

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	14 October 2009
Inspector	Sue Winson
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	19 February 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 is run by a local authority as part of its service to children with disabilities and their families. It is a single storey building, which provides a respite care service for up to seven children between the ages of eight to 18 years old, with physical or learning disabilities.

The facilities include one lounge, a dining lounge area, a dining kitchen, sensory room, a bathroom, a walk-in shower, separate toilet, laundry and seven single bedrooms. The home has specialist lifting equipment and other aids and adaptations to support young people in their daily lives. There is a play area to the rear of the home, which is securely fenced to keep the children safe when at play. The home is easily accessible by car and public transport. There is parking for staff and visitors to the home.

Summary

The provision is satisfactory with some good aspects.

The main responsibility for the young people's care lies with their parents or full time carers and their views and opinions are respected by the staff, who are in regular contact with them. The staff are skilled and experienced in caring for the young people who use the service and provide consistency of care. They support parents and carers in ensuring that young people's needs are met. Health and education is promoted and the young people have the opportunity to take part in a range of leisure activities and outings. They are given choices and their wishes are taken into account.

Although the staff know the needs of the young people well, care planning is not always up to date or specific about how individual needs will be met. Some records are not fully completed. Staff do not have supervision regularly enough and they have not all received the required training.

The building is in need of considerable repair and renovation. Plans are in place to remedy this.

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Young people have choices about what they eat and if they do not like the food provided can have alternatives. The heating has not yet been repaired but work is due to start in the near future. This will ensure that temperatures in all parts of the building can be maintained at a comfortable level. The monitoring systems in the home are not yet robust enough to identify all areas for improvement.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people are encouraged to eat healthy meals and make choices about what they eat. Meals are provided by the local authority catering service and are balanced and include fresh ingredients. Changes are planned to make the small kitchen more accessible for young people to make meals or snacks.

Young people's health is promoted and their needs are largely identified and met. Health profiles outline physical and emotional needs and include strategies and guidance geared to individual needs. Staff are trained in specific techniques and their competence is checked. They work with parents and health professionals and communicate well to the benefit of the young people.

The administration of medication safeguards the young people. Appropriate permissions are in place, signed by parents. Medication is logged in and out when young people come to stay and checked at every staff handover.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Young people's privacy is respected and they are assisted with personal care in a manner which preserves their dignity. Confidential information is safely stored and parents give signed consent to the sharing of information to meet the needs of young people.

The home's procedures and practices in respect of safeguarding welfare, bullying, complaints and missing from home serve to protect young people. Appropriate actions have been taken in response to welfare concerns, in consultation with social workers. Complaints have been dealt with in a timely manner and complainants receive written outcomes. Young people and their parents have information on how to complain. High levels of supervision ensure that young people are not subjected to bullying and there have been no incidents of missing from home.

Positive behaviour management is used and staff routinely encourage and praise young people. The staff know the young people well and work to provide consistency and support. Not all of the young people have behaviour plans in place to give guidance to staff about strategies which are effective with individuals. Records of sanctions and physical interventions are held in bound books. They do not include full information to meet the regulations, for example, they do not all contain details of the behaviour which led to the measure and some are undated. All have space for young people's comments and are signed by the manager.

The home provides physical safety and security. All the necessary checks are carried out and fire drills take place to allow young people the opportunity to practice evacuating the building. A variety of risk assessments, both generic and specific to individuals, outline known risks. These are updated to reflect any changes.

Systems for the recruitment and vetting of staff largely protect young people. All candidates are interviewed as part of the process. There is not always evidence on personnel files that gaps in employment and reasons for leaving work with children and vulnerable adults have been satisfactorily explored. Personal references do not all include the date they were written or the date received by the authority. The manager maintains a matrix of Criminal Record Bureau checks and due dates to ensure that they are renewed after 3 years.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people receive high levels of individual support from the staff at the home and from a range of other professionals. Named members of staff are designated to provide support to

each young person on each shift. Staff know young people's needs well and ensure they are given choices and opportunities to express their wishes.

Education is promoted and staff work with parents and teachers to meet individual needs. Reports for school reviews are provided, staff attend and a home/school diary is used for day to day communication. Prior to young people starting to have short stays, staff talk with school about their needs. Despite efforts to obtain these, not all the young people's files contain full education information.

Young people have the opportunity to enjoy a range of activities and outings. They are involved in planning trips out and venues for school holidays and are routinely given choices about how they wish to spend their leisure time. The home is well equipped with games, toys and electronic equipment and has a range of vehicles to allow them to take young people out.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Young people have placement plans which vary in the information they contain on young people's assessed needs and how they will be met. Some include specific strategies to meet individual needs and provide guidance to staff to ensure consistency. Others do not have full or up to date information. Where young people stay for over a hundred and four nights a year, statutory reviews are held. Staff attend and provide written reports. For some of the young people planning meetings are held to discuss their progress and needs.

Young people's parents and full time carers have prime responsibility for decision making and meeting their needs. Communication between them and staff is good. In addition to the home/school diary staff ring them to give updates. Staff respect parents and carers wishes in respect of the care of their children. A recent survey has been conducted which asked for the views of the families of children who use the service. Coffee mornings for parents and carers are held and newsletters sent to them periodically. They have been sent information about the local authority's forum for the parents and carers of children with disabilities.

Prior to young people staying at the home they have the opportunity to visit, with their parents or carers. Staff also talk with teachers at this stage to gain information about individual needs and how they will be met. There is facility for emergency placements, however, this has never involved a child unknown to the service.

Young people are encouraged and supported to make decisions and choices and their opinions are listened to. They are routinely asked for their views individually or as a group, in a young people's meeting. A volunteer comes into the home to assist with a Children's Rights Group which meets fortnightly.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is satisfactory.

The home provides care which encourages young people to build on their independence skills according to individual abilities. The majority of young people move on to adult care services with the support of their parents or full time carers. Formal pathway planning is not appropriate to this group of young people.

The home is large and has sufficient space to accommodate young people who use wheelchairs. Specialist equipment is available to meet the needs of the group of young people who use the short break service. The home has a sensory room and a small lounge with a soft play area. All areas of the home are fully accessible. Each young person has their own bedroom and where possible use the same room each time they come to stay.

The home is in need of considerable refurbishment and redecoration. A three year plan is in place to improve facilities and raise standards; this involves major building work in several areas of the home.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Consideration of equality and diversity runs through many of the policies and practices in the home. Young people are encouraged to express their views through a variety of communication methods. They are supported to access community resources and activities.

The home has a statement of purpose which outlines how the home operates and the services it provides. Young people's guides are provided in written and DVD format and include information on how to contact Ofsted.

The home has sufficient staff, many of whom have worked in the home for considerable lengths of time. They are suitably qualified, skilled and experienced in the care of the young people for whom a service is provided. It is clear that they are focussed on meeting young people's needs through working co-operatively and communicating effectively. Rotas demonstrate that there is an identified shift leader on duty at all times that the young people are there, and shift planning and analysis takes place. Staff say that their views and opinions are valued and they are an integral part of the improvement agenda. Supervision and staff meetings do not take place at the required frequency and there are some outstanding training needs. Staff work part time and are mainly on duty at times when young people are present, so there is limited time for them to complete paperwork or for key workers to update files.

The welfare of the young people in the home is largely monitored. Visits under Regulation 33 do not take place monthly. Comprehensive and detailed reports are compiled which inform the manager's action planning. The manager carries out monthly monitoring which includes file audits. She also signs that she has read many of the records in the home and adds comments as necessary.

Young people's files do not reflect their progress and development due to missing, incomplete or out of date information.

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 Children's 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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22	maintain an accurate and up to date record of measures of control used (Regulation 17)	14 October 2009
2	ensure that there is an up to date placement plan for each child or young person accommodated at the home (Regulation 28, Schedule 3)	14 October 2009
28	ensure that all staff receive appropriate training and supervision (Regulation 27)	14 October 2009
32	undertake monthly monitoring visits. (Regulation 33)	14 October 2009

Recommendations

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

- ensure that staff personnel files contain all the necessary information (NMS 27)
- ensure that all parts of the home are suitably furnished and decorated (NMS 24)
- ensure that staff meetings take place at least monthly (NMS 28)
- ensure that children's needs, development and progress are recorded. (NMS 35)