

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Liz Daniels
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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

This setting is owned by a charity and is registered to accommodate 50 children and young people, male and female, with physical disabilities, complex health needs and learning disabilities. On site is a non-maintained special school catering for children and young people aged three to 19 with complex special needs. The accommodation is provided in individual bungalows which are staffed by experienced and qualified care staff. Each provides single or double bedrooms, a lounge area, a kitchen and a dining area. There is an overhead hoist system to enable each young person to access all areas. A team of nurses, funded by the Primary Care Trust are also based on site and provide medical support. There is easy access for wheelchairs around the site, including the living areas.

Five young people are accommodated for 52 weeks in one of the bungalows, all of whom were present during the inspection. Several young people who are older are also permanently accommodated in the other bungalows.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

This unannounced interim inspection was the second visit to the setting for the year April 2010 to March 2011. The service was judged as good at the key inspection, undertaken in September 2010. The aim of this inspection was to inspect those standards that ensure young people are safe and to inspect the progress made in implementing the action previously made. The visit was facilitated by the principal of the school and provided the opportunity to meet with young people and staff.

Good arrangements continue, to keep young people safe. Staff recognise that many are vulnerable and they are diligent in ensuring they are protected. Meeting each young person's needs is an integral part of their care and staff are keen to enable them to achieve their full potential.

However, some of the newer staff have not yet undertaken a fire drill to ensure they are familiar with the home's fire plan. In addition, records available do not confirm that the setting's electrical installations and equipment are checked at least every three years, to ensure they are safe for young people.

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last inspection, staff have met the action issued. There are very good measures in place to manage the young people's behaviour which are resulting in minimal physical interventions or sanctions being needed. In the event, records of

these are now improving. There is also clearer differentiation between a sanction and a physical intervention that restricts a young person's liberty. In addition, staff training in the management of behaviour is developing. These good measures are providing a safer framework for supporting young people.

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.

Staff continue to respect young people's privacy and ensure information about them is handled sensitively. They assist young people with their personal care, while ensuring that their privacy, dignity and safety are promoted and protected. Good-sized bedrooms and bathrooms provide suitable space for personal care and a mixed staff team enables sensitivity to gender issues. Staff follow clear guidelines to ensure a correct balance between allowing a young person to spend some time alone while making sure they are safe if unsupervised.

Staff are alert to signs that young people may be unhappy and explore their anxiety through a variety of communication methods. Most have a family member who can advocate for them; they can also spend time with the representative from an independent advocacy service who visits the setting weekly. Records confirm that staff capture anxieties the young people experience and then follow them up with them. Similarly, staff communicate well with parents and seek their views to ensure the setting continues to meet their needs. One complaint received by the setting since the last inspection has been managed well.

Procedures at the setting are aimed at promoting young people's welfare and protecting them from abuse. Staff are trained in child protection and know the action to take in response to any concerns; they keep good records of any marks or bruises and discuss any queries with the relevant professionals. A team of trained, senior staff are always available to respond to any concerns staff raise and ensure they are referred on when necessary. Staff can access a copy of the local safeguarding procedures for reference, in the event of any safeguarding allegations. Robust recruitment procedures require staff to have an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau disclosure before employment, to protect young people.

The cognitive disabilities of most of the young people accommodated mean that they do not fully understand bullying as a concept. Staff who work with them are aware of the group dynamics, as well as which triggers can lead to behaviour that causes distress or conflict between young people. Good staffing ratios enable close supervision whereby staff can support young people and reduce any tensions. Similarly, staff guide young people as to what is socially acceptable behaviour,

discouraging them when their behaviour is inappropriate. Practice is underpinned by care plans, as well as risk assessments, that outline the expectations and management for each young person. Recent training has been a positive development and staff's wider knowledge is enabling them to be confident and consistent in their response. These positive strategies have resulted in one sanction and one physical intervention being needed, since the last inspection. Both were recorded appropriately in the required bound logs. Staff are also very alert to those young people who are at risk of leaving the unit without permission. Again, excellent supervision has minimised the risk of a young person becoming absent.

Staff undertake risk assessments for the premises and activities young people are involved in. Individual risk assessments are also completed on young people. These balance their behaviour, their susceptibility to falls or accidents and their potential vulnerability, with the risks they present when sleeping, bathing and eating.

All the required checks of fire equipment continue, to protect against the risk of fire and other hazards. However, there is no record to confirm that an electrical installation service has been undertaken since 2006. Staff also undertake regular fire drills although, as the time is not recorded, it is unclear whether they are throughout the 24-hour period. In addition, some staff who started working at the setting in September 2010 have not yet been included in a drill. This could present the risk that young people may not be fully supported in the event of a fire.

Visitors and contractors are well vetted; they are required to show evidence of identification, to sign the visitors' book and are supervised while on site. Equally, robust recruitment processes protect young people; all the necessary information is received prior to employment and records reviewed confirm that all the required checks are made.

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
26	ensure by means of fire drills (including fire drills held at night) and practices at suitable intervals that the persons working in the home are aware of the procedure to be followed in case of fire. (Regulation 32(1)(e))	08/04/2011

Recommendations

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

- ensure electrical installations and equipment are checked at least every three years. (NMS 26.4)