

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Angus Mackay
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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.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: a service that significantly exceeds minimum requirements

Good: a service that exceeds minimum requirements

Satisfactory: a service that only meets minimum requirements

Inadequate: a service that does not meet minimum requirements

Service information

Brief description of the service

The Vine Respite Service is a short break and respite provision. The home caters for no more than five young people during the day and has residential accommodation for no more than four young people. The home is able to meet the needs of children and young people with learning disabilities, mild physical disabilities and associated emotional, behavioural or medical needs.

Overall effectiveness

The overall effectiveness is judged to be **satisfactory**.

Young people and their families receive good care and positive outcomes from their periods in the home. Staff are good at working with other agencies, parents and young people to construct positive care plans for the young people, which meet their personal and cultural needs. Parents have a very positive view of the staff and the care which they provide to the young people.

Monitoring arrangements are good and include regular quality assurance surveys, with parents and young people. The manager uses this information, positively, to improve outcomes for young people. The manager works well with regulatory bodies and is responsive to identified gaps in the service. External monitoring visits are due to commence in April, to enhance the safe care of young people. Social workers say that the manager produces excellent written reports and provides regular verbal updates on young people's progress. The home has demonstrated good awareness of safeguarding issues, being instrumental in prompting child protection proceedings for at risk young people.

The home has many excellent policies and procedures but has not yet implemented their identified training programme for staff, which leaves staff and young people at risk. Staff selection is sophisticated and has clear decision making. The manager has, however, not carried out all of the required checks on new staff, exposing young people to potential risk from unsuitable people.

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
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26 (2001)	ensure that full and satisfactory information is available in relation to all staff in respect of each of the matters specified in Schedule 2 (Regulation 26(3)(d))	27/04/2012
33 (2001)	ensure that a written report on the conduct of the home is sent to the HMCI at least once a month. (Regulation 33)	27/04/2012

Recommendations

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

- ensure that if restraint is to be used, staff are to be trained in the use of physical restraint techniques and only use the home's agreed techniques (NMS 3.15)
- ensure that all staff are working towards the level 3 Children and Young People's Workforce Diploma within 6 months of confirmation of employment (NMS18.5)
- ensure that, as a minimum, all staff are trained to the basic level of the LSCB's training programme (Volume 5, statutory guidance, para. 2.74)
- ensure all new staff undertake Children's Workforce Development Council's induction standards, commencing within 7 working days of starting their employment. (NMS18.3)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people have made good progress in the short periods they have stayed in the home. Parents, social workers, schools and health professionals comment positively about how well the home works with them to meet the young people's needs. One parent describing the home said, 'They are brilliant; they let me relax and enjoy him being in respite care. This is of course the point of it.'

Young people have choice in the food which they eat and can select, each meal time, from a range of different meals. Staff consult with parents, to gain insight into what the young person likes and any cultural or health requirements which they may have. The home will address unhelpful or unhealthy eating patterns established at home. A school described how the home has weaned one young person from a very unhealthy diet. In addition in a short period the home taught the young person how to use cutlery and eat a wide range of healthy foods. Staff improved her engagement with other children at school, her health and appearance through this intervention.

Young people benefit from the close working relationship between the home and the schools they attend. All schools stated that children came from the home happy and well prepared. Young people were always in uniform and were clean and well presented, enhancing their self esteem and peer relationships. One school commented on the good dialogue, from the manager of the home, which helped

them with the eating habits of the young person, as described. The school commented that the young person was much calmer when coming from the home and her health and temperament improved in the short time she was there. Another teacher described how the home displayed great flexibility in working with them to address another young person's disruptive behaviour. The teacher stated, 'I was more than satisfied with the support they gave to our work.'

Young people have access to a paved garden area and garden play equipment. They attend various leisure activities and amongst other activities, enjoy visiting local shops, the library and parks. Staff use these excursions as learning opportunities for young people improving their interactions with others and enhancing their ability to follow instruction. Staff plan trips with parents and address specific areas of development for the young people, improving their community safety and social skills. One parent described how she had worked with the home to improve the young person's ability to travel in the local community. The parent stated, 'This work helped develop control of his behaviour in shops and improved his mobility by taking him on a bus for the first time.'

Quality of care

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

Young people enjoy respite care packages which staff design with them, their parents and professionals working with them. Staff use this consultation to ensure that they can actively address needs relating to the young person's cultural background and personal identity. Parents confirm that they have an ongoing dialogue with the home, who are constantly seeking to improve the outcomes for young people. One parent explained how the home would check what various signs used by the young person meant, to ensure they were able to meet his requests and choices.

Staff have developed a wide range of pictorial images of food to provide young people choice in their menu. Staff provide meals which meet the young persons health and cultural needs and preferences. Staff afford young people choice in activities by verbally offering them a small number of options. The manager is developing a range of additional pictorial methods of engaging young people in choice and in contributing to the management of the home.

Young people have benefitted from the close working of care staff with medical professionals. This close working has resulted in significant improvements in health care for individual young people. Staff have identified medical issues in young people which have ensured their safe care and appropriate medical interventions. On occasions this has required staff to work closely with health and social work professionals, to address long standing safeguarding issues for young people, placing them in conflict with parents. The home have successfully prioritised the safe care of young people in these situations.

The home is relatively new and has worked with a small number of young people.

Staff have observed and controlled young people's behaviours in the community, intervening appropriately to aid positive interactions. The young people and their parents have contributed to the homes quality assurance surveys and expressed positive views about the care provided. Parents confirm that the young people are cared for in line with their placement plans and that staff respect their views. Staff use few sanctions and always have to discuss them with the manager before imposing them. Staff use sanctions to provide learning or safety for young people and to reduce negative behaviours, rather than to punish misbehaviour. Staff inform parents of all sanctions to ensure a consistent approach and agree the most effective means of conflict resolution for young people. Parents say that the staff and in particular the manager, have been excellent at meeting the personal needs of the young people.

Young people receive care in a spacious well maintained home. They have access to individual bedrooms which are comfortable and well furnished. The home can accommodate up to four young people for overnight stays and provides a high staffing ratio to ensure their safety. Young people receive care in line with parental wishes and their own capabilities. Staff afford them appropriate privacy and are sensitive to their personal care needs. Young people are encouraged to develop new skills and to engage in community based activities. Parents describe ways the home have developed the young people during short periods in the home. This has included improving their interpersonal skills in shops and getting them to use public transport for the first time. Parents say that the home has been excellent at safely introducing the young people to these new experiences, in response to their requests.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Parents of young people and social workers say that young people enjoy going to the home and feel safe and well cared for there. There has been no bullying in the home and staff have detailed policies to guide their interventions with young people to keep them safe if it occurred. The manager is modifying the procedure to include advice to staff on how to protect young people from internet bullying, although the home currently has no internet access for young people.

Young people are appropriately protected by a range of safeguarding measures, such as systems to deal with any child protection issues or complaints. The home has actively used these systems to protect young people from harm. Staff are aware of their responsibilities to safeguard children and keep them from harm and know how to respond appropriately to any indication or allegation of abuse. The home has identified appropriate training to enhance staff skills and knowledge in safeguarding young people. The manager has not yet implemented this training, leaving young people potentially vulnerable.

Staff have successfully managed young people's challenging behaviour using

distraction techniques, short periods of time out and other low level interventions to defuse situations. Staff have not received training in the use of physical interventions, although restraint is included in the behaviour management programme. Young people are at risk if staff did attempt to intervene physically in difficult situations. The manager has altered guidance to staff, to ensure that they do not use physical interventions until after training, to protect young people from harm. The manager is developing on line systems for missing person reports, physical interventions, sanctions and rewards to allow accurate recording and ease of analysis, to identify any patterns in incidents. The manager uses this information, which she currently manually collates, to enhance the safeguarding of young people.

Young people have care supplied by staff who managers carefully select. Managers require staff to demonstrate a clear understanding of safeguarding issues, as well as knowledge appropriate to working with the young people in the home. Despite the rigorous interview process some staff have incomplete references, no complete work history and references which have not been verified. Although all staff have current criminal record bureau checks managers have not checked for gaps in employment. The home is retrospectively completing these checks, to ensure the suitability of people to work with the young people.

All young people have detailed risk assessments, which staff use in providing personalised interventions to meet their needs. Parents and social workers say that staff work closely with them to ensure that they identify and meet all of the young people's diverse needs.

Leadership and management

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

Young people enjoy care and accommodation provided by the home in line with its Statement of Purpose. The home is recently registered and provides high quality accommodation to young people. The manager has responded positively to issues identified during the registration of the home, ensuring the safety of the young people.

The manager has established good monitoring procedures within the home, to maintain and improve the quality of care provided to young people. The manager has supplied an initial Regulation 34 audit of the service to Ofsted. Unfortunately the low volumes of young people accommodated make it difficult for the manager to make meaningful evaluation of performance and practice from this. The manager has put in place an additional quality audit to gather the views of young people and parents about the service. The manager uses this information to advise service developments, incorporating the views of young people and their families. The manager now understands that she must organise visits in line with Regulation 33 and has arrangements in place for these to occur in future. The manager intends to use this in conjunction with the existing quality assurance systems to drive forward further improvement, for the benefit of young people.

Young people benefit from living in a safe well maintained environment. Health and safety audits of the home are thorough and the manager has regular reviews planned of all procedures to ensure the home continues to provide safe care. The manager has conducted a comprehensive risk assessment of the building, grounds and all areas and facilities within them identifying potential risks to young people. Staff conduct a monthly check on all identified risks ensuring that hazards to young people are reduced and properly managed. Staff practice fire evacuations, monthly, to enhance the safety of young people.

The manager has a comprehensive support programme for all staff, to aid them in providing good quality care to young people. Staff receive regular supervision when working, to reinforce the home's procedures and the delivery of good care to young people. The manager has identified the training needs of all staff and has identified appropriate training resources to provide this. To date this training has not commenced and staff have received only a basic induction programme. Young people have been cared for by experienced qualified staff ensuring they have had appropriate care. To ensure that young people continue to receive good, safe care, which meets their personal needs, the home intend to commence the identified training.

Equality and diversity practice is **good**.