

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	9 July 2010
Inspector	Muhammed Harunur Rashid
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	4 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 home is a purpose built complex run by a registered charity in partnership with a local authority. The home provides short stay services to children and young people who have high support needs between the ages of five and under 18-years-old. The home is split into two units; it provides services for up to 12 children at any one time. The home is situated in an urban area, within easy access of local transport links and health and leisure facilities. As a respite unit, different numbers of children and young people stay at the home on different days.

Summary

At this unannounced full inspection, all key national minimum standards (NMS) were inspected.

This is a good service with some aspects judged as outstanding. Children and young people are encouraged to eat healthily. Their complex health care needs are well met. The service provides children and young people with a safe environment with the adaptations and equipment provided to meet individual needs. Children and young people are cared for by experienced and knowledgeable staff. Individual needs are comprehensively assessed and these are well met. Their educational attainments are promoted. The home works closely with a wide range of outside agencies in order to meet the full range of children and young people's needs. There are good opportunities for staff training in a number of areas, such as safeguarding. Staffing levels are high and young people receive a good standard of care. Staff are well supported by the Registered Manager who is committed to promoting the welfare of children and young people and focusing on improvement.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

The service was asked to ensure that a minimum ratio of 80 % of all care staff complete their National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) at Level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People and to ensure that staff complete monthly reports on each child or young person.

The service has acted upon these recommendations. These steps help to promote staff development and maintain chronological records of each child or young person.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

There are very good arrangements for promoting the healthy lives of children and young people coming to stay at the home. Staff are fully aware of the dietary needs of children and young people. They provide culturally appropriate food. Halal and vegetarian meals are provided for children and young people who need these. Staff have developed a very good resource of symbols and pictures of different foods and meals so that children and young people can communicate their needs and choices. Staff have knowledge of disabled children and young people's difficulties with eating and work closely with health professionals for advice and support. Staff are provided with specialist training for the safe administration of gastrostomy feeding to disabled children and young people who require this.

Children and young people's health care needs are comprehensively assessed and these are well met. Each child or young person has an individual health care plan. Staff work in partnership with the local authority and work closely with the health services which enables children and young people to access these services. This also offers opportunities for staff to access various training to develop their knowledge and skills in meeting children and young people's complex health care needs.

The home has a medication administration policy and staff administer medication to children and young people. Staff maintain records of all medication administered to children and young people. Medications are safely stored. Staff have attended medication administration and first aid training. First aid boxes are provided in the home.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children and young people live in a stable and safe environment. Children and young people's privacy and confidentiality is promoted by the policy in place, the practice of staff and through the secure storage of children and young people's records.

An appropriate complaint policy and procedure is in place and the procedure is made accessible by being displayed in the home. Staff maintain a complaints log book. Complaints are appropriately recorded and managed according to the home's procedures. Staff have received a number of compliments from the former service users and carers.

The home has clear systems in place that safeguard the children and young people from abuse. Training is available for staff on safeguarding children and young people, and this training is focused on safeguarding children with disabilities. The home has an anti-bullying policy. Staff have sound knowledge and skills to deal with bullying if it is suspected.

It is unlikely that a child or young person will go missing from care due to the high levels of supervision in place. However, the home has an appropriate policy in place for dealing with unauthorised absence.

Staff are well-supported and encouraged through the provision of appropriate training, such as managing challenging behaviour. Staff have a sound knowledge of safeguarding issues and are trained in the use of restraint. However, staff do not always sign on the physical intervention log book and do not number the pages of this book.

Staff have attended health and safety training. They take appropriate steps to keep young people, visitors and themselves safe from the risk of fire and other hazards. A risk assessment of the premises is in place. Staff carry out regular fire alarm testing and fire drills. Current gas and electric test certificates are available for inspection.

The home has a thorough recruitment policy and procedure in place which ensures that children and young people are protected. The human resources department ensures that all necessary information is obtained prior to the appointment of staff. Staff files include photocopies of their passports, two written reference letters and a Criminal Records Bureau disclosure.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Staff are positive in their approach to education and its value for children and young people. Staff encourage and support children and young people to attend formal education during their respite care. The local authorities arrange transport for children and young people to travel to and from schools. Staff work in partnership with schools to ensure consistency of practice and to enhance the quality of care provided. This may include observing practice in schools, attending review meetings and liaising with teachers.

Children and Young people are given individualised support in line with their needs and wishes. They can approach any member of staff and their concerns are listened to. Children and Young people have access to advocacy services. Staff develop an individual risk assessment for each child or young person and a strategy is in place to eliminate or reduce the identified risk factors. Staff are also able to communicate with children and young people who are non-verbal or have very limited vocabulary through various communication methods.

Staff provide a variety of activities for children and young people including trips out to local places of interest, the cinema and theatre. They also have various activities within the home such as art and craft materials, games, books and DVDs. The extensive garden provides a safe and secure space for children and young people to run around as well as high quality play equipment such as swings, trampolines and bikes. All activities are planned, risk assessed and carried out to ensure the children and young people are able to enjoy the activity safely. Children and young people are able to pursue their particular interests, develop confidence in their skills and are supported by competent staff to engage in leisure and educational activities.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children and young people's care needs are effectively and comprehensively assessed. Each child or young person has an individual care plan. Care plans are comprehensively written. Guidelines are in place about individual aspects of care for each young person; this ensures that staff have a consistent approach in providing care. Staff complete daily records which include information about individual care and support given to a child or a young person. Designated key workers monitor these care plans to ensure that these are implemented during children and young people's stay at home.

Children and young people are encouraged to get involved in their review process. Evidence shows that statutory reviews take place on time. There is a good relationship with the placing authorities and staff and they can request the placing authority to arrange a review earlier if the need arises.

Children and Young people are able to maintain contact with their families and friends. They have opportunities to receive visitors in private. Staff work closely with families, schools and other professionals involved with each child or young person; this helps to provide good outcomes for children and young people. Staff encourage children and young people's family members to visit the home during their short break. Staff have good relationships with parents and listen to their concerns.

Children and young people are fully supported during the admission process and when leaving the home. Introductions to the short-break service are carried out over a period of time suited to the child or young person, starting with a visit with parents or social workers and gradually building up to overnight stays.

Excellent consultation systems are in place to seek children and young people's views. Sufficient resources are available to address children and young people's religious, linguistic and cultural needs. Staff use various communication methods to seek views of children and young people who are non-verbal or have very limited vocabularies. Evidence shows that they and their family members are also consulted regularly to improve the service they offer. Information regarding access to advocacy services is provided.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Staff encourage children and young people to carry out a variety of tasks independently or with support. These include personal hygiene, cooking, shopping and cleaning. Each young person's placement plan clearly identifies independence work young people are encouraged to carry out.

The home's location, design and size are in keeping with its purpose and function. The home serves the needs of children and young people. The premises are completely wheelchair accessible and have specialist facilities for disabled children and young people. For example, there are suitable baths, electronic equipment hoists, changing beds and shower trolleys in place. There is a soft playroom and a sensory room available for children and young people. The premises are well decorated, furnished and maintained to a high standard.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The home has a Statement of Purpose. This includes all the required information, such as the aims and objectives of the service. The young people's guide provides information regarding the facilities available to them. The young people's guide is written in a form appropriate to the age and ability of the young people.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Evidence supports a consistent commitment to improving equality and diversity in practice. Children and young people receive an individualised service in the home which is designed to meet their personal needs. Staff have attended understanding diversity and inclusion training. Staff are recruited from various minority ethnic groups and have a good understanding of children and young people's dietary, religious and cultural needs. Staff support young people to make personal choices and to access community resources.

Appropriate staffing arrangements are in place to meet children and young people's complex assessed needs. Children and Young people are supported by the qualified and experienced staff. The Registered Manager reviews staffing levels in accordance with the assessed needs of the children and young people. Rotas show there is a balance of gender and cultural backgrounds of staff whenever this is possible. The general competence and experience of staff helps them to work with disabled children and young people who have complex needs.

The Registered Manager and her two deputy managers are qualified and have several years of experience in child care settings. The Registered Manager is available to both staff and young people for support and advice.

All staff receive regular supervision and annual appraisals from their line manager. Regular staff meetings take place which promote good communication amongst the staff team.

The home works in partnership with a local health authority and young people have access to these services. Staff receive various training from health professionals which enables them to develop knowledge and skills to meet the complex needs of children and young people. The staff team is supported by administrators.

The staff team have access to various internal and external training. Staff spoken to were satisfied with the training they are receiving. Staff received various training for their professional development, such as health and safety, managing epilepsy, administration of gastrostomy, first aid, food hygiene, challenging behaviour, Makaton, safeguarding and moving and handling. More than 80% of care staff have completed their NVQ at Level 3 in the Caring for Children and Young People.

There are systems in place to monitor the performance of the home against the Statement of Purpose. Regulation 33 visits take place on a monthly basis. The Registered Manager monitors and signs the home's records and takes appropriate steps on issues requiring actions.

Each young person has a permanent private and secure record of their history, development and progress throughout their childhood.

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 dedicated book for recording instances of restraint has numbered pages and that each record is signed off by a person authorised to make the record. (NMS 22.9)