

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	3 August 2010
Inspector	Michael McCleave
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	8 January 2010
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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 resource centre is run by a local authority and provides respite services to children with disabilities. The service can be offered for up to four children at any given time. The bedrooms for the children are all single occupancy. There are two bedrooms located on the ground floor and four further bedrooms on the second floor. There is a large enclosed garden to one side of the centre that has outdoor play equipment. There is a separate annexe to the building that has a sensory room and meeting facilities. This building does not currently enable children with a wheelchair to access these facilities.

Summary

At this full unannounced inspection, all key standards were inspected.

This is a good service. The young people enjoy trusting relationships with the staff. There is a clear commitment to providing high quality care for the children during their short breaks.

There are good professional links with other statutory health agencies to provide the children with support to meet their care needs. The manager, assisted by two deputies, provides good leadership and support to the staff team. The team work well together to ensure that the children are looked after in a safe supportive environment.

There is a positive atmosphere throughout the centre and this reflects the dedication of staff and management to providing an effective service for the children.

The home is well managed and staff are supported by the management team.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the manager was asked to improve the training opportunities for staff. The manager has taken appropriate steps to comply with the recommendation. The number of staff achieving National Vocational Qualification at Level 3 in Caring for Children and Young people has increased and new staff are registered for this training.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The centre ensures that meals are nutritional and that these meet the medical and dietary needs of the children. Staff have a very clear awareness of the specialist diets relating to each individual child. Menus are prepared involving the children using pictorial symbols to show the food on offer. This demonstrates a positive approach to equality and diversity. Staff are trained to administer food to those children who require supported feeding using specialist equipment.

The health of the children is managed by staff who have a high level of specialist knowledge about learning disability. Their practice is sensitive with a strong emphasis on promoting dignity. Staff understand physical and emotional needs well. Health care records are clear and staff are well trained by the community nurse to manage complex health conditions, such as epilepsy

and autism. Staff are provided with specialist guidance to meet the changing needs of the children. There are strong and well established links with the occupational therapist and community nurse. The care and emotional needs of the children are taken care of by staff who are experienced and positively committed to their work with the children.

The system for medicines administration is very efficient requiring two staff to manage all medications given to the children. All recordings are witnessed and signed on the medicines chart for each child. A full stock check is carried out on medicines when a child returns home. These measures promote the safety of the children.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Staff have a good understanding of the need to respect the privacy and dignity of the children. They are aware of issues relating to the provision of intimate and personal care. There is an efficient administration system in operation and all records are stored securely.

There is a complaints system in place for parents. The centre has a stock of child-friendly pictures and symbols in various formats. This enables the children to indicate how they are feeling and by going through different stages, staff can determine if a complaint should be pursued. They would contact parents for consultation about making a complaint. This is good practice and demonstrates a commitment to equality and diversity.

Staff are well trained in child protection awareness and they can use a variety of communication aids to determine if there are any concerns in respect of safeguarding. Training in child protection awareness is mandatory for all care staff. There is a strong commitment at the centre to ensure that young people are kept safe. There are appropriate procedures in place to inform staff of the actions to take where there are suspicions or concerns of abuse. Staff have a good understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities.

Bullying and children going absent without authority are not a significant issues at the centre due to the high staff ratio. Where it is evident that bullying is an issue between some children, staff will carry out a risk assessment and determine a strategy to manage these situations. This is good practice and promotes the safety and well-being of children.

The relationship between the children and staff is very good and there is a positive atmosphere at the centre. Restraint is rarely used and staff will use gentle persuasion to guide a child away from confrontational situations. All staff have been trained in behaviour management techniques. Parents are consulted at the commencement of the placement to agree the level of restraint that can be used on their child. This is very good practice.

The safety of the children is a priority and appropriate measures are in place to ensure that the building is a safe environment. Fire evacuation drills are carried out in line with requirements and all appliances have been properly checked by the appropriate contractors. The home has good quality doors and locks to prevent unauthorised entry and all windows have restrictors. The garden to the rear and side of the building has a safe security fence to keep the children safe when they are outside using the play equipment.

The children are safeguarded through the robust recruitment and selection procedures in place that ensures only suitably checked staff are appointed to work at the centre.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The individual support given to the children is very good. They each have a key worker who is responsible for ensuring that all aspects of care and support is provided. Staff will spend individual time with the children and assist them to manage any personal tasks. The day-to-day care of the children is closely monitored by staff in order to determine if extra support or resources are required. This is always done following consultation with the parents. The home has established very effective links with the various health care services. This is good practice and demonstrates a positive approach to equality and diversity. The high level of support given to the children promotes their care and well-being.

There are effective links with the local schools attended by the children. Although parents retain responsibility for their child's education, staff at the centre will support children and their parents as required. School reports and other educational documents are sent by the school to parents.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The centre staff work closely in partnership with parents on all aspects of planning for their children. Information contained in the All About Me files include documentation with a full background assessment of each young person. Key worker staff are responsible for ensuring that parents are consulted on all aspects of their child's care while at the centre. All the documentation held at the centre provide the staff with the important information needed in order to care for the children. Staff demonstrated a good insight into the care needs of each of the young people including a proactive approach to diversity considerations.

Each child's placement is reviewed to ensure that their care needs are continuing to be met by the centre. These reviews are chaired by an independent reviewing officer from the council. Although the children have short break stays at the centre, parents can make contact with their children either in person or by telephone at any time.

All placements are carefully planned with parents in order to ensure that the children are introduced to the centre at a pace that is carried out with sensitivity. A similar proactive approach is taken when planning the next placement. There is a clear understanding of the need to ensure that parents and children are treated with respect during any planning process that involves change. This reflects a positive approach to equality and diversity.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is satisfactory.

The children are fully supported as they move towards adulthood. This process takes place with the involvement of the young person and their parents. It is managed by staff with care and sensitivity.

The centre is well maintained with appropriate aids and equipment to support the care and mobility needs of the children. The individual bedrooms are equipped with specialist beds and lifting equipment. The bathrooms are also appropriately furnished to ensure that the children can use the facilities with safety and in comfort. Two bedrooms on the first floor are in close

proximity to offices and this gives a somewhat institutional appearance. The dining room leads out into a safe and secure garden area. The lounge is comfortably furnished and has a large flat screen television for the children to enjoy their favourite programmes.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The centre works proactively to enhance the children's potential through positive support and encouragement. This approach enables them to lead as normal life as possible and to overcome the limitations of their disabilities. Staff demonstrate a clear awareness and insight into equality and diversity. They ensure that the children are able to participate fully in the activities available to them and to enjoy their stay. The centre has developed a range of communication systems using pictures and symbols to enable the children to communicate their views. This is very good practice. No child is deemed unable to achieve their potential.

The Statement of Purpose, gives a clear indication of what services the children and their parents can expect from the centre. This document is generic for all the county resource centres with specific information about this setting. The name of the previous manager however, is still listed in the current document.

The staff team are competent in role and demonstrate a positive commitment to their responsibilities for the care of the children. This is an experienced group of staff who have built up a strong knowledge base about learning disability. The staff are trained to National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) at level 3 in caring for children and young people. Those staff without this qualification are all currently registered for this training.

Staffing levels are appropriate to ensure the safety of the children. In order to ensure continuity of staff who are familiar to the children, a selected number from the county relief pool of staff, are used during the absence of permanent staff. When required, the manager will increase staffing above the minimum levels in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of the children.

There is a training programme in place for staff to improve their skills and professional development. All new staff undergo induction training and their progress is monitored by managers. Once induction is completed staff are registered for the National Vocational Qualification at Level 3. There are opportunities for staff to attend external training events relevant to their work with the children. This is good practice.

The management team share the responsibility for monitoring key records. This system would alert managers to particular trends or patterns in recorded issues or events. Action would be taken, if required, to improve the safeguarding and welfare of the children or to improve the quality of care practiced at the centre. Visits are carried out each month by an officer of the county to review standards. These monitoring measures help to protect the children and to maintain high standards.

The centre maintains appropriate records on each child. Staff record information about the children on a contact record using the Every Child Matters outcomes. This information is generally factual about what has taken place with the child during their stay.

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 that the Statement of Purpose is reviewed and updated. (NMS 1.1)