

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	3 June 2009
Inspector	John Chivers
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	23 October 2008
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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

This children's home is a Resource Centre for children with disabilities and their families, which is owned and managed by the local district council. One of the services offered at the centre is residential respite care for children with a disability. It is this aspect of the centre's activity that is regulated under the Children's Homes Regulations 2001. The centre is registered for five young people between eight and 18 years who have a learning and/or physical disability; many of the children also present challenging behaviour. Other services offered include day care, after school care and outreach services. The home is a two storey detached house. It has its own minibus to enable good transport links with neighbouring towns and local facilities. There are five bedrooms on the first floor and several communal areas including a lounge, dining area, sensory room and large garden to the rear of the property. There is a lift to provide access to the ground and first floor. All local amenities are within easy reach of the home. The home has a guide for parents and also its own children's guide. In addition a DVD that enables the young people to see all the facilities the centre provides has been developed. The home welcomes prospective service users and/or their representatives to view the premises and discuss their needs with the manager.

Summary

The inspection was a 'key' inspection and unannounced. All of the national minimum 'key' standards in the sections being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, positive contribution, economic wellbeing and organisation were assessed on this occasion. There were no actions or recommendations to follow up from the last inspection and only one recommendation is made as a result of this inspection. The home is managed to a high standard and affords an equal standard of care and support to the resident children, having full regard for equality and diversity issues in all aspects of its operation.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

There were no actions or recommendations to follow up as a result of the last inspection.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

The home has full regard for health and medical matters concerning the children and ensures such areas are monitored and reviewed on a regular basis. The home provides a balanced and nutritious diet, having further regard for any cultural, religious or specialist diets as appropriate and engages more able children in catering arrangements as part of their life skills and independence training programmes.

The home's menu provides for a balanced and healthy diet, having regard for any cultural, religious and specialist medical diets. A vegetarian option is also available. Information is available regarding individual children in respect to any allergies, likes and dislikes and feeding instructions as appropriate. The home has a range of information from 'The Food Standards Agency' which is used for reference as appropriate. The kitchen area is modern and well equipped

and provisions are safely and correctly stored. Staff are trained in food hygiene. The home's catering arrangements meet the standards of the local environmental health department.

The arrangements for health are detailed in the home's Statement of Purpose and a range of health and medication policies and procedures are held. All policies and procedures are clear and detailed and provide sufficient instructions and guidance for staff. Children have detailed health and medical histories in their individual files along with signed parental consent forms regarding emergency medical treatment. Signed parental consent is also gained regarding clinical procedures. Children's health care needs are clearly detailed in their individual care plans which are closely monitored and reviewed by staff. Comprehensive risk assessments regarding children's health and medical matters are also held. Children retain the services of their own General Practitioner, though a local Doctor is available to the home in case of emergencies. Children are taught aspects of healthy living via the individual schools curriculum and this is reinforced by staff at the home as appropriate.

Children's medication administration records are very well kept and evidence no gaps in recording. Medication is securely held in locked cabinets and old or discarded medication is returned to parents for disposal. Medication is audited by staff on a monthly basis. Staff are trained in medication administration and first aid.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

The home takes child protection and safeguarding issues seriously and actively promotes children's wellbeing, providing a caring, supportive and nurturing environment in which children can mature and develop to their full potential. Children respond very well to the home's behaviour management programme which facilitates good order and discipline and enables them to live in a bullying free and non-threatening environment.

The home has a policy and procedure regarding privacy and confidentiality and also holds information on the Data Protection Act. A telephone is available for children's use, though most have verbal communication difficulties and staff assist children to communicate over the telephone as appropriate. Toilet and bathing facilities afford good privacy; however some children require personal and intimate care and clinical procedures from staff. Nevertheless all children are treated with dignity and respect in these areas. Children's bedrooms have lockable doors and confidential information and records are securely held in locked cabinets within locked offices.

The home has a written complaints procedure and a well prepared pictorial version of the procedure is available for the children. Staff receive training regarding the complaint procedure. The home's complaint book shows that any complaint is taken seriously, fully investigated and details action taken and an outcome. Children indicate no concerns or complaints and appear settled and content in their environment.

The home has a child protection policy and procedure and a children's 'safeguarding' statement. In addition the home holds the County Council Multi Agency Safeguarding procedures, a staff whistle blowing policy and a racist incident policy. Staff receive child protection training at induction and periodically thereafter. Children are taught aspects of personal safety via their individual school's curriculum and this is reinforced by staff during children's periods of residence at the home. Children are closely supervised at all times and staff are alert to any safeguarding

issues. The manager said there are no current child protection or safeguarding issues at the home.

The home has an anti-bullying policy and pictorial information on this topic is available for the children. The manager said that bullying is not an issue in the home and children raise nor indicate any concerns in this area. No incidents of bullying or intimidating behaviour among the children are evident. The warm and homely atmosphere at the home, coupled with the close support and supervision afforded to the children help reduce the likelihood of bullying occurring.

The home has a missing persons policy and procedure and also has a joint protocol with the police should any children be absent without authority. The manager said that no children have ever absconded from the home and the diligent supervision arrangements help ensure that children do not 'wonder' or absent themselves from the premises.

The home has a behaviour management policy and uses the 'Team Teach' programme of behaviour management which is a recognised and approved system of behaviour management in children's homes and children's residential settings. All staff receive training in the Team Teach behaviour management programme and this training is undertaken annually. Staff have excellent relationships with the children and interact and engage them appropriately. There is a high level of individual support for each child and children respond well to these diligent and caring arrangements. The manager said that all of the current group are within the home's remit in terms of behaviour management and control. No issues regarding behaviour management or control are evident. The home's sanctions book shows that sanctions are rarely used and that only permitted sanctions are used. The home's restraint book is available and that any incidents of restraint employed are appropriate and necessary in the circumstances described in the book. Records give a clear and detailed account of restraint incidents; however, there are a small number of omissions regarding the signing and dating of some entries in the restraint book.

The home has a health and safety policy and the health and safety 'law' poster is prominently displayed. There is a current fire risk assessment. Fire evacuation drills and fire alarm tests occur on a regular basis. There is evidence of current testing of the home's fire detection system and fire fighting equipment. Staff receive fire awareness training. There are current utility safety test certificates held. There are a wide range of generic risk assessments which are reviewed on a regular basis. Accidents are clearly recorded. Standards of cleanliness and hygiene are high throughout the home and no safety hazards are evident in the areas of the premises accessed. The home takes active steps to protect children, staff and visitors from the inherent risk of fire and other potential safety hazards.

The home's staff recruitment policy is available. The home has recently commenced the practice of involving children's parents in the staff recruitment process by including them in appropriate discussions and interviews, where thereafter they give their observations and comments on candidates to the home's management. Samples of recently appointed staff files show the home's recruitment and vetting procedures to be sound and robust and hold all required information including two written references and checks via the criminal records bureau at enhanced level. The home's recruitment and vetting procedures help to ensure that only suitable staff are employed to look after the children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

The home has full regard for children's education and learning and ensures they are encouraged and fully supported in these areas.

Link workers provide excellent support to children and take lead responsibility for liaison with parents, schools and other relevant individuals and agencies. Link workers also prepare and maintain children's care plans which are monitored and reviewed on a regular basis. The care plans are comprehensive and cover 10 headings including cultural, religious and any equality and diversity needs. In addition there are detailed risk assessments on each child and an opportunity assessment and a moving and handling assessment. External specialists are used in conjunction with parents and placing authorities as appropriate. Link workers and other staff carry out their duties in a committed, caring and competent manner and are observed to supervise children closely, having full regard for any special needs, treating children with dignity and respect at all times.

Children attend schools locally and have statements of special educational needs and copies of personal education plans in their individual files. Transition plans are held as part of the personal education plans as appropriate. Education risk assessments are also held. The home has a range of educational, play and learning equipment and materials and actively encourage children's participation in activities. The home has a well equipped sensory room. Link workers liaise with schools that children attend. The home has a file on world cultures and religions and also has a cultural arts and crafts file.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Comprehensive assessments are undertaken on children prior to admission and detailed placement and care plans are in place. Key information on children is easily accessible with a care plan index being held for ease of reference. Looked after children documentation is also held as appropriate. Parents views and opinions are sought when such plans are being formulated and these are fully taken into account as part of the overall care package.

Statutory and internal reviews are held and copies of review reports are available on children's individual files. Children have review packs which contain a range of information on the review process. Review reports also have an 'achievements' section to list any accomplishments which children have attained. Children may attend their reviews as appropriate. The manager said that reviews are usually held within the prescribed time scales and copies of review reports on file confirm this.

The arrangements for contact are detailed in the home's Statement of Purpose. Parents have frequent contact with the home and any contact is clearly recorded.

The home has a clear admissions criteria and any referrals are scrutinised closely prior to admission. The manager said that all of the current children are within the home's remit in terms of behaviour management and response to the care and support provided. Children are observed to respond positively to staff inputs and the care programmes available. The home has a 'Transition Handbook' which covers various age groups and stages of development. Transition plans are in place for those of appropriate age and circumstances and cover areas

such as communication skills, language and self-help such as washing and dressing, budgeting and general hygiene. Children also attend Duke of Edinburgh Award courses as part of their independence and social skills training.

Children are frequently consulted by their link workers and other staff who also liaise closely with parents. Children are afforded choice in day to day matters that affect them and staff may use a variety of communication methods in order to obtain their views and opinions, and children also have access to an independent person as appropriate. Some children attend a 'focus group' which is run by the Children's Rights Officer of the local district council.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is outstanding.

Whilst the home does not prepare children for leaving care there are 'transition' programmes in operation regarding older children where they receive independence and social skills training. Staff support children closely in these areas and encourage them in all areas of their development and progress.

Pocket money is provided as appropriate during the children's residence at the home. As the home is a respite service a clothing allowance is not applicable and children bring with them their own personal requisites such as toiletries etcetera.

The home has recently had building work completed in that doorways have been widened to make easier access for wheelchairs. The home is decorated and furnished to a high standard and is very well maintained. Communal areas are well presented and provide adequate space for the children. The communal areas are homely and comfortable and include pictures of positive ethnic images and information as part of the décor. Children's bedrooms are decorated and furnished to an equal standard, and toilet and bathing facilities are well equipped and afford privacy.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding with the home having a clear regard for such issues in all aspects of its operation. The home is managed to a high standard and affords an equal standard of care and support to the resident children.

The home has a comprehensive Statement of Purpose which accurately describes the service and facilities provided by the home. The Statement of Purpose is currently being reviewed. In addition there is a detailed pictorial children's guide and a 'DVD'.

The home has high staffing levels and the home staff duty roster gives a clear account of staff on duty and duty times worked. Photographs of staff are pinned to the walls in order that children know and recognise which staff are on duty at any given time. There is a balance in terms of gender and ethnicity and evenings are covered by both sleeping in staff and waking night staff. The staff work in a committed, competent and professional manner and the combination of their skills, experience and competences are sufficient to meet the needs of the children and enable the home to achieve its aims and objectives. All staff have written job descriptions and are clear regarding their responsibilities and to whom they are accountable. Established staff receive supervision on a monthly basis and staff in discussion confirm the

frequency of supervision meetings and their satisfaction of supervision content. Staff performance is also appraised annually and appraisal reports are available. Currently 15 staff hold the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) at level 3, two are undertaking the training and three recently appointed staff will commence such training in the near future. Three staff including the manager hold the NVQ at level 4 and another member of staff is currently undertaking the level 4 course. The home has an active training programme covering a range of relevant topics. Staff confirm the home's training arrangements and are clear that the home is supportive of enabling staff to attend training. Staff are also very supportive of the home's management and ethos and further confirm the home's commitment to equal opportunities, equality and diversity and that no discriminatory attitudes or practices exist within the service.

There is a high level of communication between the staff team with 'handover' meetings being held daily and full staff team meetings held regularly with minutes of meetings taken. The manager and designated senior staff monitor the home's records and conduct on an ongoing basis and sign appropriate records. Regulation 33 (monthly) visits occur and the reports available show a sound level of monitoring and scrutiny of the home's operation. The home forwards questionnaires to parents annually in order that they may comment on the service provided and pictorial children's questionnaires are displayed in the home. There is a current annual development plan which is due to be revised into a new format by the local district council next year. The home has a current insurance liability certificate.

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):

- ensure the home's restraint records are signed and dated in all cases. (NMS 22)