

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	12 May 2009
Inspector	Monica Hargreaves
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	6 January 2009
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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.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcome for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and relevant National Minimum Standards for the establishment.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding:	this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality
Good:	this aspect of the provision is strong
Satisfactory:	this aspect of the provision is sound
Inadequate:	this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Service information

Brief description of the service

The home provides a short breaks service for children and young people who are between the ages of eight and 17 years and who have a permanent and substantial disability.

It is a purpose built bungalow, with facilities that are appropriate to meet the needs of the young people who use the service. It has four large single bedrooms and two bathrooms with adaptations. A tracking system enables the safe movement of the young people from bedroom to bathroom. There is a lounge, sensory room, separate utility room, dining room and kitchen. The kitchen is designed with a rise and fall worktop, which allows for wheelchair users.

To the rear of the property is an enclosed secure garden with play equipment and a sensory area. There is car parking to the front of the home. The train station, shops, amenities and park are all within walking distance.

Attached to the bungalow is a one bedroom flat, which can provide emergency accommodation. This element of the provision is for a maximum period of 48 hours and when in use has its own dedicated staff team.

Summary

This was a full, unannounced, inspection and all of the key standards in all six outcome groups were assessed. The inspection also considered the progress that has been made towards meeting the recommendation from the last inspection.

The standard of care in the home is excellent. Young people are cared for very well by a consistent team of staff who are properly trained and qualified and who are themselves well supported. There is excellent communication between the home and parents and a range of professionals outside the home, to ensure that care of young people is consistent and in line with their assessed needs. Staff are committed to ensuring that young people enjoy their stay. Their health needs are very met very well, education is seen by staff as an important part of young people's lives and staff are keen to help them to achieve to their individual potential. Robust management systems ensure that the care of young people is properly monitored, so that excellent standards are maintained.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

This is an overview of what the inspector found during the inspection.

Improvements since the last inspection

The recommendation that was made at the last inspection is met. Staff have continued to work to gain a qualification at National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) in level 3, so that all the staff team are appropriately qualified.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Detailed information, clear plans and an excellent understanding of the individual young people in their care, enable staff to make sure that young people's health needs are very well met when they use the service.

Staff are given good training so that they understand the different and often complex health needs of the young people who stay at the home. The planning process that takes place before a young person stays at the home, enables staff to make sure that they have all the information they need to provide an excellent standard of care. Detailed health information is recorded in support plans, which are written in child friendly language and from the young person's perspective. This personalises them and makes them documents that are accessible to young people. There is excellent communication with parents and health professionals outside the home, so that information on young people can be kept up to date and relevant to their ongoing needs.

Young people are provided with opportunities to take regular exercise to promote their good health. For example, staff take them on walks and to the park and there is play equipment in the home and the garden which encourages exercise.

Many of the young people who use this service have conditions which lead them to have diets that are self limiting. However, staff encourage young people to try different foods and always provide meals that are nutritious. Some young people are fed by gastric tube and staff are all trained in this area of care. Staff are sensitive to the cultural and religious needs of the children they care for and make sure that menus are planned to cater for those needs. Advice is always available from dieticians. Meal times are pleasant social occasions where staff and young people eat together.

Young people are properly protected by the home's highly effective medication systems. All staff are trained and procedures are robust. Parents are requested to bring in supplies of medication to cover their child's stay and are able to update information for staff when they do so. There are always two staff members signing in and administering medication and records are closely monitored. All staff are trained in the delivery of first aid so that young people are cared for properly in an emergency.

In responses to questionnaires, parents report a high degree of satisfaction about the way staff meet the health needs of their children.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

The service has a comprehensive range of policies and procedures to guide staff in their work, which ensure that young people are cared for safely.

Robust safeguarding systems, including thorough assessments of risk and clear and detailed support plans, enable staff to protect young people from abuse, from bullying and from the risk of going missing from the home. For example, staff are properly trained to understand the signs and symptoms of abuse, including training in issues that are specific to the needs of children with disabilities. They have an excellent understanding of their responsibilities. Young people are properly supervised and supported, which reduces the risk of bullying and of unauthorised absence. The booking system further minimises the risk of bullying, as staff are able to plan short breaks to avoid putting together young people who are not compatible. The success of these systems is reflected in the fact that bullying is not an issue in the home and there have been no incidents of a young person going missing. Staff respect the privacy of young people and practice in a way that promotes their dignity.

The home has a sound procedure for responding to complaints and there is evidence that this is followed in practice. Young people are encouraged to raise issues and make their views known. Staff have an excellent knowledge of the different ways in which young people communicate, so that they understand how young people express their dissatisfactions. They take prompt action to respond to concerns that are identified. Staff communicate regularly with parents and invite them to visit the home and meet staff, so that they can feel confident that their concerns are properly dealt with. A member of the children's advocacy team visits the home on a regular basis, which gives young people the opportunity to raise concerns about their care if they wish.

Young people are encouraged and supported to behave in positive ways and are praised and rewarded when they do so. Staff are trained to respond positively to behaviour that is challenging. This training covers the use of restraints, although physical interventions are only ever used as a last resort. Robust risk assessments enable staff to identify possible concerns for individual young people and in these circumstances, a positive intervention plan is developed, with the full involvement of parents and social workers. This ensures that young people are cared for in a safe way and the risk of challenging behaviour is minimised. Staff have a very positive view of the children and young people they look after, are keen that they should enjoy their visits and create a warm and welcoming atmosphere in the home.

Highly effective procedures and excellent care practices ensure that young people are kept safe in the home and when out on activities and that their welfare is promoted. For example, each young person has a range of individual support and care plans, such as a moving and handling plan, personal emergency evacuation plan and an individual behaviour support plan, as well as individual risk assessments. These enable staff to plan for their care and protection when they use the service and promote consistency across the team. Risk assessments on the environment and on activities are also kept up to date and equipment and installations are regularly checked and serviced, to make sure they are safe.

Thorough checks are undertaken on all staff before they start work and on all visitors to the home, so that young people are cared for by staff who are suitable and are protected from contact with unauthorised individuals within the home.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Young people are given an excellent level of individual support. Their needs are thoroughly assessed before they first stay at the home and a range of detailed plans enables staff to make sure that these needs are being met. Young people have an identified key worker, but all staff take equal responsibility for caring for them. Staff work closely with parents and other agencies so that young people can have access to any additional services they need. Staff also support friendships between young people, so that they are all included in the social group.

Parents have overall responsibility for the education of their children, but staff work closely with them and with schools, to make sure that education is promoted in the service. Staff have a very positive view of the value of education. They maintain very good contact with schools, help children with homework, and acknowledge and praise all their achievements. Staff attend education review meetings. During their stay at the home, every young person is helped to work towards gaining a nationally recognised qualification, at a level that is appropriate to their

individual ability, which helps them to develop their skills. Young people are also encouraged to learn through play and the home is very well equipped to support this.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Robust systems and excellent care practices ensure that young people are well cared for in the service and that their individual needs are properly understood and met. For example, all young people have detailed support plans that show how staff will look after them during their stay. These plans are written from the young person's perspective and in a format that is suitable for the specific needs of that young person. They are holistic, for example looking at issues that may arise from a young person's religion or culture, in addition to their disability. Plans are regularly monitored in the home and also in reviews, so that the home can be sure the information they hold on the young person is up to date and accurate and that their placement continues to meet their needs.

Staff are sensitive to the importance of helping young people to keep in touch with their families outside the home during their stay, to help them to feel settled.

Young people move into and leave the service in a planned way, which is sensitive to their individual needs and those of their families, so that they can be properly supported in the home and also when they move on into other services.

Young people, their parents and professionals outside the home, are consulted in a number of ways. For example, staff have regular key work sessions with young people and they talk to parents regularly on the phone and when they visit the home. Questionnaires have recently been sent out to families to assess their views on the care that is provided. The home has received a very good response, and parents have stated that they are very happy with the way their children are looked after.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is outstanding.

Young people benefit from being cared for in a home that is suitable for their needs and that is very well maintained, internally and externally. They have the use of an individual bedroom, which they can personalise during their stay with things that are important to them, for example, pictures, photographs and toys. Wherever possible, staff try to ensure that young people are able to use the same bedroom each time they stay at the home. Bathrooms are suitably equipped and provide young people with privacy. The home is comfortably furnished, clean and brightly decorated. The garden is secure and has suitable outdoor play equipment. Young people also have the benefit of a sensory garden.

The home is suitably located in a residential area, which enables young people to have good access to public transport and local facilities such as shops and parks, which helps them to be part of the community.

Staff are keen to help every young person to develop their skills, at their own pace and in line with their individual needs and abilities. For example, some young people are able to learn to make drinks and snacks or to go shopping, whilst other young people are helped to develop their sensory and motor skills through play and individual sessions. Staff work closely with

social workers and families to provide a planned transition for all young people into adult services.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. Staff are committed to ensuring that all young people are treated equally and that the care and support they are given meets their individual needs. They are supported in this by the authority's own commitment to equality of opportunity, which is reflected in the policies that govern the work of the home. There is an emphasis on inclusion and promoting the rights of every young person.

The home has developed a range of documents that contain good information about how it works and how young people are cared for during their stay. The statement of purpose is clear and kept up to date so that it accurately describes the work of the home. The young person's guide is produced in a written form that is child friendly and contains colourful pictures, as well as in a dvd, so that all young people can be helped to understand how they will be looked after when they stay at the service. Staff have also recently produced a booklet containing photographs and details of the whole care team, that has been sent out to all parents, so that they can have more information about the people who look after their children. Comments received from parents show that this has been very well received.

Young people benefit from being cared for by a consistent team of staff who are known to them and who are experienced, qualified and well trained to understand and meet their complex physical and emotional needs. There are sufficient staff to ensure that young people are able to take part in activities and are well looked after when they stay at the service. Staff receive very good support from managers and communication across the team is excellent, which promotes consistency of care for young people.

Highly effective management systems ensure that the work of the home and the care given to young people, is properly monitored and that excellent standards are maintained. Systems include the manager's checks, which are thorough as well as visits from a senior manager in the authority, and therefore provide an internal and an independent scrutiny of how young people are looked after in the service.

Every young person has an individual file which contains detailed information about them and a record of their time in the service. These files are stored securely to protect the young person's right to confidentiality.

What must be done to secure future improvement?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions, which must be taken so that the registered person meets the Care Standards Act 2000, The Childrens Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

Standard	Action	Due date
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Recommendations

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