

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Cheryl Carter
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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 **good**.

Young people achieve positive outcomes as they receive good care and support to have equal opportunities and inclusion with their disabilities. Living in this home, young people benefit from a high level of individualised and well planned care.

Diverse methods of communication ensure that the views of the young people are gathered and incorporated into their care planning and running of the home. The commitment and dedication from the staff team ensure that children and young people are cared for in a nurturing environment where they can also have fun. The supportive relationships offer them warmth and a sense of security, enabling children and young people to feel safe.

Diversity is embedded in written policies, practice, staff recruitment and training. The culture of the home is accepting to a wide range of needs. In doing so, staff are skilled and undertake relevant training for supporting young people with complex needs and challenging behaviour.

Young people's safety is central to the day-to-day running of the home. The dynamics of the staff team contributes to a safe environment and helps reduce risk taking and anti-social behaviours exhibited by young people. This includes: effective communication between staff, communication between staff and young people, shift planning and engaging young people in meaningful activities. External professionals praise the work of the staff for keeping very vulnerable young people safe. Professionals say staff are very committed to the young people and do go that extra mile.

The management of this home is committed to continual improvement and undertakes effective monitoring that contributes to the development of this service. Shortfalls were identified at this inspection. These relate to recording of restraints. One good practice recommendation was identified and this relates to updating the Statement of Purpose.

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
17B (2001)	ensure that a written record is made in a volume kept for the purpose of which shall include confirmation that the person authorised to make the record has spoken to the child concerned and the person using the measure about the use of the measure. (Regulation 17B(3)(h))	10/07/2013

Recommendations

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

- ensure that the Statement of Purpose is reviewed and updated. (NMS13.3)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

Young people's complex needs are sensibly handled by experienced and caring staff which contributes to their emotional development. Staff understand how the emotional wellbeing can impact on young people's behaviour. They see that behaviour is a form of communication and uses a range of communication styles with the young people, which range from picture exchange communication to verbal language. There is a high staffing ratio which ensures that there are plenty of opportunities for young people to interact and communicate to the staff about how they are feeling.

Staff encourage and support young people to make decisions about their lives, in day-to-day matters, and to influence the way the home is run. For example, efforts are made to consult about their leisure activities, outings and menu planning. Young

people benefit from mixing with adults and their peers within the home through individual as well as group activities. This helps to strengthen their social skills, have new experiences, and develop friendships through the various social events such as participating in cooking activities which gives them the opportunity to learn about healthy eating and how to prepare simple meals or drinks at the unit. They also go for walks to the local parks as well as trips to the seaside.

All of the young people are in some form of education. Support with homework is in place for all aspects of young people's education. One young person stated that he enjoys the help from staff and he is doing very well and this is helping him plan for his future.

Young people benefit from a child centred, stimulating, and safe environment which enable them to feel secure and meet their individualised needs. They achieve their potential and independence through the provision of activities and an environment in which their individual health care needs are met. Young people develop their self-awareness relating to personal presentation including managing personal hygiene, wearing appropriate clothing and caring for their hair and skin.

Young people benefit from relationships that are trusting and warm and staff successfully build young people's confidence. Young people's care needs are diverse and highly individualised, based on extremely detailed and comprehensive care and placement planning. This results in all key aspects of young people's needs being well understood and met.

As young people have limited communication, staff have devised appropriate strategies and systems to enable them to express themselves. Communication can be complex and difficult to establish. However, young people express themselves and their views and wishes are responded to appropriately. Young people that may otherwise go unheard have a voice and communicate as a result of the dedicated and supportive staff members. Young people's views influence their day-to-day care.

Young people benefit from the enthusiasm and energy of the staff members to support and facilitate communication. These effective systems such as Picture Enhanced Communication (PECS) have enabled young people to make representations when they are unhappy or troubled. Staff support young people well and also advocate for them, raising matters on their behalf.

Quality of care

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

Young people enjoy positive and constructive relationships with staff. Interaction is good humoured and supportive. This enables the young people to form trusting relationships towards the adults that care for them in a safe environment.

The staff team ensure that there is effective communication to establish the views and wishes of the children and young people. The staff are resourceful and make

every effort to ensure that they communicate effectively with each young person. In some cases picture symbols are used and developed. Individual communication methods are used that recognises the individual needs of each young person. This personalised approach enhances communication as the resources become specific instead of generalised for group living.

To further promote choice, young people are now more engaged in identifying what clothing they want to wear each day and are fully involved where possible, in the choosing and purchasing of their clothing. Young people have the opportunity to help plan the menu for the following week and this is encouraged and supported by the staff.

Young people are supported and encouraged to make their voices heard. The complaints procedure is available to the young people and their family. Invariably family members take responsibility to raise any concerns or complaints, though there has not been any since the last inspection. Parents and professionals report on the 'transparency' of this service, sharing information with them, including any problems. They welcome this approach and have confidence in the manager and staff. To further promote the rights of young people, young people are encouraged to meet with their Independent Reviewing Officer to ensure decision making is within their best interests.

Placement planning ensures that all key aspects of care are recorded and objectives identified to promote the development young people. To ensure that young people receive external support from other agencies, the manager and staff team are persistent in seeking professional services to work in partnership to provide a high standard of care.

Staff are suitably trained to deliver medication. Young people are encouraged to be aware of their health needs and have an understanding of taking medication, personal hygiene, healthy eating and physical exercise. The promotion of a healthy lifestyle enables the young people to make appropriate choices, particularly in relation to their diet. This empowers them to select food without staff having to regularly intervene. The majority of meals are home cooked, providing a healthy, nutritious and varied diet.

A varied activity programme provides fun and interest within the home and at local events and facilities. Young people are supported to participate by staff, who have high aspirations for individuals to reach and exceed their potential. Some young people engage in sports, music activities and use the local library and public transport.

The home provides a comfortable and child-friendly environment, furnished and maintained to a good standard. Bedrooms are personalised, affording a high degree of privacy for each young person. The home has a secure garden with play equipment. The home is currently having an extension built which will provide more living space for the young people.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Staff receives safeguarding training and has a good understanding of the wider issues in relation to keeping children safe. There are good arrangements for the sharing of information between professionals and good communication on a regular basis between staff, parents and schools. Safeguarding training is mandatory for all staff and this training is focused on safeguarding children with disabilities. Children and young people say that they feel safe living at the home and have not experienced any bullying.

There are high levels of supervision in place which help to eliminate the risk of young people going missing. Staff are fully aware of the procedures to follow if a young person goes missing. Each young person has an individual risk assessment in relation to their behavioural needs and behaviour management. Staff are provided with training to deal with challenging behaviour. Restraints are only used as a last resort to protect a young person from self-injurious behaviours or protecting others from any injuries. Restraints are recorded, however the record of restraints, did not show that young people are spoken to and offered the opportunity to be examined by a doctor after a restraint has taken place.

Staff are not always clear about setting boundaries; the record of sanctions showed in one instant an excessive use of sanctions where the young person had four sanctions in place for one breach of the house rules. Risk assessments ensure that young people are safe from any harm at the home and during their visit into the community.

Leadership and management

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

A Statement of Purpose is in place and this contains relevant information about the running of the home. However the document is not dated. Staff are very familiar with the ethos of the home and this is clearly evidenced in their practice and interactions with young people. A guide is available to young people and this includes a brief summary of the Statement of Purpose. Young people are given a copy of the guide on admission.

Children and young people benefit from living in a home that is well managed. The Registered Manager ensures that the home is well organised and staffed to provide children and young people with stability and consistency of care. The manager is both approachable and supportive, which is appreciated by staff, children and young people.

The staff team are enthusiastic about their work, and demonstrate a commitment to supporting children and young people in achieving good outcomes. Staff members feels supported in their work through regular supervision, a good training

programme and clear policies and procedures to support their practice. The input from other professionals is valued by the staff, enabling them to work together towards improved outcomes for the young people.

The manager is keen to promote the service and strive for continual improvement. This is evident through effective monitoring, and a willingness to identify the strengths and weaknesses through an evaluation of the home's performance.

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.