

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Karen Malcolm
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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 registered to provide care and accommodation for up to 18 children and young people. The home accommodates children and young people for 52 weeks of the year and also provides respite/short breaks during the week, at weekends and during school holidays.

Accommodation is divided into five separate self-contained units. Two units are used as a permanent home for children between the ages of 5 and 19. One unit is for respite/short breaks and one unit is a permanent home for young people between the ages of 16 and 25.

The home provides a large garden at the rear of the property with a play area, a small vegetable garden and an area for sitting and eating outdoors when weather permits. There is also a large indoor swimming pool on site and there are plans to add changing and shower facilities to this area.

Summary

At this unannounced, full inspection all the key standards were inspected. The outstanding recommendation made at the previous inspection was also followed up. All units were inspected, including the transitional unit.

The general organisation around working practices is good and the home functions well. Staffing levels are high and children and young people receive a good standard of care. Individual needs are recognised and plans are in place to address them. The children and young people's physical, emotional and health care needs are extremely well considered and staff are extremely proactive in ensuring their needs are met.

At the time of this inspection a majority of the staff, children and young people were unable to leave the home due to the adverse weather conditions. The emergency plan in place to support them during this time did not cause any upset to individual's daily routine or life.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

One recommendation from the previous inspection was made relating to the fire risk assessment being up dated. This has now been addressed.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children and young people are given choice regarding the food they eat. Menus are presented in a format that can be understood by the children and young people. Children and young people's favourite foods are listed in their care plan and reviewed with them every six months. They take an active role in planning, shopping and helping to prepare meals. Children and young people who have special dietary needs or preferences are catered for. Staff are also very aware of different dietary needs to plan and prepare for. Although, there was a bad turn in the

weather which prevented the children and young people leaving the premises for a number of days, the food supplies within each unit remained at a reasonable level.

Children and young people's health are promoted and there is clear evidence of this throughout each care plan. These are reviewed six monthly. The majority of staff are trained appropriately to support those children and young people who require specialist health care treatment such as insulin injections. Staff have a very good working relationship with a variety of healthcare professionals and incorporate their advice into each child and young person's care plan. Therefore, the children and young people's physical, emotional and health care needs are extremely well considered and staff are extremely proactive in ensuring their needs are met.

Children and young people can be confident that staff in the home are rigorous about the receipt, storage, administration and recording of medication. Records of any prescribed and non prescribed medication administered are up to date and properly kept. The manager monitors medication records regularly. Any errors occur are investigated so that all staff follow correct procedures for recording medication administration.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children and young people's privacy is respected. All personal care is given in a sensitive manner where children and young people are unable to do so for themselves. Those children and young people that can carry out some aspects of their personal care are encouraged to maintain those skills. They have single occupancy bedrooms to which they have appropriate access. The living arrangements provide space where they can relax and easily find privacy away from others if they wish. Sensitive information is held securely in the office. Staff are sensitive to gender issues when dealing with children and young people of the opposite sex.

There are clear procedures in place for handling external complaints which has now been followed by the home. Children and young people are able to express their concerns, if any, through resident's meetings which takes place weekly. There are clear strategies to support those children and young people who have communication difficulties and alternative methods of communication are used. Staff are good at encouraging the children and young people to express if they are not happy about anything. Hence, the children and young people can express their concerns or complaints and know they will be listened to.

The safety and rights of both staff and young people are protected. There are no safeguarding issues, but recent history shows that any such issues are quickly referred to the appropriate external agencies. Staff are familiar with the home's own safeguarding procedures which is in line with the local safeguarding children board. Most staff have received some basic child protection training which forms part of the home's internal core staff training programme. There is a detailed and up to date child protection policy, which all staff are trained on.

There are clear procedures in place with regards to countering bullying. Resident's meetings included discussions on bullying and child protection. The units within the home are secure. Children and young people do not leave the home without permission. Where children and young people have a tendency to wander during outings, staffing levels are increased to guarantee their safety. The home has risk assessments in place for all activities and what action is taken to minimise risks of this nature.

There are good behaviour management strategies in place, including appropriate restraint procedures. For example, each care plan outlines the child and young person's emotional and behavioural development and guidelines for staff to follow. Staff receive a variety of training in positive behaviour management and are good at managing challenging behaviour, helping the children and young people with their emotional and behavioural development. Formal sanctions are not used, but if a child or young person's behaviour is deemed unreasonable an activity may be withdrawn. All significant events are notified to the appropriate authorities including Ofsted.

General health and safety issues are addressed with a range of risk assessments in place including specific individual risk assessments. They identify hazards in and around the different units as well as risks faced when taking children and young people on community based trips and activities. One of the units has a stair lift to support children and young people with their mobility. However, there is no additional support such as a handrail to support those children and young people who use the stairs. Additional to this, there are no records to confirm when the last electrical installation check was completed. All other appropriate service contracts such as insurance, fire, gas and portable appliance testing were in place. Fire evacuation drills are undertaken regularly. However, the names of the children, young people and staff present at the time are not listed.

Appropriate recruitment practices are in place and all staff working at the home have received an appropriate criminal records bureau (CRB) check prior to starting their employment.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The home liaises well with a range of people and works in partnership with them in the best interests of the children and young people. Each child has a named key worker. The practical individual support is reflected in the records of key worker sessions along with the variety of planning documentation that is in place. However, individual's religious and cultural needs are not reflected accurately under the section headed 'identity'. The staff know the children and young people well and are knowledgeable of their individual needs and the implications this has for their care.

Specific educational arrangements are in place for each child and young person. Children and young people are working well at the school and look forward to attending. Due to the current bad weather conditions, they were unable to get to school or college. However, additional activities were in place to ensure each child was not bored. Each care plan has an education section, which is reviewed on a regular basis and guides staff on how to help each individual achieve their goals.

There are ample opportunities for children and young people to participate in a range of appropriate leisure activities, and the registered person allocates sufficient financial resources to fund all activities and trips. The home is very clear about children and young people's abilities, likes, dislikes and favourite activities. Staff have been very motivated in introducing new activities to engage the children and young people. The home provides weekly Sunday School meetings to meet individual's religious and cultural beliefs. However, it is not evidenced if all the children and young people attend and whether or not this fully meets their individual religious needs.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Placement plans are person centred. Children and young people have their needs assessed effectively. Placement plans are of a good standard and are updated regularly in consultation with the child, young person and their social worker. They contain clear objectives and plans for meeting individual needs. However, as stated under enjoying and achieving some care plans do not accurately reflect individual's cultural, religious, and racial needs. Children and young people are encouraged to attend their review and share their opinions. Key workers prepare a report for the review. They also provides individual guidance and support to each child and young person and regularly guidance, advice and support on any matter. Monthly progress reports are provided. Good running records are maintained, providing a detailed account of each child and young person's day-to-day lives.

Children and young people are assisted to maintain contact with families and friends. They have a contact plan specifying contact arrangements and any restrictions. Visits are supported either by staff providing transport and escorting.

There are procedures for introducing children and young people to the home. There are clear procedures to cover planned and emergency admissions.

Children and young people are encouraged and supported to make decisions about their lives. Regular resident's meetings are held which ensure the children and young people have a voice in the day-to-day running of the home, such as menu planning and activities. There is a resident charter which is comprehensive and positive. This is known by the staff, children and young people.

Relationships between staff, children and young people are based on mutual respect and understanding. Clear professional and personal boundaries are effective for both the individuals and the group.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Young people receive care which helps them prepare for adulthood. They are assisted to develop independent living skills both around the house and in the community.

There is a clear book keeping system in place to ensure children and young people's monies are appropriately managed. Children and young people are encouraged to save money and there is clear evidence of this.

Children and young people enjoy spacious accommodation which is decorated and furnished to a high standard. Children and young people are consulted about the décor of their bedrooms. There is ample communal space for the number of children and young people accommodated. Some of the lounges are decorated in pictures completed by the children and young people living in the home.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Information is provided about the services and facilities provided by home, through their Statement of Purpose and children's guide. This ensures that young people and their representatives know what services and facilities they can expect.

Staffing levels reflect the needs of children and young people. Records show sufficient staff on duty at all times of the day and night. As a result, the children and young people know they will be given the support they need. However, the duty rota, although comprehensive and clear, does not include the manager's shifts. The leadership within the home is operated to ensure that it is organised, managed and staffed to deliver the best possible child care. Staff spoken to said that the manager is flexible, open, approachable and operates an open-door policy. This was evident throughout the inspection. There are clear management and on-call arrangements that is known to all. Each unit is appropriately supported by a senior and support staff, meeting the needs of the children and young people placed. There are clear arrangements for staff to deputise in the manager's absence. The staffing arrangements are clearly set out in the Statement of Purpose. There are staff disciplinary procedures which are clear to each member of staff and are used to ensure children and young peoples' safety and welfare are not at risk.

The home has a very positive approach towards training. There is a full time training manager and dedicated training facilities. There is a comprehensive induction programme in place, although records are not satisfactorily completed or monitored. There is also a comprehensive on-going training programme to meet the needs of staff, children and young people. Each member of staff has their own training programme produced every six months and an annual appraisal. The majority of staff are trained to NVQ Level 3 in the Caring of Children and Young People and above. Consequently, the children and young people are cared for by competent staff. Supervisions are undertaken once a month and this was confirmed by staff spoken to. However, the records shown did not inconsistently reflect this.

Both the internal and external monitoring of the home is now taking place consistently and within the required timescales. Children and young people's case files are neat, well ordered, up-to-date and properly kept.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Children and young people are encouraged to develop and maintain their own identity. Children and young people receive an individual service in the home which is designed to meet their personal needs. All staff have a good knowledge of the young people they are working with ensuring their needs are consistently met.

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
26	ensure that a electrical safety installation checked is undertaken (Regulation 23)	7 February 2010

2	ensure under identity in individual's care plans is reflected accurately. (Regulation 12)	7 February 2010
29	ensure the duty rosters include all persons working at the home such as the manager. (Regulation 25)	7 February 2010

Recommendations

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

- ensure that the names of the each member of staff, child and young person present at each fire drill is recorded (NMS 26)
- seek advice with regards to installing an appropriate handrail in unit (NMS 26)
- ensure that all supervisions are carried out in accordance with the home's policy (NMS 28)
- review the current development plan for new starters. (NMS 31)