

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Paul Taylor
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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 children's home comprises four houses set around the manager's office. Two houses can accommodate seven young people each and two can accommodate six each. The total complement of the children's home is 26 beds.

The home caters for young people between the ages of seven and 17 years with a variety of disabilities, primarily epilepsy and learning difficulties. Each unit has the facility to accommodate wheelchair users and has equipment suitable to care for young people with a physical disability as well as learning difficulties. On the same site is a residential special school which the young people attend as day pupils. While the home was newly registered in 2009, the individual houses were previously separately registered as children's homes and have therefore provided continuous care for the young people accommodated.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

This was an unannounced interim inspection following up the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection and assessing the staying safe outcome area. The home continues to offer a good standard of care to the young people who live there.

Systems in place ensure that the welfare of the young people is monitored closely and that their well-being is promoted to a good standard.

One action relating to the recording of medication was made as a result of this inspection. Two recommendations were made. These relate to achieving a ratio of 80% of the staff team who have completed the National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People and asking that the home ensures that regular checks of fire equipment are consistently carried out.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection two actions were made relating to the recording of incidents of restraint and the recording of medication.

All records of restraint now include all the details required and the action has been addressed. While the vast majority of medicine administered and stock taking is accurate, there are occasions when records do not reflect what is in stock or have identified whether a medication has passed its expiry date. Additionally, an audit carried out by a member of staff could not be found. This action therefore remains.

Two recommendations were made at the last inspection. One was asking the home to include the names of the young people who have been present during fire drills. This has been achieved. The other recommendation related to the home achieving a ratio of 80% of the staff team who have completed the National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People. While this ratio has not yet been achieved, the organisation offers a rolling programme of this training to all members of staff. The recommendation remains.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is not judged.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Confidential information is securely stored. Very clear guidelines are in place so that the young people's dignity and privacy is protected, particularly with regards to personal care.

The learning difficulties of the young people means that they may not have the ability to understand the concept of what constitutes a complaint. The staff use their knowledge of each young person to ascertain from their behaviour and vocalisation whether a young person is unhappy about something. Staff receive training in complaints and whistle blowing as part of their induction process. Most complaints tend to come from parents and carers on behalf of the young people. Complaints are addressed promptly and the results of any complaints thoroughly recorded, including whether the complaint was founded and whether the complainant was satisfied with the outcome.

All members of staff receive child protection training and are up-to-date with child protection procedures. Additionally they have access to local safeguarding procedures and the organisation's child protection policy. There is a dedicated safeguarding team based on site who offer additional support and advice as well as liaising regularly with the local child protection team. Members of staff are clear as to their obligations in the event that they have concerns about a young person's well-being. Detailed records are maintained on any child protection or welfare concerns and how they have been pursued and resolved. The home's approach with regards to ensuring that any child protection matters are addressed is thorough and involves close liaison with all agencies and parents.

There is a policy and guidance for the staff to follow with regards to bullying. The cognitive disabilities of the young people means that they do not necessarily understand the concept of bullying. The staff who work in the home are aware of the group dynamics and what triggers can lead to behaviour which may cause conflict between the young people. Close supervision and support of the young people

ensures that incidents are kept to a minimum.

The staff are very aware of the young people's extreme vulnerability in the event that they go missing. Therefore, the need to closely supervise them to ensure their safety, is embedded in the practice of the home. There is very clear guidance and an emergency protocol for staff to follow if a young person goes missing. Incidents of a young person leaving the premises without supervision are extremely rare and addressed as a matter of urgency should they occur.

The organisation has a very efficient system which ensures that all the necessary agencies and parents and carers are informed promptly of any specific events which occur in the home. This ensures that all relevant parties are kept up to date with issues regarding the young people's safety and well-being.

Each young person has an individual behaviour management plan which is developed using input from parents, key workers, class teachers and relevant professionals such as psychologists. The plans outline what strategies need to be used to support the young people and what triggers may lead to them displaying distressed behaviour. Staffing levels are outlined in the behaviour plans and risk assessments to ensure that the young people receive the guidance and support they need.

Sanctions, or 'consequences' as they are known in the home, are rarely imposed. If a sanction is imposed, then it will have been agreed as part of the individual young person's behaviour management plan. If a sanction is imposed then it is clearly recorded and the manager endorses the record to ensure that it was appropriate.

All members of staff are trained in the method of physical intervention used in the home. Records maintained of physical interventions contain all the details required and are checked on a regular basis by the manager.

Risk assessments are used to ensure that both the environment and activities for the young people are assessed and risks minimised and managed. They are regularly reviewed and updated. On the whole, checks of fire equipment are carried out regularly and in line with the organisation's policy. However, there are occasions when these checks have not been carried out within the timescales set out in policy and practice. Fire drills occur regularly and each young person has a personal emergency evacuation plan.

All visitors to the site are required to report to reception. The recruitment of staff is subject to a thorough process and suitability checks, such as Criminal Records Bureau checks and references are carried out prior to employment.

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 not judged.

Organisation

The organisation is not judged.

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
12	ensure that an accurate record is maintained of any medication stored and administered. (Regulation 21 (1))	18/02/2011

Recommendations

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

- continue to train a minimum of 80% of the staff team to National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People (NMS 29)
- ensure that the testing of fire equipment is achieved consistently and regularly. (NMS 26.8)