

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	4 June 2009
Inspector	Mick Walklin
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	28 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 is run by the local authority. It provides short breaks for children and young people aged over four years who have a learning disability. Some children may also have a physical disability.

The facilities are provided in a large property near the centre of the village, close to shops, parks and local amenities. There is good-sized shared accommodation with quiet areas provided for children and carers. All bedrooms are single and bathrooms are equipped to meet the personal care needs of the children. There is a large, established and secure garden for young people, with activities suited to the children using the service, including a climbing frame and cycles. Seven young people were present for part of the inspection.

Summary

At this unannounced interim inspection, all standards in Staying Safe were inspected together with non-key standards in Enjoying and Achieving, Economic Wellbeing and Organisation. Being Healthy and Positive Contribution were not judged.

Young people enjoy a good range of activities to ensure that their stays are varied and enjoyable. Suitable aids and adaptations are provided to meet the needs of young people with mobility difficulties. Personal and intimate care is provided in a way that maintains young people's privacy and dignity. They are protected by robust safeguarding, anti-bullying and missing persons procedures. Information about the complaints procedure is available and staff are skilled at recognising when young people are unhappy. Young people are assisted to develop socially acceptable behaviour where applicable. Their health and safety is protected by regular fire checks and robust procedures for vetting new staff and visitors. The home is well managed and organised and staff are well supported. The welfare of young people is monitored to ensure good standards of care.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Not Applicable. There were no actions or recommendations from the previous inspection.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is not judged.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Personal and intimate care is provided in a way that maintains young people's privacy and dignity. Staff have a good awareness of their responsibilities in this area and encourage young people to be as independent as possible. Young people are offered a choice of which staff provide personal and intimate care. There are sufficient bathing and toilet facilities, accessible to young people with mobility difficulties. Some electronic monitoring of young people occurs at night. Doors are fitted with sensors to alert night staff of movements and sound sensors are fitted to monitor conditions such as epilepsy. This is only done at the request of parents or

carers with appropriate consents in place. However, the use of this equipment is not covered in the home's Statement of Purpose. Young people's records are securely stored to maintain confidentiality and staff are fully aware of their data protection responsibilities.

Good information is available about how to complain with the procedure available to young people in symbols format. Some young people using the service have significant communication difficulties. Staff rely on behavioural observations and their knowledge of the individual young person to judge if they are unhappy. Staff commented, 'We are aware that they are unhappy by their body language and behaviour. We use PECS symbols(Picture Exchange Communication System), social stories, or Makaton signing to find out what is wrong'. Contact details for the National Youth Advocacy Service are prominently displayed. No complaints have been received since the last inspection.

Young people are protected by robust safeguarding, anti-bullying and missing persons procedures. Staff receive safeguarding training and have a sound knowledge of the procedures to follow if they have concerns. The home caters for a diverse group of young people with very differing needs. Admissions have to be well planned to ensure that vulnerable young people are not put at risk by the behaviour of others. Staff monitor the relationships between young people closely and good staffing levels enable high levels of supervision to be maintained. Comments from young people included, 'I feel safe here. One boy pinches me but staff look after me'. Most young people using the service have a lack of understanding about common hazards in the community such as road safety. External doors leading to the road are keypad operated for safety reasons and the garden and play area are fully enclosed by a boundary fence.

Young people are assisted to develop socially acceptable behaviour where applicable. Staff receive training in the management of challenging behaviours and close liaison with schools and parents ensures consistency in approach. Care plans contain clear behavioural management guidelines. Sanctions are very low key because of young people's understanding, but sanctions relating to mealtimes should be reviewed. Physical interventions are used only to prevent injury to the young person concerned or others. Incident reporting is of a good quality ensuring detailed records of events are kept. Significant incidents are notified to the appropriate authorities.

Young people's health and safety is protected by regular fire check and evacuations. A recent visit by the fire officer identified some actions and recommendations which are being implemented. Service agreements are in place to maintain moving and handling equipment. Robust recruitment and selection procedures ensure that staff are suitable to work with children. Visitors to the home are thoroughly vetted prior to being allowed in.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people enjoy a good range of activities to ensure that their stays are varied and enjoyable. They are fully consulted about their hobbies and interests, with staff endeavouring to organise activities which young people will enjoy. Although shift plans identify activities there is flexibility to accommodate young people's individual preferences. Young people are welcome to bring their own toys and games with them during their stays. The home has a minibus accessible to wheelchair users and outings to local facilities and attractions are organised. The home is well equipped with art, play and entertainment equipment including a sensory room. The large

enclosed garden also has a good range of play equipment, including an adventure playground, trampoline and go-carts. Comments from young people included, 'I like coming here. There is lots to do and I can meet my friends'.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is not judged.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Young people's needs relating to personal requisites are met by parents and carers. A clothing list is sent to them with the letter confirming short break dates. However, a small supply of clothing and toiletries are kept for emergency use. There are good systems for recording clothing and money sent in.

The home's location and size is in keeping with its purpose and function. Suitable aids and adaptations are provided to meet the needs of young people with mobility difficulties. Adaptations include a stair lift, adapted bathing and toilet facilities, hoist and adapted beds. One bedroom is situated downstairs. Restrictions to movement are in place within the home for health and safety reasons. Restrictions include the use of gates across doors and confusion handles on some doors. These are used when agreed, in the young person's care plan, with the appropriate consents in place.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Staff are well supported to safeguard young people's welfare. They receive monthly formal supervision which enables them to discuss practice issues. New staff receive more frequent supervision. An annual appraisal ensures that development needs are identified. Regular team meetings and thorough handovers enable effective communication between the staff group. Staff say that support is 'fantastic' with senior staff being 'very approachable'.

The welfare of young people is monitored to ensure good standards of care. Regular audit visits are conducted with reports from these visits being of a good quality, outlining the strengths and any shortfalls of the service. The home is well managed and organised with the Registered Manager being suitably qualified and experienced for the role. However, her job description does not accurately reflect the scope of her responsibilities. Staff describe the home as very well organised with good communication and a good staff team with a good skill mix.

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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Recommendations

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

- review the use of sanctions relating to mealtimes (NMS 22)
- ensure that the Registered Manager's job description accurately reflects the responsibilities and duties of the post (NMS 34).