

Heswall Disabled Children's Holiday Fund

Inspection report for residential holiday schemes for disabled children

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Inspector	Nick Veysey
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Registered person	Heswall Disabled Children's Holiday Fund
Registered manager	Vincent Keating
Responsible individual	Andrew Powell
Date of last inspection	N/A

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Service information

Brief description of the service

The residential holiday scheme for disabled children is a voluntary and charitable trust that has been operating for 50 years. It provides a residential holiday for one week only during the summer holidays for up to 30 boys with complex needs, including learning and physical disabilities and complex health needs. The scheme operates from a residential activity centre.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: a service that significantly exceeds minimum requirements

Good: a service 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 **Outstanding**.

This is the scheme's first inspection since it has been registered as a residential holiday scheme for disabled children and the introduction of the new regulations and national minimum standards. It was previously registered and inspected under the regulations and national minimum standards for children homes.

Children enjoy exceptionally positive experiences during their stay at this holiday scheme. They experience a full range of opportunities that promote their personal growth and development in a supportive and safe environment. This includes taking part in varied, new and stimulating activities, and making new friends.. They develop confidence in their abilities, make choices about how they spend their time, develop their independence and discover new skills and interests.

Children's needs and welfare are central to the running of the scheme. Children are safe and protected from significant harm. They are extremely happy with the quality of care and the support they receive from the helpers. The scheme is exceptionally well-planned and coordinated. This ensures it is highly personalised and tailored to comprehensively meet the individual needs of each child and young person, and take into account their characters and disabilities. Helpers work in a coordinated way with children, their family and health professionals to ensure that children and young people continue to get the right help and guidance during their stay.

Helpers are highly committed and have the skills, experience, qualifications, understanding and knowledge to meet children's diverse needs on a daily basis. They are kind, friendly and determined that children really have an exceptionally good time. This is reflected in the strong and positive relationships and trust that exists between children and helpers.

The manager and leaders are energetic and provide strong leadership with a clear emphasis on providing a very high standard of care and support. They demonstrate a strong commitment to complying with the regulations and standards. They understand the strengths of the scheme and are committed to continue to develop and secure improvements. The only shortfalls found during this inspection are minor administrative issues relating to keeping more detailed recruitment records and recording children's views about behaviour management.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

ensure where any disciplinary measures are used or children are warned about their behaviour, children are encouraged to have their views recorded in the records kept by the scheme (NMS 2.17)

ensure detailed records are available of the recruitment and vetting checks which have been carried on those working for the scheme and include all the information specified in the national minimum standard (NMS 9.3)

ensure the record of recruitment and vetting checks shows the date on which each check was completed and who carried out the check. (NMS 9.4)

Experiences of children and young people

The experiences of children and young people are **Outstanding**.

Children with disabilities and complex health needs thoroughly enjoy their time at the holiday scheme. They make the most of their opportunities by taking part in stimulating, fun and exciting activities that enrich their lives and promote their welfare and personal growth. The activities are well planned and suitable for the children's ages, needs, and interests. They include: arts and crafts; theatre and performance; physical exercise and sports; games, for example 'angry birds'; bubble workshops; swimming; trips out to the seaside, museums, cinema, and the zoo. Children have opportunities that may not be otherwise available to them.

Some of the children have significant care needs and in many cases this is their only holiday. Children are confident and secure in their time away from home and their families. Their behaviour is exceptionally good and they do not take part in risky behaviours that may place them at harm. The leaders and helpers support parents and children keep in contact, where necessary, to help children to feel settled and happy while being away from their family.

Children are very positive about the choice of activities. They said that they had really enjoyed going swimming to 'Splashworld' and the cinema to see the film 'Planes'. They said they get to do things that they do not have the chance to do at home and can try new things. They were looking forward to the 'free running' demonstration and going swimming again. Children meet new people and make friends. Quite a few children and young people have been to the scheme before. They said they always looked forward to coming back to see friends they made the last time and have a 'great time' together. All children, including those with complex needs, actively participate in a wide range of different activities. Some children, who find large and noisy groups challenging, have grown in confidence to feel more comfortable about taking part in activities with a number of other children. One child with complex health and communication needs is taking part in more group activities and for longer than he did last year. All children are able to exercise choices about what they take part in and follow their own interests. They make significant improvements in their communication and social skills, develop interests and new skills, and become more confident and independent in their abilities.

The scheme enables children to make a positive contribution to the community. A number of children over the years have returned as adult helpers and are actively involved in the running of the scheme and the charity.

Quality of care

The quality of care is **Outstanding**.

Children enjoy their holiday in a friendly and supportive atmosphere. They enjoy positive and constructive relationships with each other and helpers. Leaders and helpers have effective interpersonal skills that enable them to build trusting relationships with children. They have suitable skills to communicate with children who use different methods of communication, including British Sign Language and Makaton. Children feel their views are listened to and taken seriously about the activities and the personal care they receive.

Children feel that leaders and helpers want them to have a good time and are interested in them and concerned about their welfare. Children said they like the helpers; 'they are fun, friendly and good at caring for me' and 'when I got stung by a wasp, the helpers made sure I was ok and did the right things to make sure it didn't hurt for too long.' The leaders and helpers have high aspirations for the children and effectively ensure each individual child's full participation in the activities and life of the scheme. There is a strong commitment to providing opportunities for children with very complex needs regardless of the challenges this presents.

High quality planning and assessment enables leaders to make an informed decision about whether they are able to meet individual children's specific needs and their compatibility with other children. This involves a thorough analysis of children's individual needs, home visits to meet children and their parents or carers, and seeking information from the health and education professionals involved in children's lives, and the opinion of the scheme's own doctor. This detailed

assessment enables leaders to develop a comprehensive plan for caring and supporting individual children to ensure all their needs are met and they get the most from their holiday. This information helps leaders to identify the training and skills helpers will require. The leaders have established excellent links with a range of agencies involved with the children, including strong relationships with local health services, the police, and community facilities while the scheme is taking place.

Children enjoy healthy lifestyles and continue to have excellent access to a full range of health services and receive excellent support with any health problems. Leaders and helpers have strong and effective links with parents and health professionals involved in the lives of the children and young people. As a result, their health care is not disrupted during their stay. Leaders, helpers, and qualified medical professionals monitor children's health and take appropriate action if children become unwell or have an accident. There are effective systems and safe practices for managing and storing medication. Leaders and helpers involved with medication are knowledgeable and suitably trained. Children receive the medicines that meets their individual needs and in line with medical advice. Helpers are suitably trained and competent in first aid and carrying out skilled health tasks that some children require; including the management of epilepsy, diabetes and gastric tube feeding.

Helpers effectively put each child's plan into practice to promote children's safety, well-being and development. The helpers are friendly, well-motivated and skilled at supporting disabled children. They place the welfare and enjoyment of children at the centre of the practice of the scheme. They have a detailed understanding of individual children's circumstances, interests and disability; and how best to support to meet all their diverse needs, including those relating to children's cultural background and personal identity.

The venue that the scheme uses is licensed to provide adventure activities and suitably located, designed and maintained. It meets the individual needs of the children attending. It provides suitable and comfortable sleeping accommodation, kitchen and dining facilities, sufficient space and facilities for the activities the scheme provides. The venue is secure from unauthorised access and a physically safe environment that takes into account children's needs and disabilities. Suitable risk assessments and fire safety checks routinely take place to protect children's welfare.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Children feel safe and have a strong sense of safety and well-being. They feel able to talk to leaders and helpers if they are worried, and their worries are taken seriously and sorted out. Leaders and helpers actively promote children's safety and protect them from harm. They are suitably trained in safeguarding, including identifying the signs and symptoms of abuse and safeguarding children with disabilities and children who do not communicate verbally. Helpers follow suitable safe caring practices,

including when helping children with their personal care. Detailed risk assessments and management plans protect children from harm, while enabling them to take reasonable risks suitable to their age and circumstances as part of their growth; for example taking part in new activities. Helpers clearly understand the vulnerabilities of individual children, including the potential for bullying.

Leaders and helpers promote positive behaviour and help children deal with any worries or frustrations constructively. They use effective communication to ensure children know what is acceptable behaviour and the possible consequences if they are naughty. Children's behaviour is exceptionally good, they are not involved in risk taking behaviours, do not go missing and are protected from bullying. Helpers are vigilant and deal with any concerns promptly. For example, helpers observed that some children's behaviour had the potential for bullying other children. The leaders and helpers intervened effectively to help the children involved change their behaviour before it became a problem. The children usually get on and there are few disagreements. They are understanding and tolerant of each other's needs and disabilities and engage with positively with each other. Children are appropriately supervised, including in the community and at night.

The scheme's policies for child protection, bullying, behaviour management and missing children are suitable and consistently followed. There are clear practices and agreed arrangements with local police and children's services to support and promote children's safety. Leaders appropriately report any serious incidents involving children to the relevant agencies, including Ofsted. Leaders and helpers keep detailed records of any serious incidents or concerns relating to accidents, illness, safeguarding and managing challenging behaviour. The records provide enough information to show what happened and what actions the leaders and helpers took in response. However, the behaviour management records do not include children's views about what happened.

Leaders and helpers are carefully selected and vetted to ensure that they are suitable to work with vulnerable children, and have relevant skills, experience and motivation. However, the scheme does not always have detailed records available of the recruitment and vetting checks which have been carried, including the level of disclosure from the Disclosure and Barring Service and confirmation that written references have been received and checked. Also the records do not show who completed the checks and on what date. These are administrative and recording weaknesses. The appropriate checks are being carried out as a result the shortfalls do not impact on children's welfare.

Leadership and management

The leadership and management of the residential holiday scheme for disabled children are **Outstanding**.

Children come to stay in a highly efficiently run holiday scheme that meets its objectives. The Registered manager and leaders have suitable skills, knowledge and experience to run the scheme. They provide strong and effective leadership with a

caring ethos and culture, which reflects the aims of the charity to provide disabled children and young people with an enjoyable and safe holiday that enhances their personal growth and development. The holiday is adequately resourced. It is funded through charitable contributions, fundraising and donations. There is no cost to children and their families. Parents, children and other people interested in the scheme have access to detailed information about its aims, objectives and the support provided.

The manager, leaders and helpers are unpaid volunteers from a wide variety of backgrounds and walks of life, including students, and health and education professionals. The vast majority have worked at the scheme previously, some for many for years. They all have relevant experience of working with children, including volunteering with schools and youth organisations in the community. They clearly demonstrate a strong commitment to delivering exceptional childcare practice tailored to the individual and personal needs of the children they look after.

Helpers are well-prepared for working with the children. They receive detailed information about each child and young person and the support they require, and suitable training and guidance, including in safeguarding, medication, manual handling and skilled health tasks. Helpers are deployed effectively to ensure children and young people are always appropriately supported and safeguarded. The skills available among helpers match children's needs exceptionally well. Helpers are well-supported by the manager and leaders. Daily helpers' team meetings provide the opportunity to reflect on children's progress and how best to support them, the running of the service and to look at ways to improve things.

The scheme continues to show an excellent capacity for continued improvement based on its performance and the extremely positive experiences for children. The manager and leaders show a clear understanding of the new regulations and national minimum standards and a strong commitment to comply with their requirements. The leaders and managers have addressed the area for improvement identified at the last inspection in relation to: updating the statement of purpose and devising a children's guide; including Ofsted's contact details in the complaints procedure and developing a system to the review of the quality of the scheme.

The manager and leaders effectively monitor the quality of care to enable them to have a clear understanding of the strengths of the service and identify areas for improvement. The changes necessary to improve the service always take place; for example carrying out more detailed assessments of children's needs, improving the arrangements for medication, improving the events to welcome children on the first day, developing helpers' expertise and competence in carrying out skilled health tasks. These changes have improved the quality of care and support for children; for example obtaining better information about children's needs, routines and care has resulted in children being able to settle in more quickly.

About this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to inform 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 *Inspection of residential holiday schemes for disabled children - Interim framework for inspection of residential holiday schemes for disabled children* and the evaluation schedule for residential holiday schemes for disabled children.