

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC034210
Inspector	Michele Hargan
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered manager	Deborah Jane Sandles
Date of last inspection	17/03/2014

Inspection date	22/09/2014
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Previous inspection	good progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	adequate
Outcomes for children and young people	good
Quality of care	adequate
Keeping children and young people safe	adequate
Leadership and management	adequate

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	adequate
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Leadership and management are judged adequate. The Registered Manager monitors the quality of care children and young people and those that use the service receive as required by legislation. These reports are comprehensive and detailed. A social worker said about the service. 'My involvement so far has been very positive experience.' Children, young people, parents, carers, residential staff and other professionals did not receive surveys that Ofsted sends out prior to an inspection. Staff progress with completion of children's workforce development council needs to be clearly recorded. One requirement and three recommendations are made within this area. This includes an outstanding recommendation from the previous inspection.

Safeguarding children and young people is judged as adequate. Children and young people receive high levels of supervision from staff who ensure the home is safe and well maintained. Staff complete risk assessment for each child and young person. Senior staff said, 'We are trying to encourage staff to think about and unpick things, so they understand more about children's behaviour.' The Registered Manager must make sure any matters of concern are dealt with as required by national minimum standards and associated legislation. This promotes the continued safety of children and young people. There are two recommendations within this area.

Quality of care is judged as adequate. Staff use sanctions infrequently as a response to inappropriate behaviour by children and young people. The details of these were not clear within sanctions records. This means assessing the reasonableness, fairness and understanding by the child or young person concerned about any sanction is significantly hampered. Staff and children and young people have meaningful relationships. Staff are invested in enabling children and young to express their views and feelings about a range of issues that are important to them. This way of working promotes the emotional development of children and young people. There is one recommendation within this area.

Outcomes for children and young people is judged as good. Children and young people are provided with ample opportunities for experiential learning and this approach is central to their stay within the home. Children and young people live in an environment that supports their consistent attendance at school. 'I got a really good handover from the teacher the child was great this morning.' Said a member of staff. The experiences of children and young people are captured with photographs and displays that do not overwhelm the home. 'It means a lot to parents if they can see what their child is actually doing.' Said another member of staff. Preserving these moments for children, young people and those that are important to them as pictorial narratives promotes meaningful relationships.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This children's resource unit is operated by a local authority. It provides short breaks for up to nine children with learning disabilities and complex health care needs and for children who have autism. The service is provided from two sites.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
17/03/2014	Interim	good progress
19/11/2013	Full	good
19/02/2013	Interim	good progress
25/07/2012	Full	good

What does the children's home need to do to improve further?

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
24 (2001)	ensure that a written record is made of any complaint, the action taken in response, and the outcome of the investigation. In particular record any low level concerns that may be raised. (Regulation 24 (5))	30/11/2014

Recommendations

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

- The views of the child, the child's family, social worker and Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) are sought regularly on the child's care (unless in individual cases this is not appropriate). In particular this means distributing the pre-inspection surveys to these people and the residential staff when Ofsted send these to the registered provider once a year (NMS1.4)
- Sanctions and rewards for behaviour are clear, reasonable and fair are understood by all staff and children. In particular sanctions records make clear the individual nature of the sanction used (NMS 3.8)
- New staff undertake the Children's Workforce Development Council's induction standards, commencing within 7 working days of starting their employment and being completed within 6 months. In particular progress with this to be made clear within staff supervision files (NMS 18.3)
- Allegations against people that work with children are reported by the designated person to the LADO. This includes allegations that on the face of it may appear relatively insignificant or that have also been reported directly to the police or children and family services. In particular this should include anonymous complaints (NMS 20.6)
- A clear comprehensive summary of any allegations made against particular members of staff, including details of how allegations was followed up and resolved, a record of any action taken and the decisions reached is kept on the persons confidential file and a copy is provided to the person as soon as the investigation is concluded. The information is retained on the confidential file, even after someone leaves the organisation, until the persons reaches normal retirement age, or for ten years if this is longer (NMS 20.7)
- ensure all information relating to a child is recorded clearly and in a way which will be helpful to the child when they access their files now or in the future. (NMS 22.5)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Children and young people's emotional wellbeing benefit by staff who encourage meaningful relationships between peers and with staff. Children, young people, parents and carers experience a sensitive planning process designed to introduce their child or young person to the home. The rate at which this takes place depends upon the individual needs of the child or young person and those who know them best. 'They went at the right pace for me.' A parent said in relation to this. 'He's improved in all areas he has some really good relationships at the home.' Another parent said. This approach gives children and young people, parents and carers time to build meaningful relationships with staff and others using the service. This type of preparation supports the successful transition from home to short break care.

Children and young people take more responsibility for their general wellbeing considering the point from where they started. Children and young people are encouraged to participate in as many activities of daily living as they can. They are encouraged to learn and build on skills leading to increased independence. 'I try everything to get him to brush his teeth.' Said a member of staff. Children and young people are supported to take part in a range of meaningful experiences. Staff promote getting out and about, going for an amble by the riverside after school, into town on public transport or more structured activities. 'We usually go out after school and do something, it depends on the young people.' A member of staff said. This approach helps children and young people learn more about their own abilities.

Children and young people views, wishes and feelings are important to the staff working with them. Staff use a wide variety of approaches to aid communication, including British Sign Language, Makaton, and a picture exchange communication scheme known as PECS. 'We want to be signing community.' Staff members repeatedly said. Children and young people learn that support is available to help maximise the influence they have over their own lives.

Children and young people's attendance at school and opportunities for experiential learning are central structures to their stays within the home. The home is stimulating, creative and nurturing. 'We use familiar objects to help children with the transition to school.' Said a member of staff. Staff encourage children and young people to take part at whatever level they are able to experience the world around them. The experiences of children and young people are captured with photographs and displays that are stimulating but do not overwhelm the home. 'It means a lot to parents if they can see what their child is actually doing.' A staff member said. Preserving these moments for children, young people and those that are important to

them as pictorial narratives promotes meaningful relationships.

Quality of care

adequate

Staff work with children and young people to establish sound relationships. Staff promote meaningful relationships between children and young people wherever possible. Staff are invested in enabling children and young people to express their views and feelings. Staff communicate effectively with them about their likes, dislikes and the activities they want to take part in. This way of working promotes the emotional development of children and young people building feelings of security and trust.

Staff do not make clear the details of the sanctions given to children in response to inappropriate behaviour. Children and young people receive relatively few sanctions. Assessing the reasonableness, fairness and understanding of any sanction by the child or young person concerned is significantly hampered by this omission.

Children and young people's positive behaviour is rewarded by additional treats and rewards such as going to leisure parks within the community. This practice promotes positive behaviour by young people and builds trust between children, young people, their parents and staff.

Staff make effective relationships with parents and carers. This is the basis on which a detailed awareness about the impact of the disability affecting each child, young person and their individual needs are formed. Staff recognise that parents and carers know their child best of all. 'They ask me if they are not sure and I'm reassured by that.' A parent said. This approach promotes continuity of care and builds trust and confidence between parents, carers and staff.

Children and young people receive a quality of care from staff underpinned by, guidance and support from an appropriate range of health care professionals. Staff offer practical support where possible to parents and carers so young people can access health care services. 'We go to a CAMHS (child and adolescent mental health service) meeting once a month and it's really helpful, we can advocate on behalf of children and young people.' A senior member of staff said. 'It's good because we don't have to do things like give injections until we are really confident.' Another member of staff said. Additional systems are in place to promote and double check safe care practice. Children and young people are cared for by staff who gain the necessary understanding about the impact for the child of the disability affecting them. This promotes an empathic approach to caring which is unique to each child and young person.

Staff promote a range of quality activities that children and young people are supported to take part in. These include in house arts and crafts, sensory type pastimes, and indoor and outdoor play equipment. Staff trained to drive the homes minibus enable access to community activities. Other young people including wheelchair users, with support from staff, take public transport just like their peers to visit places of interest. 'If it's doable we do it, I think staff go above and beyond.' 'You've got to be a detective find out what is out there.' A member of staff said. Children and young people take part in activities they choose and enjoy. This also promotes their emotional and physical wellbeing.

Children and young people's diverse range of needs and cultural backgrounds are meaningfully recognised by staff who care for them. Staff promote the celebration of religious and cultural festivals including Christmas, Easter and Chinese New Year. Staff said, 'We made a dragon and had Chinese food.' 'A young person was doing Diwali at school.' 'We looked at books about Ramadan.' 'I was Father Christmas last year.' Children and young people can be confident that their individual identities including their cultural backgrounds are understood by staff. Depending upon the capacities and individual ability of children and young people, this approach also promotes emotional identity and a sense of belonging.

Children and young people receive support from staff within settings that promote their independence. Staff provide children and young people with a short break service that is across two sites. One of the homes is more suitable to the needs of physically disabled children and the other has been adapted for learning disabled children. Both are located within the community, accessible and near to a variety of community and leisure amenities. Staff work across both of homes. 'We work four days here, three days there not a month goes by without working across both settings.' 'We have really good handover and communication between staff is really, really good.' A staff member said. Children and young people experience a short stay with others whose needs are very broadly similar to their own within a setting which is specially adapted to promote their independence.

Keeping children and young people safe adequate

Children and young people live in a home that is safe. Staff provide appropriate levels of supervision and they know what to do reduce identifiable risks to children. 'We always take information with us about the children when we go out.' A member of staff said. Staff complete risk assessments which include what might trigger difficult behaviour for children and young people. 'We are trying to encourage staff to think about and unpick things, so they understand more about children's behaviour.' A senior member of staff said. These responses by staff help build trust with children and young people and promote feelings of safety.

Children and young people are protected from harming themselves and others by the

intervention of staff when necessary. They take appropriate action to keep young people safe by holding them only as a last resort. The reasons for any restraints are clearly recorded. Managers read and comment on the circumstances and the responses of the staff concerned. 'It's very rare that we have to restrain.' A member of staff said. 'We do a de-brief with staff usually at handover.' A manager said. Children and young people learn staff can help them find safer ways of expressing difficult feelings.

Children and young people are cared for by staff who have undergone rigorous recruitment checks. Staff supply the necessary references and identification information. This promotes the continued safety of children and young people. The Registered Manager must ensure any matters connected with the home raised as a concern are responded to in full compliance with national minimum standards and legislation. This is to ensure the safety of children and young people and accountability of those caring for them.

Children and young people stay in accommodation adapted and designed to help promote safe and independent access to spaces and activities within the homes. The accommodation is well maintained, clean comfortable and homely. A range of activities are available within both homes, including safe external spaces with a range of stimulating and specialist play equipment. Staff think about how to help young people feel relaxed and settled in their bedrooms. 'We have moved the bed so you can see the door this seems to have helped the young person.' A member of staff said. Children and young people live in a setting which promotes their access to activities of daily living, promoting independence and choice.

Leadership and management

adequate

The Registered Manager is suitably qualified and has extensive experience including management of residential homes for children and young people. At the time of the inspection the manager had been in post for approximately a year. There is one outstanding recommendation from the previous inspection. This relates to ensuring information about children is recorded in a way that is helpful to children with accessing their files.

Staff responses to comments, concerns and complaints do not currently meet the requirements of regulations. Staff report concerns as being speedily addressed on an informal basis. 'We just deal with them.' A member of staff said. The Registered Manager must ensure a written record is made of any complaint any action and outcome of this. Complaints that are not recorded can reduce the confidence of those using systems designed to demonstrate effective responses and improve practice. It can create misunderstanding increasing the vulnerability of children and young, parents, carers and staff.

Staff competency with the completion of induction standards in line with children's

workforce development council (CDWC) is not recorded within supervision files. This decreases the confidence of new staff in induction and supervision procedures administered by managers. It also increases the vulnerability of children, young people, parents and carers. Staff progress with induction must be clearly recorded.

Children, young people, parent's carers and social workers did not receive the Ofsted surveys prior to the inspection as these were not distributed. Highlighting areas for development and building on good practice identified by those using and working in the service are therefore significantly reduced. The views of the child, the family, their social worker and independent reviewing officer must be sought regularly on the child's care (unless in individual cases this is not appropriate).

The independent visitor demonstrates monitoring and consultation with children, young people, parents and carers and those involved with their care. This contributes to improvements within the home. The Registered Managers provides reports to Ofsted about the quality of care that staff deliver to children, young people their parents and carers. The reports are comprehensive and include detailed responses to issues raised by the independent visitor to the home. This established monitoring process improves the quality of care received by children and young people.

Staff are deployed across the service to look after children and young people on the basis that they know the children well and can meet their needs. The Registered Manager is aware of the need to recruit further permanent staff. Progress has been made with this including establishing a large pool of relief staff to supplement the permanent staff. The approach promotes consistency and continuity of care experienced by children and young people.

What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
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.

Information 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 framework of inspection for children's homes.