

## Inspection report for children's home

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	SC409506
<b>Inspection date</b>	10/12/2013
<b>Inspector</b>	Natalie Burton
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Full
<b>Provision subtype</b>	Children's home

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<b>Date of last inspection</b>	24/10/2013
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## Service information

### Brief description of the service

This home is run by a local authority and is registered to provide short breaks for seven children 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 **adequate**.

This is an adequate service that positively impacts on young people's lives. The quality of relationships between staff and young people is strength of the home. Parents report that young people using the service are safe and enjoy their stays. There is effective support to enable young people to develop socially and emotionally. Young people are kept safe by staff that follow guidance in care plans and risk assessments to ensure each young person's safety is a priority. Young people make good progress in relation to their self-care skills, challenging behaviour and social skills. The home provides sufficient personalised care that takes account of young people's individual needs.

However, there are some shortfalls. These relate to supervision records, updating the development plan, monitoring of records, appointment of a permanent Registered Manager and specific training for staff. In addition, some aspects of behaviour management and staffing need improvement. The organisation is aware of these shortfalls and has an action plan that is already being implemented to address these.

## 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
7 (2001)	appoint an individual to manage the children's home if there is no registered manager in respect of the children's home. ( Regulation 7 (1)(a))	31/01/2014

## Recommendations

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

- ensure there is an environment and culture, to promote models and support positive behaviour that all staff understand and implement (MS 3.2)
- ensure a written or electronic record is kept by the home detailing the time and date and length of each supervision held for each member of staff, including the registered person, in particular the record is signed by the supervisor and the member of staff at the end of the supervision (NMS 19.5)
- ensure staff receive high quality training to enhance their individual skills and to keep them up-to-date with professional and legal developments (NMS 18.1)
- ensure the home has a written development plan, reviewed annually for the future of the home (NMS 15.2)
- ensure the overall number, competence and deployment of staff, both as a staff group and on individual shifts, can fulfil the home's Statement of Purpose and meet the individual needs of all children resident in the home (NMS 17.1)
- ensure the manager regularly monitors, in line with regulations, all records kept by the home to ensure compliance with the home's policies, to identify any concerns about specific incidents and to identify patterns and trends and immediate action is taken to address any issues raised by this monitoring (NMS 21.2)
- ensure records are clear, up to date and stored securely and contribute to an understanding of the child's life. (NMS 22)

## Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

Young people attend the home for short periods depending on days allocated by the service. One parent reported my child 'gets so excited when he knows he is going'. Another parent said it is 'the only place that can look after my child'. This was supported by a social worker who reported that during their last visit to the home the children 'felt at ease and were relaxed'.

Young people benefit from a healthy lifestyle during stays. They eat a balanced diet and make choices on their likes and dislikes. Close working arrangements with parents, external agencies and social workers ensure strategies to manage health

needs are current and agreed by all parties. Young people are cared for by staff who are vigilant to changes in their health and so take agreed action to keep them as healthy as possible.

Young people increase their skills, for example self-care, being more patient and reducing challenging behaviour. One parent commented that a member of staff had supported their child who was struggling with changes in their transport through the use of a social story,. As a result, young people are enabled to communicate their needs.

Young people communicate in their preferred method during stays and make day-to-day choices such as the food they would like to eat, choosing the room to stay in and the activities they want to do. Young people cook their tea with staff and help to lay the table. Young people achieve some positive outcomes within a caring and supportive environment. This is because their progress is based on their assessed abilities and needs.

Young people grow in confidence and develop good emotional resilience because they are treated with respect, have their needs sufficiently assessed and their individuality facilitated and celebrated. Staff identify achievable goals for young people, such as making their beds, cooking and making their lunch for school. They celebrate achievements with young people, for example, with verbal praise, certificates of achievement and medals; this increases young people's independence.

## Quality of care

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

Young people benefit from supportive and positive relationships with the staff team. They are developing healthy attachments that have helped with their emotional stability. For example, where young people are admitted for a short break or tea visits, the service tries to ensure that staff are on duty that the young person has met before. This helps to reduce young people's anxiety. Staff provide young people with a nurturing environment. For example, the rooms allocated for their stay are chosen by young people, and personalised to their likes. There is positive interaction between staff and young people. Staff have a clear understanding of the individuality and personal history of young people, which enables them to make tailored responses. As a result, young people are treated with respect and their confidence develops.

Young people's personal care is sensitively managed to preserve dignity and afford privacy. A range of activities are available to stimulate and broaden young people's horizons. For example, arts and crafts, playing in the sensory room, and using the garden and play equipment. However, on occasion, due to staff shortages, activities away from the home do not always occur as much as the staff would like. This is because additional staff are needed for some young people when they access the community. The organisation is aware and is actively addressing this. For example, through recruitment of a permanent manager this will enable more staff to take

young people outside the home.. When staffing permits, young people do access the community, for example, going to see the switching on of the Christmas lights.

Young people are happy staying in the home. They are encouraged to engage in key work sessions and to have their views heard; for example, all young people are involved in choosing new names for bedrooms. Most young people attend resident's meetings during their stay where staff gain their views, and act on requests where possible, such as, what a young person would like to do on their last visit. In addition, staff help young people to understand why it is not possible to act upon their wishes in all cases, for example, by explaining to young people about waiting for tea, or how long to use the computer. Staff use young people's preferred means of communication such as social stories and clear instruction.

Practice is child centred and personalised; the manager and staff analyse each young person's needs and review the effectiveness of the strategies to help young people address things they find difficult, for example, settling at night time. Additionally, staff actively listen to parents about their children's likes and dislikes.

Young people's health needs remain the responsibility of parents, although staff are suitably trained to respond to day-to-day health needs, such as first aid and administering medication. The home provides a healthy environment where young people are able to access the services they need to meet their physical, emotional and psychological health needs. Staff have a good working relationship with the community nurse who works with them and young people. For example, in implementing night time routines. Young people benefit because staff are more knowledgeable about how to meet all their needs.

The home provides young people with good individual and communal accommodation that is well maintained. This is because the service has a handyman, who ensures that the day-to-day wear and tear on the building is repaired to a good standard. The rooms are furnished to a sufficient quality and there are good levels of privacy. Each young person has their own room on their chosen night, and staff are mindful of which room young people prefer and of certain items they enjoy in their room, for example, a pop-up tent, or favourite chair.

## **Safeguarding children and young people**

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

Children who use this service have limited means of communication. However, feedback from parents and social workers is that children are happy and safe. Where parents are not wholly satisfied with the care provided, managers and the organisation work with them to build relationships and rectify errors made, although these are not safeguarding concern and do not impact on the safety of young people, for example, where communication was lacking during their children's visits.

Safeguarding young people is a priority and diligent attention to providing safe care is a focus of the service. Careful attention and multi-agency planning agrees

strategies and responses, including medication, to support young people's care safely. Staff are aware of young people's vulnerability's and know how to deliver intimate personal care safely. An established system to chart and monitor body maps ensures information can be shared and explanations for any marks clarified.

Staff are pro-active in safeguarding young people, understand their responsibilities and act within clear procedures where required. There are effective links with the Local Authority Designated Officer. This ensures young people are protected in line with legislation. Young people are supported to keep safe.

Adequate levels of supervision both inside and outside the home recognise young people's significant vulnerability. Children do not go missing; this is because they are well supervised by staff, both within and outside of the home. While the home has not had to make a child protection or safeguarding referral, there are policies and procedures in place and staff demonstrate a sound understanding of any action to take should they have any concerns about a young person's safety or well-being.

The quality of relationships between staff and young people is positive and reinforces the caring atmosphere that can be witnessed throughout the home. Young people are assisted to develop appropriate behaviour through the home's behaviour management policy and young people's individual plans. In addition, staff liaise with other professionals such as the community nurse, to identify alternative strategies if there are areas of concern. For example, in helping young people who may display challenging behaviour to settle at night time. On occasion, staff have not managed incidents of physical aggression in line with the young persons identified plan. As a result, the intervention used has not always been successful in de-escalating or distracting a young person from displaying inappropriate behaviour. Managers are aware of these incidents and have addressed these with staff through supervision and team meetings. While there has been minimal impact on young people, this does not ensure that young people are cared for in line with the home's policy or individual plans.

Young people's risk assessments sufficiently identify potential risk to them and how these risks can be reduced. Therefore, potential hazards to young people are adequately defined and addressed. Health and safety is generally well managed. The environment is physically safe and appropriately secure, taking account of the needs and characteristics of the young people. Safety is promoted with regular service checks, including of fire safety equipment. Regular fire drills ensure young people and staff know what to do in the event of a fire. The local authority follows robust recruitment procedures and ensures that all adults are suitable to work with children.

## **Leadership and management**

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

Since the last inspection, an interim manager has been appointed. In addition, while the organisation does not currently have a Registered Manager, the organisation is actively recruiting to the position and have clear timescales for this to be achieved.

Young people benefit because through the appointment of the interim manager, less cover is required by the deputies allowing them to efficiently monitor the quality of care young people receive and their records within the home.

The home has sufficient staffing to meet young people's general needs. This is because staff are working additional shifts and some consistently used agency and bank staff are covering. However, staff are not consistently able to fulfil all of their responsibilities with regard to some paperwork and on occasion taking young people out. The management are well aware of this and are taking active action to address the situation. For example, the manager is currently working on how many hours are needed to cover the building in line with the individual needs of the young people to have a basis to start from. As a result, young people will benefit as there will be sufficient staffing based on their individual risk assessed needs.

Staff report they feel supported, receive regular supervision and can access core training. However, some staff lack specific training, such as enhanced communication methods to meet the individual needs of all young people. The organisation is aware of this, and has a plan to develop specific training. Regular team meetings focus on young people's needs and current issues to share information. The organisation provides parent forums to gain feedback on the service and to provide for a consultation for parents.

The management understand the strengths and weaknesses of the home. There is a development plan, but this is not up-to-date. This is because the home has recently implemented further systems to improve the quality of care. As a result, there is no up-to-date tracking of the progress of the home, objectives and actions so that the management team are confident that the home is reaching its full potential.

Regular monitoring activities are conducted by the management, and external monthly visits are carried out. The manager has recently prepared a quality assurance system which highlights progress and monitors trends and patterns within the home. However, this is still in the process of being fully implemented. The provider meets the aims and objectives of the Statement of Purpose, and these are understood by staff and interested parties. In addition, there is a child-friendly version, in a format accessible to children, which explains what they can expect.

Eight requirements from the previous inspection have been met. Risk assessments have been updated and fire doors are no longer propped open. As a result potential concerns to young people's health and safety are identified and action taken to reduce the risk. Staff, including agency and relief staff, receive their supervision in line with the home's policy. Young people benefit as they are cared for by staff who are supported in their role.

All measures of control are recorded with all required information. Also, action has been taken that all future records will be in a bound book, therefore ensuring records cannot be tampered with. No significant events have taken place since the last inspection; however, there is an improved recording system in place to monitor any action the home takes. The organisation has ensured that external visits occur



monthly, and reports of these visits have been submitted to Ofsted. The manager has established a system for monthly monitoring, that also provides for consultation with parents, young people and placing authorities. As a result, these systems provide for identifying any emerging trends and patterns, and help to improve the quality of care provided to young people.

Staff have partially met two further requirements. They are actively gaining all required information from the placing authority for all young people. This is through e-mails, requests through senior managers and meetings with social worker to request all missing records. In addition, there is a clear list for each young person of what paperwork still needs to be received. However, due to the amount of young people and limited time, this information is still being received on a daily basis. There is a clear monitoring system in place to ensure all records will be received within a clear timescale. While there continues to be some vacancies within the home, for example, through staff sickness. The organisation has ensured that there are sufficient staff to meet the needs of the young people accessing short breaks. This is because, some part time staff are working full time hours, staff are flexible in moving shifts to cover any gaps, and some stable agency staff are being employed to support the permanent staff. However, on occasion, there are times when due to constrictions on some staff, young people are not always able to access activities within the community. For example, only some staff can drive the mini-bus. In addition, there is limited rota time for staff to complete all their paperwork as part of their role, for example, staff cover when young people are accessing the home rather than when there are no young people there during the day.

Three recommendations from the previous inspection have been met. The acting manager has implemented a clear recording and reporting system for allegations of abuse, thus ensuring decisions made are recorded. Staff supervision records now detail the time, date and length of supervision, although on occasion they are not signed by either the supervisor or supervisee at the end of the supervision. The manager has ensured there is a clear procedure to follow in regard to medication errors. In addition, the manager has a clear action plan to further strengthen the home's procedure, such as all young people medication will be stored in double containers, with young people's photographs on them to protect from accidental spillage and ensure medication is only given to the young person it is prescribed for. Most shortfalls within the report have already been identified by the manager, although insufficient time has meant that not all these issues have yet been addressed.

Young peoples' records are held securely and kept confidential. The records inform staff practice and help to underpin the care provided. However, not all records are up-to-date. The organisation is aware of and actively addressing this, through liaising with social workers and working with the staff team to try to ensure they have the time to update records while on shift.

## 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.