

## Inspection report for children's home

---

<b>Unique reference number</b>	SC037986
<b>Inspection date</b>	12/11/2013
<b>Inspector</b>	Emeline Evans
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Full
<b>Provision subtype</b>	Children's home

---

<b>Date of last inspection</b>	07/01/2013
--------------------------------	------------

---

© Crown copyright 2013

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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

This is a short-break unit which provides day care, and residential short breaks for five children and young people with learning disabilities. It is owned and managed by a local council.

### 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 accessing the service benefit from outstanding levels of close individual care and support. They also receive outstanding support and encouragement from staff, both to participate positively in leisure activities in the community and to celebrate their achievements. Young people and their parents and carers enjoy very positive supportive relationships with staff at the home. Young people are looked after by a very experienced and stable staff team. Through the relationships formed with staff, young people are relaxed and feel safe, and professionals reiterate this. Staff are equipped with the skills to recognise when young people are upset or worried and are proactive in acting on concerns. Staff respond professionally and appropriately to unexpected behaviours.

Staff form effective working relationships with parents, carers, education and specialist services, to ensure a cohesive approach to care. Young people are very happy in their environment, and by the use of alternative methods of communication and an understanding of the young people, staff offer choices in many aspects of their daily life.

The management team is striving for continued improvement and are aware of the strengths and weaknesses within the home. There are breaches of regulation which relate to the internal monitoring of the home and review of the Statement of Purpose; improvements are required in this area. Areas of further improvement include consistency of recording young people's views following any physical intervention, review of the building risk assessment and a review of the locks presently in operation on bedroom doors.

## 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
4 (2001)	update the Statement of Purpose to ensure that it includes all the criteria required by regulation (Regulation 4(1), Schedule 1)	20/12/2013
34 (2001)	establish and maintain an effective system for monitoring the matters set out in Schedule 6 and for improving the quality of care provided in the children's home. This should include consultation with children, their parents and placing authorities. (Regulation 34(1)(a)(b)(3))	20/12/2013

### Recommendations

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

- ensure children are encouraged to have their views recorded in the records kept by the home following incidents of restraints (NMS 3.18)
- revise the building risk assessment to demonstrate that the use of keypads within the home allows children as much freedom as possible, consistent with the need to keep them safe (Volume 5, Statutory Guidance, para 2.108)
- ensure the home provides a comfortable and homely environment. This specifically relates to reviewing the locks on the bedroom doors to ensure they can be opened from the inside. (NMS 10.3)

### Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **outstanding**.

Outcomes for the young people continue to be outstanding. Since accessing the short-break service, young people have grown significantly in their confidence, independence and ability to access a range of activities. Young people's self-esteem is developing well because of the child-focused care provided by a staff team who are skilled at understanding the individual ways young people express their needs. It is evident that young people thoroughly enjoy and look forward to their short break at the unit. This was echoed by parents and a placing social worker.

The home promotes excellent communication between themselves and individual educational settings. This ensures young people's educational needs are fully supported. This is further supported by staff meeting regularly with the local schools and attending educational reviews as appropriate. This proactive approach to educational achievement ensures children are provided with support and guidance to reach their individual goals. Comments from parents include: 'The staff work really well with my child's school. They share information and make sure that everything is consistent for my child, which is really important.'

Young people are able to access the services which they need through close multi-agency relationships which the staff team has with local health services and health advisors. Healthy living, including a well-balanced diet and exercise, are all important aspects of the young person's stay at the unit. Young people have developed a greater range of healthy eating choices as a result of going to the unit. The 'titans' Friday group has recently had a meeting to put forward their thoughts and views on healthy eating; this has resulted in the young people understanding healthy choices. Young people benefit from a staff team that has an acute awareness of their individual emotional and physical health needs. Parents commented that their children's health needs were always given high priority. The service closely monitors young people's health during their stays and responds promptly to any emerging health concerns.

Young people benefit from these brief periods away from home; they are supported to develop new skills and make decisions to promote their independence. The service has the resources to provide a range of activities in-house. Young people are encouraged and given the opportunity to try new experiences and be involved in the community when they visit. There are trips out to local parks, cinema, bowling, shops and local places of interest. These experiences are allowing the opportunities for social interaction to be further enhanced.

All young people at the home are being successfully supported to maximise their independence, and this is an integral aspect of how the home operates. Going shopping, cooking, taking responsibility for personal care and improving communication, are all examples of areas where staff are working with young people to develop their independence. There have been measurable outcomes achieved in these areas.

## **Quality of care**

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

The quality of care received by young people at the home is outstanding. This is mainly due to the excellent relationships that exist between young people and the staff team. Staff demonstrate exceptional understanding of the needs of all the young people, which was echoed by parents and social workers alike. Young people receive excellent support to enable them to maximise their potential and make progress in all areas of their lives. The welfare of young people is central to how the home operates, and staff work very closely with parents and external agencies to

promote positive outcomes for them. Observations were indicative of the trusting and fulfilling relationships between the young people and staff. Young people said, 'the staff are great.' A parent described the staff as, 'lovely and caring.'

There is an emphasis within the service on ensuring that young people have fun during their stay at the home. The staff team takes time and care to ensure the needs of the young people accessing the service are compatible. This enhances the opportunities for peer interaction and enables young people to develop social skills. Young people's views are gained on all areas involved in their care and stay at the unit. Staff are able to communicate extremely effectively with those young people with communication difficulties and actively seek the views of all young people as part of their everyday practice. An intimate knowledge of each young person's needs enables staff to be able to tell if someone is unhappy for any reason and to respond accordingly. Although a young person may not make a formal complaint, if a young person appeared unhappy staff immediately advocate on their behalf.

Staff work in partnership with parents and professionals to ensure that a consistent approach is achieved. Effective communication ensures that key messages about young people's care and well-being are properly addressed. One parent explained, 'communication is good and I can contact them at any time.' Parents were highly complimentary about the staff team and the regular open communication that exists to ensure that young people's welfare is at the centre of all practice.

Excellent care plans detail all the areas of care and support staff will provide. Care plans provide an abundance of information which takes into account the complex needs of the young people including their medical, health, cultural and behavioural needs. These plans clearly identify any additional support required due to disability. They are used as working tools on each shift. This practice promotes consistency in the quality of care received, so that young people's preferred routines are carried out. Young people have individual 'ladders of achievements' which are incorporated into care planning and enable progress to be clearly evidenced.

Arrangements for dealing with medication are safe and appropriate. There is a clear audit trail of medication coming into and leaving the unit. There is appropriate attention provided to any emerging or on-going health or emotional needs. Some young people have complex health needs, and these are understood and excellently managed by staff.

The home is situated in a residential area within easy reach of local facilities. Young people enjoy their stays in a safe and pleasant environment. The home has appropriate specialist equipment to ensure the individual needs of the young people accessing the service are met, such as adapted baths and ceiling hoists. The sensory development of the young people is enhanced through the use of sensory equipment and a sensory garden.

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

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

Young people are provided with individual routines and structure during their stay to support them in feeling safe and comfortable in their surroundings. There is good provision at the home for ensuring the safety of young people. Parents and placing social workers all report feeling that young people are safe at the home. Young people have very good relationships with staff who understand and recognise changes in behaviours. Through feeling safe and confident in these relationships, young people are able to communicate any issues as they arise and make progress in their personal development. Staff receive regular training in safeguarding and demonstrate a recognition of the particular vulnerabilities relating to the needs of children with disabilities.

There have been no instances of bullying reported since the last inspection. This is due to the planning and attention given to ensuring appropriate peer groups are in place for young people's visits. High staff ratios ensure any challenging behaviour is managed in a positive and successful manner. The home has been working with the organisation's behaviour specialist to ensure consistency in managing young people's behaviours is achieved. This has resulted in a decrease in incidents of challenging behaviour and a reduction in the use of physical intervention. The service closely monitors the use of measures of control and discipline, and this scrutiny ensures that trends and patterns are monitored and behaviour plans are adjusted accordingly. Instances of physical intervention are recorded in a bound volume in line with regulatory requirements. However, young people's views are not consistently recorded. This does not enable the home to fully explore the effectiveness of these interventions.

Comprehensive written risk assessments are being regularly reviewed and staff are acutely aware of each young person and their individual vulnerabilities. There have been no incidents of any young person being missing from the home since the last full inspection.

The home has a sound recruitment process in place, which ensures all the necessary checks are completed before a member of staff starts work. This protects young people from having contact with unsuitable people.

The premises provide a safe and secure physical environment where young people feel safe and where they are being safely cared for. The servicing and routine checks of fire safety systems, equipment and gas and electric installations take place as required. The building is kept secure through the use of alarms on external doors. Due to the young people's complex needs it is necessary for safety reasons to restrict access to some parts of the building. However, this has not been formally recorded in the building's risk assessment. In addition, the bedroom doors are fitted with locks that cannot be opened from the inside. This is to prevent young people entering bedrooms when not in use. A recommendation has been made to review the bedroom door locks currently in operation.

## **Leadership and management**

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

The Registered Manager is currently on maternity leave and an acting manager has been recruited to manage the home during this time of absence. The management team understands the strengths of the home and is aware of areas for development. There is a comprehensive development plan in place; this has a clear emphasis on achieving good outcomes for young people.

Staff work together well and there is a good team spirit which impacts positively on young people. Staff report feeling supported by senior staff and management. The service is well resourced, ensuring that young people have good staffing ratios, access to purposeful activities and to leisure interests. The staff are very enthusiastic and passionate about their work and demonstrate that they know the young people very well. Staff undertake training which enhances their individual skills. Staff are complimentary about the quality and types of training they receive because it is relevant to their work with individual young people.

The Statement of Purpose clearly states the aims and objectives of the service and the facilities it provides. There is a clear focus on working in partnership with young people, parents and outside professionals to achieve a consistent approach to meeting the needs of young people. However, this document requires reviewing to include the current management arrangements, the experience of the staff team and the monitors which are used within the home and what benefit these methods of surveillance provide for the well-being and safety of the young people. Young people are provided with a children's guide which summarises the home and also a DVD to familiarise all young people with the environment.

Monthly quality assurance monitoring of the quality of care is completed by the manager and a designated person from the organisation. These have developed into a robust process which involves young people. However, the internal monitoring of the home does not indicate that routine consultation with young people, parents and placing authorities takes place or how this information is used to further improve the quality of care provided. In addition, it does not include all the matters required by regulation. It is therefore difficult to fully evaluate the standard of care provided in the home.

Young people's files are stored securely and contain documents which are relevant and contribute to an understanding of the young people's life. At the last interim inspection in January 2013 there was one recommendation made. This was to publish the children's guide to ensure all young people have access to this document; this has been met.

## 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.