

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	18/03/2014
Inspector	Lynn O'Driscoll
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	15/01/2014
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This is a council owned and run children's home. It is registered to provide a short break service for up to five children and young people at any given time who have a permanent and substantial disability. They may also have additional health care needs arising from sensory and physical impairments and/or a range of challenging behaviours. Their short breaks can form part of a broader package of support to families, which is reviewed every six months to ensure it remains suitable.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Good progress	The children's home has demonstrated continued improvement in quality of care and outcomes for children and young people and where appropriate has addressed all requirements and the large majority of recommendations that were raised at the previous inspection.
Satisfactory progress	The children's home has maintained quality of care and outcomes for children and young people and where appropriate has addressed all requirements and the majority of recommendations that were raised at the previous inspection.
Inadequate progress	The children's home has failed to address one or more requirements and/or has not met the majority of recommendations and/or the quality of care and outcomes for children and young people have declined since the last full inspection.

Progress

Since their previous inspection the service is judged to be making **good progress**.

This home was judged to be outstanding in all areas at the last full inspection on 15 January 2014. In the last two months the staff have continued to develop the service in full collaboration with children and young people. This demonstrates an excellent capacity to continuously improve.

For example, an information booklet has been completely written and designed by the young people who already have short breaks. This is specifically aimed at other children and young people thinking of accessing this service. Extracts include, 'we like the staff and they know their stuff', 'when we first came we were nervous but the nerves went after a few minutes because the staff made us feel welcome', 'don't be afraid to ask the staff about anything that is bothering you. The staff will listen and sort it out' and, 'it's a nice comfy building. You have your own room and staff set it up just how you want it. If you want to bring in your own stuff you can.'

Some young people are regularly involved and love taking part in the recruitment and selection of staff across the authority. They are currently preparing their own highly pertinent questions which they will ask as part of an imminent interview panel. This is for a social work post within the children with disabilities team. Another significant development is that other young people are now part of the training team for new foster carers. To this end they have met and devised challenging scenarios to test out skills and competencies.

In response to the one recommendation made at the last inspection, a full team day has been planned for 9 April 2014. The main agenda item is to explore together a systematic and more effective way of incorporating parental views into the development of the service. Currently, any constructive criticism is responded to on an individual basis and discussed in reviews. A 'Coffee and Cake' evening session has also been specifically planned for March 2014. This is to enable parents to meet the night staff and ask them any questions or concerns they may have.

All the children and young people thoroughly enjoy their short breaks and the opportunity to take part in a wide range of meaningful activities both inside and outside the home. They feel safe and secure and can, therefore, totally relax. Comments from young people include, 'I love staying here and seeing all my friends', 'I love going on trips,' and, 'it's A-May-Zing!!!'

All the children and young people, regardless of age and abilities, are encouraged to develop their independence skills. They are rightly very proud of their achievements. One young person told her review, 'I am still doing well with my objective which is to help make my breakfasts. I help by setting the table, taking my bedding to the laundry and making snacks.'

Daily event records capture the individuality of the children and young people and demonstrates that their diverse interests and talents are encouraged and supported during their short breaks. One young person, for example, loves dressing up and performing her favourite musicals to the delight of her friends. She is currently planning a talent event for the next family fun day. Another young person heads straight to the trampoline on her arrival. These records also clearly demonstrate that staff actively support young people's educational progress during their short breaks. However, there is insufficient documentary evidence to demonstrate that concerns raised by children and young people are always acted upon.

Young people benefit from a very stable, experienced and highly dedicated staff team who are extremely well managed. Morale is high. Comments from staff include, 'I really enjoy working here' and, 'it's a very happy team and a very well managed home.'

Parents, carers, social workers and other professional stakeholders are consistently extremely satisfied with the quality of care provided at this home. Comments include, 'it's a great service and my foster child loves coming here. He is matched with other young people he gets on with. There are always activities and days out planned. There is really good communication with the team', 'I am very impressed with the

welcoming homely feel of this purpose built home', 'there is always a very warm welcome from all the staff. It is a lovely, peaceful place with a beautiful garden and the children love coming to stay' and, 'this home provides a very welcoming family atmosphere and excellent care.'

This service continues to successfully keep families together and sustains foster care placements. Staff regularly share their outstanding practice with other local authorities looking to develop their respite services. The excellent facilities at this home are also used by local schools to prepare young people for independence.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- provide clear documentary evidence that concerns raised by children and young people are always acted upon. (NMS 1.2)

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 progress made by the provider since the last full inspection, identifies any further strengths, any areas for improvement and makes judgements as outlined in the *Inspection of children's homes – framework for inspection*.