

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Caroline Wilson
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This private children's home can accommodate eight children with physical and learning disabilities. There is a garden with wheelchair access to the ground floor of the building. There is a lift to the first floor but this floor is not fully accessible to people using wheelchairs.

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**.

This home provides a good service for young people with disabilities. The prime focus is on young people's abilities to ensure that they meet their full potential. Young people are confident and self-assured and take appropriate risks that promote their welfare both in their home and in the wider community. Young people's views are taken seriously with regards to their individual care plans and the way that the home is run.

Staff are highly effective. They work well as a team and take seriously their responsibility to promote and safeguard the welfare of young people. There is a strong management team that supports staff to gain the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding to prioritise the needs of young people. Quality assurance is vigorous, which enables staff to have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the home. Good health and safety systems are in place and ensure that the home is free from hazards to young people, visitors and staff. One shortfall was identified in relation to the home's recruitment process. A statutory requirement has been made in respect of this.

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
26 (2001)	ensure that there is full and satisfactory information relating to all staff (Regulation 26 (3) (d))	30/07/2012

Recommendations

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

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for children and young people are **good**.

Young people enjoy healthy lifestyles which are incorporated into their daily living routine. They regularly play football and basketball which provides them with regular exercise and keeps them fit and healthy. Healthy eating is incorporated into their everyday lives. The reduction of fizzy drinks and sugary foods in their diet has had a positive effect on their physical health. Young people's emotional needs are met. They take advantage of staff's availability and will regularly speak with them about any issues that they are not happy with or need further advice on. Young people with specific health issues are supported by the home to promote their mental and physical health. Young people, who are of sufficient age and understanding, are supported in taking responsibility for the administration of their medication. They are encouraged to be aware of the times that their medication needs to be taken and to sign and date the records relating to this. This helps young people to learn how to be responsible for their good health, as well as providing them with independence skills that they will need when they move on to living in the community.

Young people enjoy regular and constructive relationships with family members and their peers. Young people have made good relationships with other young people within their home and advocate on other people's behalf where the young person may have communication difficulties.

Young people also have a good understanding of the behaviours that are expected on them. They are actively involved in resident meetings where they have the opportunity to discuss a range of issues that relate to group living which, including housekeeping matters. An example of this has been a change of menu, where young people did not feel that it met their individual culture. Young people feel comfortable at constructively challenging various aspects of living at the home and plans for their future. Young people have regular keywork sessions, where they are guided to have a good sense of their own identity and on matters, such as behaviour management and sexuality. This is communicated to young people using communication methods relevant to their individual need.

Young people look forward to living independently and they have the confidence in their ability with regards to this. They spoke with pride about their skills in being able to cook, clean and their plans for further education or employment that will enable them to live successfully in the community.

Young people understand the benefits of achieving the best educational standards they possibly can. All young people are engaged in education or training which includes skills for life, such as maintenance work. Young people have been proactive in using the skills that they have learnt to secure future employment within the service, subject to relevant risk assessments and insurance.

Quality of care

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

Staff make good use of systems in place which monitor the health needs of young people. These benefit young people as they identify any significant changes to young people's weight and blood pressure, which may be an indication of potential, chronic health conditions. Changes are then made to young people's diet and exercise routines to ensure that they live in a healthy environment which promotes their health and well-being. Staff ensure that all necessary services are in place to address young people's individual, specific health condition or other complex needs.

Staff have a good understanding of how to respond to each young person's behaviour and are skilled at diffusing difficult situations to avoid these escalating. Clear risk assessments are in place. These set out specific strategies which help to reduce incidences of negative behaviour and enable staff to maintain constructive dialogues and react appropriately when confronted. Physical intervention only takes place to prevent likely injury to the young person, others and property. These instances are clearly recorded so that they can be monitored to ensure that these are only undertaken as set out in regulations. Parents have commented positively on the good progress that their child has made in relation to their behaviour. The parent attributed the changes to the boundaries that have been set by staff.

Staff monitor all documentation in which young people have made their opinions known. This ensures that their views and wishes are known to staff and, where appropriate, can be followed up through the complaints procedures. This assists young people who have communication difficulties and is in addition to the formal complaints system. This ensures that all young people's concerns are taken seriously and acted upon.

Young people make good progress to gain a clear understanding of themselves and become self-resilient. One parent stated, 'staff are brilliant here. My child is made to feel very important. This has had a positive impact and has boosted their self-confidence.' The parents gave examples of how staff had supported their child's successful integration into the local community and by enabling their child to take risks. This enables young people to become well-rounded, mature and confident

adults. Risk assessments are in place in respect of this and take into account the age, level of understanding and health needs. Reasonable precautions are put in place so that young people can safely explore the world in which they live.

Staff support young people to overcome educational barriers so that they can reach their full potential. Every effort is made to ensure young people attend school regularly; daily transportation is in place to facilitate this. Staff have close relationships with schools. Good communication is in place to share young people's achievements or to highlight where young people may be experiencing difficulties that may obstruct them from making use of all the education system has to offer. For instance, staff have worked alongside education establishments to ensure that staff are trained in specific medical interventions. This ensures that young people's health needs are promoted, which otherwise would have prevented young people from pursuing further education. Staff also consider making use of young people's talents within the home, such as gardening or maintenance skills, subject to relevant support, risk assessments and insurance.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Overall good recruitment practices are in place to ensure the safety of young people. Documentation, such as Criminal Record Bureau checks, references and proof of qualifications are in place for all staff. However, there are minor gaps in some staff's employment history to provide a full employment record. Therefore, this does not enable the home to fully assess that the staff who work with young people are of good character and integrity. The impact of this on young people has been minimised, however, due to the previously-stated recruitment checks which provide an indication of a potential member of staff's suitability to work safely with young people.

Young people are and feel safe in the home. Young people are included in safeguarding training, so that they, along with staff, are aware of the signs and symptoms of abuse. This is also effective in enabling young people to have an understanding of how to protect themselves and others whilst out in the community. Young people and staff are aware of the reporting procedures in the event of any concern, allegation or disclosure of abuse. This in no way negates staff responsibilities from safeguarding young people from abuse or neglect; they take the lead whenever a safeguarding matter comes to their attention.

All young people receive one-to-one support. There is a high level of monitoring which ensures that any indicators of bullying are quickly identified and appropriately responded to and ensures that it is a safe environment for young people. Safeguards are also in place to prevent potential conflict where a clash of personalities is an issue. High levels of monitoring also mean that incidences of young people being absent without authority or being missing are rare.

All health and safety inspections are undertaken at appropriate intervals. This keeps

the environment physically safe and secure and takes into account the needs and characteristics of the young people being cared for.

Leadership and management

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

There is an acting manager in place who has worked in a senior position within the organisation and is in the process of applying to be registered as a manager. The acting manager has excellent knowledge of the needs of young people with disabilities and the home's policies and procedures. The acting manager has empowered her staff team to have the expertise and skills to meet young people's individual needs. As a consequence, the home runs smoothly in her absence. Staff are supported by a strong management team, consisting of highly-competent team leaders who ensure that the home is run in the best interests of young people at all times.

Staff are committed to achieving good outcomes for young people. One stated, 'as long as you have the best interest of the child, then it is best for them.' Supervision is of a high quality; staff have described its quality as akin to training. During sessions they learn about appropriate responses to young people, as well as identifying areas that they do well in addition to those needing development. Regular training is in place, based on a comprehensive training programme which supports staff's professional development. Staff take responsibility for their own learning and will read and research matters which enable them to keep up to date with current practice developments so that they can provide young people with high-quality care.

Bank staff are provided with a 'fast track' folder which gives them information regarding young people's care plans, codes of conduct and a brief overview. This ensures that bank staff have a good understanding of the needs, wants and behaviour management of young people as well as any house issues. This ensures that all staff can effectively promote and safeguard the welfare of young people.

Regular monitoring of the home is undertaken to ensure that the home is operating in accordance with its Statement of Purpose. This includes Regulation 33 visits by an independent person as well as Regulation 34 monitoring by the acting manager at the home. This monitoring is effective in ensuring that the home continues to provide a good service for young people. The Regulation 33 independent person is experienced in the care field and provides clear information on the home's progress, so that the home continues to effectively promote and safeguard the welfare of young people placed.

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* (March 2011) and the evaluation schedule for children's homes.