

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	8 March 2010
Inspector	Christina Maddison
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	29 July 2009
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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 outcome for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and relevant National Minimum Standards for the establishment.

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 service is a purpose built respite and residential service, situated in a rural area. It is registered to provide eight respite and two long stay residential beds for children and young people aged between five and 18 years old who have learning disabilities and may also have physical disabilities.

The accommodation is provided on two floors and a passenger lift is provided for the children to reach the first floor. All bedrooms are single rooms, and there is plenty of communal space provided. The service benefits from being situated next to a school that many of the children who use the service attend. The children have the use of the school playing fields and hydro pool. All children are staffed on a one to one basis and are encouraged to access a range of fulfilling activities.

One area of the service is for two long stay residential places, and is called Brook House. These bedrooms are sited in a separate area of the building and have their own facilities.

Summary

The purpose of this unannounced key inspection was to check that the national minimum standards have been met.

There is a continual approach in the home to drive forward improvement and this is apparent in the appointment of a new deputy manager, the completion of building works, redecoration of the home, and the continuous updating of existing systems.

The children and young people who stay in respite care and the separate permanent residential care area are cared for by a competent and committed staff team who clearly enjoy working with the young people they look after.

There are four recommendations made as a result of this inspection.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

There were no actions or recommendations made at the previous inspection.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

There are good arrangements in place to promote the health of the young people who permanently live at the home, and those coming in for short respite visits.

Children and young people are encouraged to eat healthy, home cooked meals. Staff promote healthy eating and also support the children and young people to chose what they would like to eat. Staff have a good variety of communication methods such as pictures and symbols that the children and young people use to see what choice is on the menu and to indicate their likes and dislikes.

Parents retain the overall responsibility for their child's health care when they come for respite care. Staff work well in partnership with families using the service to ensure that children and young people receive good continuous health care. All staff are trained in first aid to provide help if there are any accidents. Staff have also received training in key healthcare areas such as diabetes management and epilepsy care.

There are suitable medication procedures to help ensure the children and young people get their medication at the right times. These procedures are monitored by the manager. Medication is suitably and safely stored in the home.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Staff respect the privacy and dignity of the children and young people when undertaking intimate personal care tasks. Confidential files are safely locked away to ensure the security of the children and young people's personal information.

Safeguarding procedures in place are robust, and staff are confident about what action to take should a safeguarding issue arise. Staff have undertaken safeguarding training, and are knowledgeable about their responsibilities and the procedures in place at the home.

There is a complaints procedure in place, and complaints are taken seriously and acted upon in a timely manner. However, the complaints procedure is not currently available in a format that is accessible to the children and young people staying at the home.

Unauthorised absences are extremely rare because of the high levels of individualised support given to the children and young people, and their general lack of independent mobility. However, there is a procedure in place for staff to follow should this occur, and staff are familiar with this procedure.

Any undesirable behaviour displayed by the children and young people is sensitively managed by the staff, and positive behaviour is encouraged and modelled by staff. Physical interventions are rare and are only used when there are safety issues. Staff use distraction techniques in the first instance. Staff are appropriately trained in safe holding techniques.

Staff are trained in fire prevention and evacuation procedures to ensure the safety of the children and young people in the event of a fire. Night time practices take place, and a member of staff is tasked with fire safety on each shift. Health and safety is a priority in the home for the manager and staff, and records show that disability equipment, electrical appliances and gas appliances are regularly serviced and undergo safety checks.

There are robust risk assessments in place in the home for individual children and young people, the building and for activities and outings outside of the home, with clear guidance for staff on how to minimise any risks and what action to take.

Procedures are in place to ensure that only suitable persons are employed. Appropriate checks and interviews are undertaken with prospective staff. The visitors' book demonstrates safe practice and only authorised visits.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

There is an excellent level of individual support for children and young people and interests and hobbies are known and encouraged.

Each child and young person staying at the home has a detailed placement plan clearly identifying how individual needs will be supported. Staff provide very good care and are knowledgeable about each child's individual needs and how best to support them. There is very good practice with regard to helping children and young people communicate and make choices as part of their care and support. Staff understand how important communication is with the young people in their care.

Education is promoted, and the staff have good links with the variety of schools that they have contact with.

Staff actively encourage the children and young people to get involved in a good range of leisure activities indoors and out in the community. There is a very good range of resources in the home, such as a well equipped sensory room, toys, books, games, play room and a recently built play area in the garden. The children and young people can use the facilities in the school opposite including the playground and the hydro pool.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

There is very good assessment of care needs prior to a child or young person using the respite service or moving into Brook House. Individually tailored care plans ensure that each child's care needs are met. These care plans are reviewed on a regular basis. Cultural, religious and racial needs are identified and addressed.

Children and young people are able to participate in their reviews and key workers are able to act as advocates to ensure that their views are represented, and help them to use non verbal forms of communication such as Makaton and pictures and symbols.

The staff help the children and young people maintain contact with their families and their families can come and visit at any time. The staff are currently working on gathering feedback from the children and young people and their families about the quality of the service and areas that could be improved.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Children and young people live in a home that is very clean, well furnished and decorated and warm. Each child and young person has their own room when staying at the Robins, and the full time resident young people are able to personalise their bedrooms and their lounge. Outdoor play equipment is available in the garden. Toilets and adapted bathrooms are available in sufficient numbers and fitted with appropriate locks.

There is a privacy issue in Brook House due to the glass panel in the fire door.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The children and young people are supported by a dedicated and well trained staff team who have a very good rapport with them. The children and young people are supported individually by staff, and at nights there are sufficient numbers of suitably trained staff on duty.

Staff confirm that there is a wide variety of training available to enhance their skills and knowledge. Staff members receive regular supervision that enables them to receive guidance and support to sustain professional development.

An independent person provides monthly monitoring visit reports, where actions that are raised are acted upon.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good, through the contribution that the home makes in meeting the children and young people's diverse individual care needs.

The home has recently produced a very informative children's guide to the home that is in an accessible format. The Statement of Purpose is out of date in some areas.

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 meets the Care Standards Act 2000, The Childrens Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

Standard	Action	Due date
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Recommendations

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

- ensure that the home's complaints procedure is available in a format accessible to the young people (NMS 16).
- ensure that a system is devised for recording and acting upon feedback about the service from children and their families (NMS 8)
- ensure the privacy of young people who live in Brook House (NMS 9)
- ensure that the statement of purpose is updated. (NMS 1)