are fully familiar with the general evacuation process, however, there is no personal emergency evacuation plan to guide staff as to specific approaches for each child. The potential impact of this is minimised by the high staffing levels and continuity of staff.

Management arrangements are well organised, with the manager and responsible individual working closely together with the senior staff team. The majority of the people working in the home have a number of years of either personal or professional experience in the field of learning disabilities.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- ensure there is an individual personal emergency evacuation plan (PEEP) that all staff and children are familiar with. (NMS 10.9)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

The home is very welcoming and well maintained. Young people's experiences of the short break home are highly positive and parents talk about how their children really enjoy their stay. As a result of staying at the home on a regular basis some young people experience individual growth in areas such as developing self-care skills. Some young people have become able to understand boundaries and become less challenging. Young people enjoy positive relationships with staff. For example, one young person who has never settled in other services has become comfortable and is expressing affection to staff within an extremely short time.

High staffing levels and individualised support enable many young people to access the community and experience things which would have not previously been thought possible. Young people are healthy and are encouraged to enjoy healthy lifestyles. Young people enjoy highly individualised care in accordance with their particular needs, and equality and diversity is threaded through the care provided. Each young person has a short break plan of care developed by the home which includes all key areas of need and details of their routines.

Young people are welcomed in a planned way which ensures staff are able to meet their individual needs. All of the young people have learning disabilities with complex additional needs and require high levels of support. Young people are helped to develop personal and self-care skills which are relevant to their age and understanding.

Young people are supported in understanding the world around them. Young people enjoy active and varied lives and are able to participate in the community whilst at the short break unit. Staff are highly sensitive to interests which may be enjoyed by an individual such as, linking with a local car showroom to 'ride in the red and blue cars', or making pizza, activities are planned accordingly. The vast majority of families and social workers say that they feel their children are extremely well cared

for by a competent, caring and committed team of staff.

Quality of care

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

The well maintained and decorated building provides young people with homely accommodation that they feel comfortable in. The provider plans to extend the accommodation this year with a particular view to enhancing accommodation for young people with limited mobility. This will allow the service to be offered to a wider group of young people. Each young person is able to choose their own bedroom when they stay and is encouraged to bring things with them which will help them feel comfortable.

Equality and diversity is threaded through the service provision. During the comprehensive assessment process staff identify young people's needs arising through their disability and cultural heritage. Staff seek to understand fully the young person's daily routines and those factors which may help young people settle. For example, staff identified that one young person was particularly fond of a specific small range of toys. Staff then specifically purchased these toys for the young person's first visit. The parent of this young person highlighted how the comprehensive assessment process enabled their child, for the first time, to settle in an unfamiliar place with no distress. This was something, the parent emphasised, they thought would never be possible. Staff deliver highly individualised care in accordance with each young person's particular needs. Due to their autistic care characteristics some young people are most settled when routines are clear and familiar. Staff closely adhere to these routines with any variations fully explained.

As a short break service parents retain the responsibility for managing young people's long term health needs. Staff, however, follow all guidance given by parents and support young people to enjoy healthy lifestyles. Staff encourage young people to eat a healthy diet and encourage them to try new things, such as, cultural foods. Staff are well trained and competent having received training in key areas such as first aid, epilepsy, food handling and moving and handling.

Staff display a solid commitment to ensuring young people have the best life outcomes possible. The service is highly flexible and delivered according to young people's individual needs. The planning of the short break is managed to ensure that parents and young people are able to maximise their care package. Staff are highly successful at working in partnership with families enabling skills developed at the short break unit to follow through at home. For example, staff have filmed children feeding themselves and shared this with the parents, who were then able to work on developing their child's skills at home. The manager ensures parents are provided with clear reports of each child's stay and photographs and film clips of the young people enjoying themselves are given to the parents.

Parents comment how their child is happy when they tell them they are going to respite. Young people are able to develop positive relationships with staff, parents

refer to some staff becoming like an extended family. Some staff work in other environments such as local special schools where they know the young people. The provision of regular and familiar staff provides continuity of care and enables a thorough understanding of young people's needs.

A particular strength of the home is the commitment to providing young people with a wide range of activities during their stay. Staff find that some young people enjoy being kept active and ensure they are able to go out and about. Staff are aware that challenging behaviour may be the result of being easily bored or conversely over stimulated. Staff therefore are constantly monitoring the interaction of young people with staff and their environment. Staff plan activities, such as, train and bus journeys, or visits to the sensory room, and cinema around young people's individual interests. Activities are also planned according to each child's needs. Some young people have a very limited attention span and benefit most from short activities which are regularly repeated.

High staffing levels mean that staff are able to respond to children's desires flexibly. Young people are helped to gain an understanding of the world around them through daily activities in the home. Young people are informally encouraged to develop independence skills at the level suitable to their understanding and experience small but significant personal growth. This is individually demonstrated through development of their skill base and well-being, such as, improvements in self-care skills, and behavioural skills.

Young people enjoy very positive relationships with staff. Parents refer to staff who are caring, kind and patient who ensure that they are kept up to date with what's happening in their child's life. The majority of parents rated the support given to them and their children as good to outstanding. Parent's comments included, 'I am stunned and really impressed with them, they really care.'

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, secure and well cared for. Parents and placing authorities have confidence in the staff and management team to keep the young people safe. Parents are able to leave their child secure in the knowledge that they will be well cared for.

Due to their autistic care characteristics, some young people are most settled when routines are clear and familiar. Staff closely adhere to these routines with any variations fully explained. Individual behaviour management plans focus on possible triggers for distress and how to manage complex situations. When a young person is challenging boundaries staff try to establish what may be being communicated by this and seek to understand the young person's feelings and views. Placing authorities praised staff for their ability to patiently manage young people who display high levels of challenging behaviour. Staff do not use consequences and sanctions, as such, as young people's comprehension of this is limited. Staff seek to

distract young people from any negative behaviour they are displaying and verbally reinforce boundaries. Staff are trained in restraint and are clear this is appropriate to be used only to safeguard themselves or others.

Staff are trained in safeguarding children and are aware what to do should any concerns arise. Feedback from families and stakeholders is that children and young people feel safe and well cared for. Comprehensive risk assessments identify young people's vulnerability and any risks regarding activities.

Young people are safeguarded from unsuitable people gaining employment or volunteering in the home through robust vetting practices. No staff are employed until all checks to ensure their suitability, such as, those on identity, employment history, qualifications and potential criminal record, are carried out.

Young people are effectively safeguarded from going missing through rigorous security precautions. Young people's care characteristics mean that they would be at risk if leaving the home unsupervised and would be immediately reported missing. Staffing levels are high enabling at least one to one support for young people. When going out some young people can be highly challenging and are supported by three staff.

Fire precautionary arrangements in the home ensure young people and staff are safeguarded from fire in line with current good practice. Staff are fully familiar with the general evacuation process, however, there is no personal emergency evacuation plan to guide staff as to specific approaches for each child. The potential impact of this is minimised by the high staffing levels and continuity of staff. The safety of the building is regularly monitored ensuring that risks to young people are identified and addressed. For example, the provider recently removed blinds from windows due to a concern regarding the chords. Staff promote young people's dignity and manage behaviours such as removal of clothes sensitively. Since the last inspection the provider has enhanced the privacy of the home by placing privacy film on bedroom windows to prevent young people inadvertently exposing themselves to the public.

Leadership and management

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

Management arrangements are well organised, with the manager and responsible individual working closely together with the senior staff team. The majority of the people working in the home have a number of years of either personal or professional experience in the field of learning disabilities. The service is staffed by a flexible core team of staff who mostly work outside of school hours when the demand for care is highest. Some of these staff work with the children in other settings, particularly local schools. This means that whilst able to provide a flexible and responsive service, young people and their families benefit from staff who are familiar.

Staff working in other areas will in some cases also have benefited from a variety of

training and knowledge which they are able to bring to their role in the home. The manager demonstrates a strong commitment to training and has high expectations for staff. Staff undertake a variety of training relevant to their role and the manager ensures assessed practical competency in areas, such as, medication and restraint before staff are allowed to undertake these activities. Management ensure that staff are supported through regular supervision and team meetings. The vast majority of staff have completed or are studying for, the National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in Caring for Children and young people, or have equivalent qualifications.

The setting is well resourced to ensure that young people receive high levels of support. Staff demonstrate a solid commitment to working with young people and care practice and all care and support is highly individualised and child focused. Equality and diversity is threaded through the service with staff responding to each of the young people's complex and diverse needs. The management team view themselves very much as a resource and will pass on to families any information and resources that they are familiar with.

No formal complaints have been received by the home and families have confidence in the home's ability to respond to any issues of concern which they may raise. Where parents have raised issues through feedback sought by the home, the manager has taken on board the comments with a view to developing practice and the facilities provided. All of the young people, due to their care characteristics require the support of a family member or advocate to assist them should they wish to complain. However, the manager is planning to develop the young people's complaints procedure in partnership with some young people, into formats such as DVD and explore the use of tablet computers to further widen the accessibility.

The home is well staffed ensuring that young people's individual needs are met. Staffing is arranged according to the needs of the young people. At minimum a member of staff is provided to support each young person. In most instances staffing is higher than a one to one ratio with some young people being provided three staff to individually support them out in the community. Waking staff are on duty each night, this ensures that staff are available to respond flexibly to young people's needs and desires. Staff are competent in the roles they perform and establish positive relationships with young people, parents and other agencies.

Systems are in place to notify relevant authorities of any significant events or safeguarding concerns. The service has effective systems in place for monitoring the standards of care within the home. The management team keep the quality of care under review and are constantly looking to develop and improve the service. One particular aim is to expand the accommodation further to provide services to a wider range of young people than is currently possible

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 the inspection of children's homes.