

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	26 May 2010
Inspector	Monica Hargreaves
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	13 October 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

This local authority 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.

The home is a purpose built bungalow, with facilities that are appropriate to meet the needs of the young people who use the service. There are 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 flat, which can provide emergency accommodation for one young person. 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 an unannounced key inspection. All key standards in all outcome areas were assessed.

The home continues to provide an excellent standard of care. Staff have a high regard for the young people they look after. They encourage and reward positive behaviour and work hard to make sure that young people enjoy their stay in the home. Young people respond well to the way that staff work with them. They are helped to stay healthy when they stay in the home and their education is promoted.

Safeguarding has a high priority in the service. Young people are protected from bullying, their right to privacy and confidentiality is respected and staff carry out personal care tasks in a way that promotes their dignity.

Young people enjoy visiting the home. They say that they are able to make new friends and socialise, that staff help them to learn new things and that there are lots of things for them to do when they stay.

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 made at the last inspection.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

The promotion of young people's health in the service is excellent. Staff make sure that that they have comprehensive information about young people's health needs before they come to stay in the home. This is kept up to date and accurate, so that young people's ongoing and

changing needs can be effectively monitored. Staff are given specific training to make sure that they have the necessary skills to care for young people with complex needs. For example they are trained in the management of epilepsy and the safe delivery of oxygen at night. Staff have effective links with nursing and other services, so that young people can be referred for additional support if a need is identified.

Young people enjoy nutritious meals that meet their dietary needs. They are encouraged to help to choose menus and to try different foods during their stay. Staff and young people eat together and meal times are pleasant social occasions. As well as knowing the individual preferences of young people, staff have a very good understanding of the diverse cultural and religious needs of the young people in their care and menus are planned to incorporate those requirements. Some of the young people who stay in the home are fed by gastric tube and care staff are appropriately trained by nursing staff, so that young people are well-nourished during their stay.

Young people are properly safeguarded with regard to the administration of medicines. Care staff are all trained in the safe storage and delivery of medication and records are clear and regularly checked by the manager. Medicines are brought in by parents and carers immediately before the young person's stay and taken away by them when the young person goes home. This means that there are no stocks of prescribed medication kept in the home. All medicines are stored securely in locked facilities. Staff are also trained in first aid procedures, so that they know how to look after young people safely in an emergency.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Excellent care practices, that are underpinned by clear policies and procedures, ensure that young people are cared for safely in the home.

The privacy and confidentiality of young people is respected. For example, staff encourage young people to respect one another's privacy and they carry out personal care tasks in a way that promotes the young person's dignity. Records are held securely and staff have a good understanding of issues of confidentiality. This ensures that information about young people is protected.

The response to and management of complaints, enables young people and their families to be confident that their concerns are taken seriously. Staff have an excellent understanding of how individual young people communicate their views and take prompt action to resolve their dissatisfactions. Young people have access to an independent person who visits the home regularly. There have been no complaints at all about care in the home since the last inspection. In their feedback to the home, parents make positive comments about the excellent standard of care that is given to young people.

Young benefit from staying in a service where safeguarding has a high priority. Staff know young people well and changes in behaviour are closely monitored. Training in child protection issues is kept up to date and staff demonstrate a good understanding of the reporting procedures. Bullying is not an issue in the home, because staff supervise young people well and make sure that short breaks are planned to avoid young people being placed together if they are not compatible. There have been no incidents of young people going missing when

they are at the service, although the home has a very clear procedure for managing unauthorised absences.

Staff have a very positive view of the young people they look after. They promote socially acceptable behaviour in the home and regularly praise young people when they behave well. Staff are trained to respond positively to challenging behaviour and use this knowledge to distract young people and defuse difficult situations. Their training includes the use of physical restraints. However, there is clear evidence to show that these are only ever used as a last resort, and at the lowest level necessary to protect young people. Records confirm that there have been no incidents that have resulted in a physical intervention since the last inspection.

Health and safety matters are managed very well. Risk assessments are kept up to date and equipment and installations are checked and serviced regularly. Fire safety training for staff is also kept up to date and each young person has a personal evacuation plan. Fire drills take place regularly, which enables staff to practice evacuating young people from the building in safety.

Young people are effectively protected by the authority's robust systems for the recruitment and selection of staff. These ensure that all staff are assessed as suitable to work with children and young people before they begin their employment. The involvement of young people in the recruitment process is excellent practice as it encourages participation and promotes self-confidence. The safety of young people is also secured by the checks that staff make on visitors before allowing them into the home.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Young people receive a very high level of individual support in the home, that meets their diverse needs. Staff are very well informed about young people's needs because there is a clear assessment when a service is requested. There are very good levels of multi-agency working and very good communication with families. Staff have an excellent understanding of the specific needs of all of the young people in their care and of how different young people communicate. This enables them to support young people effectively. Key workers take a lead responsibility for making sure that plans are progressed and the care team work very well together to ensure consistency of care. Young people say that the home is good at helping them to make new friends and to socialise.

Staff in the service actively promote the value of education. They support young people to develop their skills and to learn and achieve during their stay in the home. Staff provide detailed reports of young people's progress for education reviews and attend review meetings. They also make sure that information about young people is exchanged through their home-school diaries. The home is well resourced to support young people's learning through play and activities. For example, young people have access to a computer, books, games, arts and crafts materials and suitable outdoor play equipment. Young people are supported to reach their individual objectives, which vary according to their needs and abilities. When they stay in the service, young people have access to a range of activities outside the home to broaden their experiences. Recent examples of these include abseiling, archery and a barge trip. Young people say that the home gives them 'lots of things to do' which they enjoy.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Staff work in partnership with parents, young people and other professionals to ensure that full and detailed information about young people is available to them when a service is requested. This ensures that staff are equipped to meet young people's needs. Holistic care and support plans are put in place. These identify how young people will be cared for when they are in the home and promote consistency in the way that staff work with young people. Plans are regularly monitored in the home and reviewed through the formal reviewing process.

Staff work very well with young people so that their wishes and feelings can be incorporated into reviews. They talk to young people and agree the information that will be shared. This is simply written and presented in a format that is relevant to the individual young person. These files give an excellent picture of the young person's view of their time in the service.

Staff are very positive about the importance of supporting family contact. This is addressed in care and support plans, although because young people live with their parents, formal contact is not usually planned. Parents are encouraged to visit the home and to contact the service by phone when they want to and if a young person wishes to get in touch with their family during their stay, this is facilitated by staff. Parents comment that staff are very good at keeping them informed and say that they feel welcome when they visit the home. Young people develop friendships in the home and staff promote these friendships by arranging their short breaks so that they can stay together. This is excellent practice.

Short breaks are carefully planned and young people are introduced to the service in a structured way, and at a pace that meets their specific needs. This keeps families fully informed and reduces anxiety. Staff work well with families and workers in the adult services team to ensure that young people move on from this service and into an adult service in a planned way. This supports young people and their families during a period of transition.

Consultation with young people and their families is a real strength of the service. Young people's views about their care are actively sought and they are represented very well. Staff spend considerable time with young people identifying their wishes and feelings using their preferred methods of communication. They promote choice as a matter of course in their practice and work hard to put in place changes that young people have requested.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is outstanding.

The service has a strong commitment to helping young people develop their personal skills and the daily life of the home enables them to do this. Staff provide very flexible care packages because they work with young people with complex needs that restrict their ability. They work at the pace of young people and promote learning in many areas for example, shopping, making drinks and snacks and taking responsibility for self care. Young people say that staff help them to learn: 'the home gives me confidence to try new experiences'. At an appropriate stage, staff talk to young people about moving on from this service into adult services and they work closely with other professionals and families to support young people during this transition.

Young people benefit from staying in a home that is very well maintained, both internally and externally. The home is suitably furnished and appropriately equipped to meet the specific and

complex needs of the young people who use the service. For example, there are specialist chair, beds and baths and suitable play equipment. The home is accessible throughout to all the young people who stay there. Young people say that they can bring their own things into the home and put up posters when they stay. Parents comment that the home is always warm and welcoming.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

There is a clear Statement of Purpose that accurately describes the service provided, so that families and placing social workers can see how young people are looked after. The document is regularly reviewed and kept up to date. The young person's guide to the service is available in an appropriate format, and staff go through this with them when they first come to stay, to help them to understand how they will be looked after.

The home is managed very well. Young people benefit from being cared for by a team of competent staff who are qualified and suitably trained and who have an excellent understanding of their needs. Staff are supported very well by the manager and senior staff in the home. Staff regularly review the way they work and look at ways of developing and improving the service they offer to young people and their families. Communication between staff is very good so that they work together effectively. This is confirmed by the consistently high standards of care in the home.

There are robust systems in place to ensure that the work of the home is monitored. The manager undertakes regular checks and a senior manager visits the home every month to review the work of the staff and the care that is given to young people. The home's manager makes sure that prompt action is taken to remedy any shortfalls that are identified as a result of these checks.

Information about young people is stored in individual files that are kept in secure facilities. Files are in good order. Information is detailed and is appropriately cross referenced from other documents, so that each young person has access to a separate record of their time in the service.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. The service is managed to meet individual needs. Staff are proactive in their approach and create an environment in the service that ensures that disability is not a bar. Young people are recognised and valued by staff as individuals and their full participation in all aspects of their care is encouraged. The team reflect on current practice and continue to provide further developments to service.

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

There are no recommendations.