

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Sonya Robinson
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Date of last inspection	24/02/2010
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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 outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for the service.

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

The home operates from two separate houses that are in close proximity to each other and this service is linked to a specialist school. Both properties are detached and provide spacious settings situated in a residential area, with local shopping outlets close by. There is good access to a number of parks, cinemas, leisure and recreational facilities. The school that the young people attend is a short driving distance away. This school is also managed by the same organisation.

All young people considered for placement experience Autistic Spectrum Disorder with associated communication and sensory impairment and possible learning disability.

Placements in the home are generally provided for school terms only, with accommodation being provided on weekdays and weekends. Periods of respite care are agreed on an individual basis. There is also provision for children to reside permanently at the home.

Young people and staff participated within this inspection.

Summary

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

This was a full inspection that was conducted unannounced. All key standards were assessed.

The outcomes for young people are enhanced in most areas of care and support. The majority of key standards are met well, providing good standards of care. However, there are some satisfactory features that require improvement. These relate in the main to weaknesses in recording, some training needs have been identified, and professional staff supervision. Other areas include maintaining the environment, improving internal monitoring and developing a plan as to how the home can continue to develop over the next 12 months.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection three actions and four recommendations were made.

Two actions related to information that is required to be maintained on staff files, these largely related to photographs of staff, hours worked and position of the staff member, being held on file. These have been actioned. Latterly, the organisation was asked to ensure that the home is maintained to a state of good structural repair both

externally and internally. This again has been actioned, but this requirement is made again, due to other issues that are raised within this inspection.

The following was recommended as a matter of good practice. The service was asked to maintain adequate precautions to protect young people, staff and visitors against the risk of fire, such as ensuring all fire records are kept up to date. This has been undertaken and maintained.

The service was to ensure that the views of children on all matters affecting them, including day-to-day ones, are ascertained on a regular and frequent basis through, for example, regular children's meetings. 'Your voice' meetings, whereby the young people meet as a group or on a one-to-one have been introduced and these have highlighted a number of areas and demonstrate good practice.

The service was to ensure that the Statement of Purpose, accurately sets out what the home is to do for the children and the manner in which care is provided. This has been undertaken and now meets the necessary standard in this area.

Finally, the registered person of the home was asked to monitor the setting and take action to improve or adjust provisions where necessary. The Registered Person has appointed an independent visitor to the home. Since the last inspection they have visited every month, which is stated within the standards for children's homes and they have produced a report about the conduct of the home. While this has improved, a couple of issues are further highlighted within this report to ensure that they may become more robust.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people enjoy healthy and nutritious meals that meet their dietary needs. Staff have a good understanding of what makes a healthy and balanced diet. The home are able to provide young people with special diets when this is required for example, allergies and tolerances. Staff encourage young people to develop healthy eating habits. Young people are encouraged to choose what they have to eat as there is always an alternative available. Menu planning is discussed within the household by all concerned and includes a variety of foods from other cultures which young people are encouraged to try. This means they learn to appreciate and enjoy a wide selection of foods.

Young people's health needs are met. They have plans showing their health needs and the arrangements for meeting them. Staff have a good understanding of young people's health needs. They monitor young people to make sure they are healthy. The home liaise very well with parents and health professionals by ensuring that they are up to date with feedback from young people's routine health checks and medical treatment when they are unwell. The home has good links with specialist health and

advisory services, such as, speech and language therapists to make sure that young people get suitable support with specific health issues.

Staff deal with health issues sensitively and make every effort to reduce young people's anxiety about receiving treatment. Staff work with parents to ensure young people get appropriate support and advice to promote healthy lifestyles.

Staff with first aid qualifications are on duty at all times to make sure appropriate action is taken to safeguard young people in the case of an emergency.

The home manages medication for young people safely. Staff make sure that young people only have medication specifically prescribed for them and take it in line with the prescription instructions. Medication is securely stored. Staff keep detailed records of any medicines stored in the home and the administration of medicines to young people.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff respect young people's privacy and confidentiality consistent with good parenting and the need to protect young people. Young people make and receive telephone calls and are given space, support and time to be alone when they wish. Room searches are undertaken where risks have been identified due to the complex needs of some young people. However, the documentation of these doesn't meet the necessary standard, that is, insufficient detail is noted.

Staff provide supervision for young people based on their needs to make sure they are safe in the home and in the community. All staff have recently received training in safeguarding young people. There are clear systems to let parents, the police and social workers know about serious events involving young people. The home keeps detailed records about any concerns regarding young people's safety, including any accidents and the actions taken in response.

The home has a suitable complaints procedure. Staff are making efforts to help young people to express their views about how they are being looked after, and to ensure they know what to do if they are unhappy. The home keeps a written record of any complaints and the action taken to deal with them. Bullying is not currently an issue in the home. Young people learn to respect others through the good examples provided by the management and staff team who work in an anti-oppressive manner.

No young person has been missing from home. There are good procedures in place to ensure that staff promote young people's safety in this area.

Staff support young people when they are upset. They offer reassurance, try and find out what is the matter, and help them to try and deal with their anxieties in a positive way. Staff use communication skills to encourage young people to develop

socially acceptable behaviour. They place emphasis on building positive relationships with young people and understanding young people's behaviour.

Young people have clear plans identifying what may cause any difficult behaviour, and outlining strategies to manage these behaviours in a calm and effective manner. Staff discuss young people's behaviour as a team and seek advice from parents, school and support agencies. They share information about what works in certain situations with young people to make sure that people work with them in a consistent way. The behaviour plans are reviewed regularly to make sure they are up to date and continue to meet young people's needs. However, not all staff have up-to-date training in behaviour management and physical intervention of young people.

New staff undergo comprehensive suitability checks before they start work with young people. The home maintains regular health and safety checks and the associated certificates are in place. This means that the home has appropriate safeguards in place.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people receive individual support when they need it. Staff are knowledgeable about young people's needs and are skilled at providing the support they need. There are many good examples of young people getting advice and support with a wide range of possible needs including healthy lifestyles, personal care, communication, dealing with worries, and life skills.

Education is actively promoted and plays an important part in the lives of young people. Their educational needs are identified in written plans and there are clear arrangements for meeting their needs. Staff have excellent links with the school and they work together to support young people's education.

Staff have created an environment that supports and encourages young people to learn and develop. Young people have a structured daily routine that prepares them for school. Young people enjoy learning, and have opportunities to take part in educational activities in the home to develop their skills.

Staff support and encourage young people to take part in leisure activities in the home. Young people pursue particular interests such as, listening to music and stories, keeping fit and imaginary play with toys. There is also some opportunity to take part in activities in the community, such as attending youth clubs, swimming and days out.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Young people have written placement plans identifying their needs and outlining the arrangements for meeting them. Staff have a clear understanding of young people's needs. They put the plans into practice and keep detailed records about young people's progress and experiences. Young people's placement plans are reviewed regularly to make sure that they are up to date and continue to meet their needs.

Young people have regular contact with their families to help them maintain relationships and offer reassurance. Staff work closely with young people's families to let them know about their progress and involve them in decisions about the care provided.

Young people are encouraged to make decisions about their lives and to influence the way the home is run. They are involved in decisions about what food they eat, what clothes they wear, what they do in their spare time and how their room is personalised. Staff are actively looking at ways to improve communication with young people and help them to express their feelings.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is satisfactory.

The home is located centrally to young people's schooling and offers them good access to various community facilities. The service is split into two individualised homes, where young people can receive personalised support, that is tailored to meet their needs.

Staff encourage young people to develop their independence. Young people are encouraged to take more responsibility for themselves suitable to their age, abilities and understanding. They learn skills through taking part in the running of the home such as planning meals, and household tasks. Young people are also encouraged to develop their personal care and social skills.

Young people are supported in choosing how they spend their personal allowances and young people wear clothes that are age appropriate and in keeping with the season. This means that their independence and individuality is being promoted.

Young people have personalised their bedrooms and have enough personal space to meet their needs. However, parts of the home, are not maintained to a good standard, despite being identified within internal monthly audits.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Positive development has been made to meet the diverse and complex needs of the young people. The home works closely with the school which is part of the same organisation. This promotes development for the young people placed in all aspects of personal, social and health education and citizenship. Staff ensure that young people receive an individual service designed to meet their personal needs. Staff have good knowledge of the young people they are working with.

The management show effective leadership and a commitment to good child care. The two managers from both of the houses are in the process of registering with Ofsted to be the Registered Manager of each setting.

The home has a clear written statement for parents and social workers of how the home operates and plans to meet young people's needs. The children's guide provides important information about the support young people can expect from the home and how they will be looked after. The guide is available in different formats to enable young people with different communication needs to access the information.

Staff are well supported on a daily basis, however, one-to-one professional supervision has lapsed over recent months. Staff develop their knowledge, understanding and skills to meet young people's individual needs through training. Also, many are working towards gaining recognised child care qualifications. The manager of the service is also undertaking a professional qualification relevant to the needs of the home.

The staff team reflects the gender and cultural background of the young people living in the home and provides role models for young people. Staffing levels are satisfactory to meet the needs of young people living in the home.

Monthly monitoring visits are undertaken and reports contribute to the manager's evaluation of the service. However, the opinions of parents, relatives and staff are not sufficiently reflected within these which could aid in forming an opinion of the standard of care provided in the home. Access also, to review the appropriate records in preparing a report on the conduct of the home is sometimes curtailed. This means that internal monitoring systems could be more robust. The home also does not have a specific written development plan of the way forward for the home over the next 12 months.

Young people have accessible care records that are clear and reflect the standard of care and support delivered to each young person. Systems within the home ensure that records are maintained to a satisfactory standard.

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/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Std.	Action	Due date
22	ensure that all staff employed in the home receive appropriate training such as, behaviour management and physical intervention (Regulation 27 (4) (a))	31/01/2011
24	ensure that all parts of the home are maintained both externally and internally, this is with particular reference to all issues identified through the monthly audits (Regulation 31 (2))	31/12/2010
32	ensure that the registered provider visits the home at least once a month and interviews in private with their consent, and children accommodated there, their parent, relatives and person's working at the home, in order to form an opinion of the standard of care provided in the home, they shall also review the appropriate records and prepare a report on the conduct of the home. (Reg 33 (3) (4))	31/01/2011

Recommendations

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

- ensure appropriate records are in place for documenting any instances of room searches (NMS 9.8)
- ensure all staff receive at least one and a half hours of one to one supervision from a senior member of staff each month (NMS 28.2)
- ensure that the manager of the home has professional qualifications relevant to working with children and management, which must be of National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) level 4, or another qualification that matches the competencies required by that NVQ (NMS 34.3)
- ensure that a minimum of 80% of all care staff have completed National Vocational Qualification level 3 in the caring for children and young people or an equivalent qualification (NMS 29.5)
- ensure there is a written development plan, reviewed annually, for the future of the home. (NMS 33.5)