

Inspection report for Children's Home

Unique reference number	SC039900
Inspection date	08/02/2011
Inspector	Linda Brown
Type of inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	26/10/2010
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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 a large, spacious, detached house located near to the centre of a small town. There are a good range of local shops and community facilities. Public transport is easily accessible. To the front of the property is a car park with a grassed bank and conifers which create a natural barrier between the house and the road.

The setting provides accommodation for up to seven young people between 10 and 17 years. They have complex social, emotional and developmental needs and moderate to severe learning or physical disabilities. Some young people attend the home on a respite or part-time basis. All have their own bedrooms.

Summary

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

The purpose of this unannounced interim inspection visit is to examine some of the standards in the national minimum standards for children's homes, and monitor the home's performance against the recommendation made at the previous inspection. During this inspection, all key standards in the outcome area staying safe are examined.

This inspection found that outcomes for children continue to be outstanding and the service meets and exceeds many of the national minimum standards. Staff work in close partnership with families and professionals in order to provide a consistent service for young people. The management and staff provide a very positive environment where young people feel safe. The home is well managed and staff are supported, experienced and well trained. A key strength of the home is the relationship staff have with the young people and staff's understanding of their individual moods and behaviours. These relationships combined with excellent plans and risk assessments enable staff to manage behaviour well.

The Registered Manager continually strives to improve and develop the service to young people. Staff are currently looking at the transition process for when young people are reaching adult hood. Many of the young people have lived together for a number of years and when they leave the home this can cause distress for the young person moving out and the young people remaining. The Registered Manager is keen to work with the transition team to address this shortfall in the process. The Registered Manager and deputy are also invited to attend the Challenge and Improvement programme for children's homes workshop. Organised by the Department for Education to develop and support the children's residential sector to deliver better outcomes for the

children in their care.

The outcome area staying safe is examined and judged to be outstanding, no other outcome areas are judged. No actions or recommendations are made at this inspection.

Improvements since the last inspection

One recommendation, with regard to recording young people's views after a restraint has taken place, was made at the last inspection. The records did not previously reflect the good practice taking place regarding the time staff spend communicating with young people and gaining their views and feelings after a physical intervention has taken place. Evidence is now available to confirm that this recommendation has been fully met.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is not judged.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Policies and procedures are in place to cover all the key standards in this outcome area and staff are able to demonstrate an excellent knowledge and understanding of the implementation of these in their day-to-day practice. The facilities and arrangements for showering and bathing ensure the young people have their privacy respected. Staff are aware of the needs and abilities of the children in their care and encourage independence at all levels. Confidential information is shared and stored appropriately. Families are regular visitors to the home and rooms are made available for young people to have their visits in private.

Good systems are in place for recording, resolving and providing outcomes of complaints. The Registered Manager continues to work in partnership with families and other professionals to discuss and resolve any concerns they have before they reach the complaint stage. All complaints are dealt with through the provider's complaints department. In addition young people benefit from regular involvement from an independent advocacy service who have a knowledge and understanding of working with young people with disabilities. Young people with communication difficulties have alternative communication systems available. This ensures they are able to make a complaint or share their feelings. The Registered Manager and deputy are committed to improving the service delivered to young people and after attending training in complaints for people with disabilities were concerned that all the information provided at the training was not accessible for young people with communication difficulties. Staff translated all the literature into alternative communication systems for the use of the young people at the home and the

training department.

The procedures in the home fully comply with the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures and good links are established with this service. Child protection remains a high priority and robust systems are in place to record and report any concerns. Staff at all levels are confident that they are fully aware of the guidance to follow if any concerns arise. All staff working at the home including, the cook, administration and domestic staff receive the appropriate child protection training. Refresher courses are ongoing.

Young people are protected because staff closely supervise them both inside and outside the building and this significantly reduces the risks of incidents of bullying. Staff know the young people well and are able to identify concerns through their individual moods and behaviours and are proactive in following up any areas of concern. Systems are in place and guidance is provided for staff should an incident of bullying occur.

There are excellent systems in place to ensure that behaviour is well managed. Behaviour management plans and risk assessment are completed for each young person and provide advice to staff on how to understand and deal with specific behaviours; this enables staff to offer a consistent approach to individuals. Staff meetings take place regularly and behaviour is discussed giving staff the opportunity to share good practice and ideas to improve the care provided to young people. The relationship staff have with the young people and staff's understanding of their individual moods and behaviours remains a strength of the home. Staff promote positive behaviour by praise and reward and sanctions are rarely used. Physical intervention, when used, is only to prevent young people harming themselves or others. Staff continue to have a good understanding of the effect of a restraint on a young person and the frustration and emotions they experience. They dedicate time to the young person following a restraint. Excellent individual communication documents are completed with young people, offering them support and an opportunity to communicate their feelings. Staff receive training in diffusion and restraint and benefit from their own qualified trainer who ensures that staff knowledge is regularly updated. Appropriate records are maintained in the event of a sanction or restraint taking place.

The high level of supervision reduces the risk of young people going absent from the home without authority. Staff are very aware of the process to follow if a young person went missing or failed to return to the unit

The records kept in the home show that robust procedures are in place to protect young people from physical harm arising from their environment. All the fire systems are tested regularly. Staff and young people undertake fire drills. All young people have an individual evacuation plan. The Registered Manager and deputy have recently attended contingency planning training. Although the provider has a plan for major emergencies the Registered Manager is currently completing the homes own contingency plan to ensure that the young people would be provided with appropriate facilities to meet their needs if it was necessary to vacate the building in

an emergency. Relevant certificates show that regular servicing and maintenance are completed on all equipment.

A sample of recruitment files for staff employed in the provider's five children's homes were examined at the Human Resources department during July 2010. Records are well maintained of staff Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks and a system to ensure that they are renewed every three years is in place. All files contain application forms, a full work history, CRB checks and reference requests. Action has been taken to address any shortfalls. All visitors to the home are signed in and where appropriate identification is requested. The provider ensures that the recruitment policy is effectively implemented and this protects and safeguards young people.

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.