

## Inspection report for children's home

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<b>Inspection date</b>	17/06/2013
<b>Inspector</b>	Valerie Shephard / Monica Hargreaves
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Full
<b>Provision subtype</b>	Children's home

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<b>Date of last inspection</b>	08/01/2013
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## Service information

### Brief description of the service

This privately run children's home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to five young people who have learning and/or physical 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**.

Young people receive a good level of care and have positive relationships with staff, in particular, their key worker. Young people make steady progress in the home and outcomes for them are adequate. The manager is effective in her role and has good oversight of the strengths and areas for improvement in the home.

Staff are aware of young people's individual and very specific welfare needs. Placing social workers and parents are extremely positive about the care that staff provide. Staff are proactive in promoting young people's contact with those who are important to them, such as, their family.

Very positive partnership working with a range of health and safeguarding agencies helps to promote and protect young people's well-being. Staff value education for young people and are proactive to involve them in learning for their future. Education is tailored to meet young people's individual needs. However, some young people refuse to attend school on a regular basis which limits their progress in this area of their life.

Staff support young people to gain appropriate social and independence skills. A parent said 'all staff are very friendly and approachable with both my child and myself; they have made a huge difference to my child's life.'

One requirement and three recommendations for improvement have been made as a result of this inspection. These relate to the recording and storage of medication, health and safety, staff training and household maintenance.

## 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
28 (2001)	ensure that records in respect of each child accommodated in the home includes information specified in Schedule 3 with particular reference to the date and result of any review of the placing authority's plan for the care of the child.(Regulation 28(1)(a) Schedule 3 (19))	29/07/2013

### Recommendations

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

- review the range of activities young people have access to (NMS 7.2)
- ensure the home has a record of the recruitment and vetting checks which have been carried out on those working for the children's home with particular reference to telephone enquiries made of references (NMS 16.3)
- ensure new staff undertake the Children's Workforce Development Council's induction standards, commencing within 7 working days of starting employment and being completed within 6 months (NMS 18.3)
- ensure that if staff in the home resort to any measure of control or discipline or restraint, this is carefully recorded with full details by the staff involved within 24 hours in a record kept for the purpose. ( Volume 5, statutory guidance, para 2.91)

### Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

Young people make good progress compared to their starting points at the time of their admission. Parents and social workers comment on the observable improvements in young people's personal hygiene, communication and behaviour. One parent said of her daughter, 'her personal hygiene and appearance is much better. She now showers regularly and changes her clothes and there is a vast improvement in her choice of clothing. Overall she has a much better appearance.' Another parent commented, 'his speech has improved and he can understand certain

things, and use short sentences. This helps him to make more choices.'

All young people have made improvements with regard to their behaviour. They benefit from positive behaviour management strategies which focus on rewarding desired behaviour. Young people are encouraged to behave in more appropriate ways and gain rewards accordingly. They learn new skills that help them deal with their anger better. A social worker said, 'the young person is a different child and the improvements made are fantastic. Her behaviour has improved; she seems to be able to tell staff how she feels.'

Young people enjoy good health and are able to access a range of community based health services. For example, involvement by child and adolescent mental health and learning disability services ensure that young people's holistic health needs are met. Young people learn about following a healthy lifestyle. They have access to healthy food and encouragement to make good choices in relation to their meals. Some young people have benefited well by losing weight due to a healthier eating regime.

Young people have excellent attendance at school or college supported by well-established links between their education provision and the home. A social worker said, 'there is more enrichment here which has helped with growth and development. Education has improved since she came into the home as staff are able to get her into school.' Excellent communication and consistency of care between the settings enables young people to progress with their education and learning.

Young people have access to a range of physical activities which promote health and acquisition of social skills. Examples include swimming, walking and trips out. However, in accordance with their age, sometimes young people do not wish to engage in activities and then say they are 'bored'. A review of activity plans is due to ensure young people have access to a range of stimulating and appropriate opportunities. Evidence demonstrates that during a recent holiday, excellent preparation by staff resulted in an increase in young people's participation in activities.

Young people benefit from on-going contact with their families and significant people from their past. Excellent communication between the home and young people's families ensure that contact runs smoothly for the benefit of young people. One parent said, 'I visit him monthly and sometimes other family members come too. We had a lovely visit recently for his birthday. Staff made the event very pleasurable for us all.'

All young people acquire some independence skills appropriate to their age, understanding and stage of development. Those on independence plans are able to perform simple tasks such as tidying their bedrooms and preparing food with appropriate support. Young people are acquiring social skills and learning how to present themselves in a suitable manner to the outside world.

## **Quality of care**

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

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

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

Young people are safe in the home and observations of their relationships with staff demonstrate that they feel safe. Staff fully understand young people's individual vulnerabilities as a result of their learning and communication difficulties. This ensures they are able to protect young people from potential harm. Young people rarely go missing and there are no reported incidents of bullying. Sufficient staff work in the home to ensure a high ratio of staff to young people. This reflects the increased level of supervision required for young people with diverse learning needs. A social worker said, 'the home is well risk assessed and well managed.'

Young people enjoy positive relationships with staff which assist them to improve their behaviour. Effective behaviour management with carefully developed incentive plans focus on rewarding good behaviour. Young people are able to work towards targets to earn treats, for example choosing a special activity or trip out. Staff consistently remind young people about their targets and encourage them to withdraw and calm down. One parent said, 'my daughter's behaviour has improved vastly; she wasn't able to express herself before and used to get very angry. She now takes herself away to calm down to her bedroom or a quiet room.'

Staff are trained in the use of physical restraint and understand that this is only to be used when a young person is putting themselves or others at risk of harm. Incidents of restraint have reduced considerably during the last few months. This is a result of effective behaviour management techniques and young people learning how to manage their anger better. However restraint records do not always contain enough detail to ascertain what the antecedents were prior to the physical restraint. Consequently it is difficult to evaluate the effectiveness and appropriateness of the restraint.

Staff recruitment is robust to ensure only adults who are assessed as suitable to work with young people are able to do so. A shortcoming exists in relation to the verification of references. The manager confirmed that verification does occur, however lack of consistent recording of this does not demonstrate good recruitment practice.

The staff team benefit from training in child protection and safeguarding and demonstrate that they are confident in following policies and procedures. The provision of refresher training enables the staff team to keep their knowledge and skills up to date.

The home provides a safe environment for young people and safety measures do not create an institutional feel in the home. The use of comprehensive and individualised risk assessments for young people helps to keep them safe. These are subject to regular review and update and inform care delivery. Regular testing of equipment within the home assures that appliances do not create a safety hazard to young people. Fire drills and evacuation plans ensure young people are able to leave the home promptly in the event of an emergency.

## **Leadership and management**

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

The home currently does not have a Registered Manager as a result of the very recent resignation of the post holder. The deputy is adequately managing the home in the interim while recruitment to the post takes place. There are also some gaps in the staff team due to sickness and the recent departure of a team leader. The responsible individual is taking prompt action to fill the Registered Manager's post.

The home provides a high staff ratio to ensure young people are efficiently supervised and safe. Young people benefit from a minimum of one-to-one staffing in accordance with the home's Statement of Purpose. The staff team are experienced and well qualified and benefit from the provision of a wide range of training. This equips them with the skills they need to care effectively for young people with learning difficulties and health problems. However, new staff are not enrolled on the Children's Workforce Development Council's induction programme within seven days of commencing employment. Consequently they do not have the opportunity to acquire the basic knowledge, skills and understanding necessary to care effectively for young people.

Staff benefit from regular supervision which provides them with the support they need to offer good quality care to young people. There is a commitment to supervision and staff confirm that they feel fully supported by management. Supervision records have sufficient detail, are signed and dated by all parties.

Quality assurance monitoring systems within the home are adequate. The system for monitoring the quality of care under Regulation 33 is met. The acting manager addresses any actions raised by the independent visitor in an attempt to drive forward improvements within the home. The requirement for the submission of Regulation 34 reports to Ofsted is also met. These measures ensure the regulatory body has an overview of the running of the home.

Amendments to the children's guide has resulted in a document which now contains all relevant contact details young people may need. This provides clarity for young people and their families about where to seek independent advocacy.

Records within the home are generally clear, up to date and stored securely and present a narrative of the young people's life in the home. However some records



were missing from the files, such as copies of young people's review reports. It is a requirement to hold this information on young people's files. This does not impact negatively on young people's outcomes or welfare as staff are working in accordance with their care plans. However, this could be detrimental for young people in later life if they wish in the future to access their file.

The home is well resourced and meets health and safety standards. Effective maintenance of the property ensures the home is a pleasant place for young people to live in and staff to work in.

## 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.