

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC005041
Inspection date	1 September 2010
Inspector	Jackie Callaghan
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	28 October 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 home is registered to accommodate up to 10 young people with a range of disabilities including physical disability, learning disability and complex needs. The provision may be for either settled care or short-breaks.

The home is set back from the road, within a quiet residential area. The home has a two vehicles which are used to take young people on activities. Good bus routes and rail networks are nearby, giving access to both local and more distant amenities and facilities. The young people are supported to attend appropriate educational facilities and a wide range of leisure opportunities. There were nine young people present through out this inspection. All contributed to this inspection through symbol questionnaires and some young people contributed verbally.

Summary

This was a full unannounced inspection that concentrated on all key national minimum standards in all outcome areas. It also looked at recommendations made at the last inspection.

Positive relationships exist between young people and staff; who are very caring and supportive. Four minor recommendations have been raised in respect of behaviour management recording, fire evacuations, recruitment and selection and young people's communication systems. This is to ensure that physical intervention documentation consistently meets standards; that all young people practice fire evacuations at night; that young people are involved in staff recruitment and selection processes and that young people's communication systems are developed further. However, the individual support that young people receive is wide-ranging. As a result, young people are very happy, settled and extremely well cared for.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the manager was asked to ensure that there is a written record of supervisions and to make improvements to the garden.

There is now a detailed written record of supervisions that meets national minimum standards. The garden has had a make-over and is now a fully inclusive environment that all young people can enjoy.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Young people are creatively encouraged to adopt a healthy lifestyle which includes the successful promotion of a healthy diet. Food is freshly prepared, cooked and enthusiastically enjoyed by the young people. Young people say 'I like the food and the cook'. Young people's health and general well-being is of paramount importance. They all have a detailed health care plan which is reviewed routinely every six months or updated as and when required to show any significant changes that have taken place. This means young people receive care that actively safeguards their welfare.

Young people's medical needs are safely met. The home operates a well-developed and very effective medication policy and implements this in practice. Young people's files contain signed medical consent forms. This ensures that staff have permission to provide first aid and over the counter medicines. Staff are abundantly aware of the comprehensive procedures that they adhere to. Staff's competence to administer medication is continually assessed, ensuring that the excellent practice continues to meet the high standards that promote young people's well-being.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Most young people using the service require high levels of support and supervision when carrying out personal care. Staff provide this in a way that maintains young people's privacy and dignity. Young people are able to raise concerns and complaints with the home through a well known complaints procedure. Young people say 'im not unhappy'.

Young people and staff know that bullying is not tolerated. Young people receive clear messages that bullying behaviour will be challenged and that these issues are discussed openly within the home to ensure everyone is protected.

Young people are encouraged, guided and taught how to understand what conduct is expected of them in various situations. A key strength of this service is the strong positive relationships between staff and young people. Staff are focused on providing behavioural boundaries that are fair, consistent and easily understood. However, staff are not consistently recording the duration of the physical intervention. This has the potential to hinder the monitoring processes.

Young people live in a stable and safe environment where their welfare is paramount. Staff have a good understanding of the needs of young people and how to safeguard them. Young people's safety is further promoted because staff are fully aware of the correct procedures to report any allegations or child protection issues. Young people's files contain information that outlines the action staff are to take in the event of a young person leaving the home without permission.

Young people's health and safety is protected because the home has risk assessments for all aspects of the safety of the premises and grounds, which are implemented successfully in practice. Young people and staff participate in fire evacuation practices. However, the home needs to undertake a night time drill. This is so they expose young people to this scenario. Then as staff they will observe directly how each individual young person will respond, which will enable staff in the future to be fully prepared.

The home operates a robust staff vetting procedure and staff demonstrate proactive awareness of the need to safeguard young people. Currently, no children are involved in this process. Therefore the home is not making the most of assessing and/or observing if young people are happy with the selection of staff that will be working with them.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Young people receive excellent personal support from staff. Young people are supported by a professional and well-informed team who ensure the home maintains a flexible approach to

providing individualised personal care; this is paramount in meeting the needs of young people who have varying degrees of dependency. The home is proficient in meeting young people's individual preferences, for example, one young person comments 'I was given a choice of different places to think about for my holiday, I'm excited'.

The home gives prominence to promoting education in the broadest sense. All young people are actively encouraged to undertake a variety of educational, community and leisure based opportunities. Staff successfully work in partnership with parents, teachers and other professionals. As a result, this actively supports and promotes the principles of social inclusion where young people are successfully encouraged to participate in community activities.

The home's policy and practice successfully supports young people to begin to understand some of the physical and emotional changes they will experience and offers information and strategies to empower them to make informed and responsible decisions.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The need for consistency of care and effective planning is given a high regard by staff and as a result, young people are provided with individualised care that meets their diverse needs. Each young person is allocated a key worker who is responsible for implementing the individual care planning tasks and objectives. The key worker proactively develops relationships with the young person and their families, without creating dependency. Each young person's care plan is reviewed regularly and includes realistic targets for young people to achieve.

Staff understand the importance to young people of maintaining contact with family and friends. They work closely with placing authorities to ensure that young people are able to keep in touch with people outside the home who are important to them, in line with agreed contact plans.

Young people on entering the service have a gradual introduction to the home. This includes tea visits before staying overnight. A young person confirmed this "I visited this home three times before I moved in to make sure I liked it". Staff are aware that moving on and leaving the home can promote extreme anxieties for both the young people and their families. As a result, the home works closely with young people to support them through this fearful change.

Young people are encouraged and supported to play a part in the planning, running and development of the home through the use of observation and discussion. Although staff use a recognised communication system and signing, they are not fully exploiting the use of pictorial questionnaires or prompts to ascertain young people's views.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Young people reside and learn both social and practical skills in an inclusive environment. This not only equips them with the skills needed to help them as an adult, but inspires them to respect and value their own needs and the differing needs of others.

Young people enjoy staying in an accessible and stimulating environment that is welcoming and safe. Resources and space are used effectively to maximise young people's independence

and to provide them with a secure environment in which they build and develop trust. The home is well maintained with good quality décor and furnishings. It is fully adapted to meet the needs of young people with mobility difficulties.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The Statement of Purpose clearly details the aims and objectives of the home. It outlines what young people can expect from the home and is made available to parents and the placing authorities. There is an appropriate young person's guide in symbol form, which young people keep in their bedrooms.

Young people receive a good quality service from an experienced staff team who regularly receive effective training, supervision and annual appraisal. Young people flourish as they are cared for by a committed senior management team who are dedicated to providing care of the highest quality. This view is confirmed by an external professional who reports that the 'staff at the home work really well together'.

The overwhelming majority of staff are qualified to National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in caring for children and young people. This approach to training means that all staff are continually learning about differences and similarities as they work together to ensure young people receive a good service that actively enhances their lives.

The provision of equality and diversity is good. The home celebrates difference through valuing diversity and ensuring that there is equality of opportunity for all their young people. Staff respect each individual young person and responds sensitively in order to fully enhance and promote their dignity.

The home's quality assurance systems are centred on the experience of young people. Monitoring processes by way of Regulation 34 is continuing to be developed and expanded to contain more detail. Young people's needs, development and progress are well recorded to reflect their individuality.

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 Children's 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 duration of the restraint is completed on all occasions (NMS 22.9)
- develop the recruitment process to include young people's observations of the applicant (NMS 27.7)

- ensure a fire drill held at night is undertaken (NMS 26.8)
- develop the systems for ascertaining young people's wishes and feelings, for example, pictorial questionnaires. (NMS 8.8)