

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspection date	21/10/2010
Inspector	Jackie Callaghan
Type of inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	08/07/2010
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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 is registered to provide care and accommodation for a total of four young people with learning disabilities between the ages of 10 and 17 years. The home can also provide a service for up to two young people who have additional physical disabilities.

All young people are provided with single bedrooms. The rear of the home has a garden and patio area with ramped access to the lawn. A car park is available at the front of the home for visitors and staff. The home is situated close to a city centre and is within short travelling distance of most local amenities. Staff use public transport and their own vehicles to further assist young people to access the community. Once every three weeks the home uses a hire vehicle to ensure that group activities can take place. Four young people currently live at the home and all were present for part of this inspection. Due to young people's communication needs they were unable to verbally contribute directly to this inspection. However, they did interact with the inspector and observations have been used to help inform the outcome judgement of this visit.

Summary

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

This was an interim unannounced inspection that concentrated on following up the two actions and four recommendations made at the last inspection. This inspection focused on keeping the young people safe.

Overall, young people receive stable and safe care. However, this is potentially weakened because at times there are insufficient staff on duty and not on very occasion are the necessary checks on staff fully undertaken. There are systems in place including staff supervision to develop practice and to help staff promote improvements for young people.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the Registered Manager was asked to; ensure that all persons receive appropriate supervision and that there are sufficient staff on duty for the running of the home. Staff supervision processes have improved. Staff are now provided with appropriate opportunity to reflect and explore their roles. Staffing numbers however, although much improved, are still not ensuring that sufficient staff are on duty at all times of the day. This has the potential to continue to place young people at risk of harm.

The Registered Manager was also asked to ensure that equipment is repaired

promptly, that the Statement of Purpose is updated and to develop a children's guide in different formats. All repairs to equipment in the home that is damaged and poses risk is now repaired promptly. The Statement of Purpose now includes the correct names of staff and an appropriate children's guide in Makaton has been created. As a result, young people's welfare is being positively promoted.

Finally, the Registered Manager was asked to update the complaints policy. This has yet to be done and still does not contain the correct regulatory body that young people, staff and external professionals can raise concerns with.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is not judged.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff respect the privacy of young people and they make sure that information is kept confidential. There have been no complaints made since the last inspection. The complaints policy, however, continues not to have the correct contact details of the regulator. This may delay any issues being raised with the appropriate external body.

Young people are protected from abuse. There are appropriate policies and robust practices in place. Staff have a sound understanding of the young people in their care and their individual vulnerabilities. There is a clear procedure for reporting and managing safeguarding concerns and staff sufficiently understand their responsibilities within this process. Staff are trained in child protection issues when they first come to work at the home. There is evidence that some staff have received ongoing training in safeguarding and this is now being extended to all staff to ensure that their knowledge is kept up to date.

Bullying is not an issue in the home and relationships observed demonstrated that the young people appear at ease with each other. Individual care arrangements are always informed by a detailed risk assessment for areas of known and potential hazards. These assessments inform staff practice and clarify how young people will be fully safeguarded. The home has a detailed protocol for managing unauthorised absences. However, no young people have left the home without permission.

Staff work hard to help young people to learn to behave in a socially acceptable way and to resolve difficulties appropriately. They provide positive role models and give young people clear and consistent boundaries. Staff are able to develop good and supportive relationships with young people, which helps them to feel settled in the home and to make good progress. Staff are trained to respond positively to challenging behaviour. This includes training in physical restraint, although this is only ever used as a last resort and in clearly defined circumstances, to protect young

people.

Health and safety matters are well managed in the home. Individual and general risk assessments enable staff to put in place appropriate plans to lessen or eliminate risk, in order to protect young people and the environment. Risk assessments are regularly reviewed to ensure that information is kept up to date and that it accurately reflects the changing needs of young people. Fire and electrical equipment is regularly checked and young people take part in evacuation drills so that they know what to do in an emergency. The home is kept appropriately secure to prevent unauthorised individuals gaining access.

The procedures for the recruitment and selection of staff have not been followed in every case. One file does not have two written references and the character reference has no proof of verification. As a result, practices do not always ensure that all staff are thoroughly vetted before they start work. The identity of visitors to the home is checked before they are allowed in. This practice protects young people, as they ensure that unauthorised individuals are not able to gain access to the home.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is not judged.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is not judged.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is satisfactory.

Young people benefit from living in a homely environment. The service is suitably located in a residential area and provides young people with an appropriate amount of private and communal space. It is comfortably furnished, well maintained internally and externally and is clean and tidy. Any damage to the property is identified in a maintenance log. A risk assessment approach is being taken to ensure that any necessary faults that place young people at risk are promptly repaired. The care that staff take in the upkeep of the home, encourages young people to take a pride in their environment.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The service provides young people, their families and placing social workers with good written information about how the home works, in the form of a detailed Statement of Purpose and young person's guide. Both documents are regularly reviewed and updated.

There are appropriate systems in place to enable staff to have the opportunity to reflect on their practice and to monitor the care that they give to young people. These include regular staff meetings, good handovers between shifts and regular supervision.

Staffing levels have improved. However, morning shifts still only have two staff on duty to four young people. Given the current complex needs of the young people, this is not enough to systematically maintain safe levels of supervision and overall care. Particularly as some young people require staffing on a one to one basis, help with personal care and for whom the management of their behaviour can be physically challenging. This is evidenced by an incident during a morning shift that required two staff to deal with a situation that required physical restraint, leaving no staff to look after the other young people. Fortunately, on this occasion a third member of staff had come on shift two hours early and was able to supervise the other young people. This incident further demonstrates that staffing levels are potentially placing young people at risk by not ensuring that on all occasions there are safe levels of supervision.

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
27	obtain for all staff, before they start work at the home, all the information set out in Schedule 2 (Regulation 26(3)(d))	21/11/2010
30	ensure there are sufficient staff for the running of the home taking into account the needs and behaviour of the children and young people. (Regulation 25.1)	15/11/2010

Recommendations

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

- ensure that the complaints policy is reviewed and includes the correct contact details of the regulatory body. (NMS 16.5)