

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	2 June 2009
Inspector	Jackie Callaghan
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	10 September 2008
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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 ten young people with a range of disabilities including physical disability, learning disability and complex needs. 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 vehicle which is used to take and collect young people. 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 are seven settled care residents all of who were present at different times throughout the inspection, and 11 young people who receive a short-break service.

Summary

This was an unannounced full inspection undertaken by one Ofsted inspector. The inspection looked at the key Children's Homes National Minimum Standards (NMS) under the Every Child Matters outcome groups. All outcome areas were inspected.

This is a good service. The home works closely with a range of outside medical agencies in order to meet the full range of young people's needs. Staff are supported well by the registered manager who has a strong commitment and focus on improvement. Care plans contain good behavioural guidelines and clearly outline management strategies. However, they do not always contain key workers signatures to demonstrate ownership. The homes Statement of Purpose provides appropriate information but does not currently contain all of the details as required by Schedule 1. The home is well-maintained internally and fully equipped to meet the individual needs of the young people that it caters for. However, the garden is not fully accessible for all young people who live at the home.

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 Registered Manager was asked to ensure that all medication is securely locked away. That staff receive child protection training and following a regulation 33 visits a written report is received within two weeks of the visit.

All medication that is now securely locked away at all times and staff have received child protection training. As a result, young people's welfare is promoted. Written Regulation 33 reports are now received within the timescales identified by regulation. This provides good additional safeguarding mechanisms for young people by looking at staff and management practices.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Young people are receiving a wide range of advice and guidance from staff and external professionals about what matters in regard to their health. Young people are actively involved in compiling the menu each week with staff, and are well supported to become involved in

cooking. Food is used well to help broaden young people's knowledge and awareness of other cultures. For example, Saturdays is take-away night, where young people choose what food they would like to try and then they go with staff individually to collect.

Young people get excellent health care from staff with significant skills and experience. They enjoy good physical, emotional, and mental health. The home advocates for and supports young people and their parents to secure health input to meet individual needs. New health plans have been introduced to run alongside the current diligent documentation which supports the comprehensive management of medication and health care.

Young people's welfare is safeguarded by the home's policies and procedures for administering medicine and treatment. This is safely managed by skilled staff so that young people get the medication and treatment they need. There is superb access to health care professionals such as occupational health and community specialist support teams who work closely with staff to identify and successfully meet young people's complex individual needs.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Staff take beneficial steps to safeguard young people's welfare. This extends to recognising and valuing the rights of children to have their privacy respected. No young people have left the home without permission. However, there are good procedures in place to safeguard young people if this was to ever occur. Staff fully understand safeguarding processes and their responsibility for reporting protection concerns. There is an open approach to complaints and adults encourage young people to use democratic processes to make their views known and to understand the views of others.

Staff work to protect young people from the impact of bullying, anti-social or intimidating behaviour and young people are clear about their right to feel safe from this. The emphasis on reinforcing positive messages to young people about their behaviour is captured through a positive rewards system operated by the home. Recordings of care and control are detailed. For example, reference is made on how de-escalation or distraction techniques are used before physical intervention is considered necessary. As a result, young people's welfare is safeguarded by staff group who actively question if there is a 'better way'.

There is good proactive health and safety in operation at the home. Young people are encouraged to experience life enhancing activities and new opportunities. Staff minimise unnecessary risks so that enjoyment and personal development can be maximised. For example, two of the young people have requested to go camping in tents. Staff assessed all the risks and have begun to safely practice this exercise and prepare the young people by camping in the back garden.

Young people are safeguarded by good selection and vetting of all adults who may have contact with children. Positive steps are taken to keep young people, staff and visitors safe from fire and other hazards in the home. For example, records indicate that regular drills are undertaken and young people are given the opportunity to participate. As a result, young people know how to evacuate the premises safely.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people benefit from good individual support. Key to this is a committed residential staff group who have excellent skills in day-to-day communication and give young people additional tools to enable better participation and inclusion. Young people are seen as individuals. Staff talk to parents and/or carers to make sure that they support young people's racial, cultural or religious needs in the right way and that no one experiences discrimination.

The home actively promotes and supports the educational achievements of children, with aspects of encouraging school attendance and having strong community links well established. This care and support to children's learning and social wellbeing helps them achieve their personal aspirations and experience the diversity of their community. Staff have a real sense of encouraging young people to get the most out of life and make sure that leisure is not just fun, but adds to a rounded and holistic experience of care and education in the wider sense.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Each young person has a placement plan that is well written to provide an outline on how needs are to be met. However, these are not always signed by the key worker after they have been reviewed to demonstrate ownership. The plans are reviewed regularly with minutes of these meetings held in young people's files.

Young people are able to move into and leave the home in a planned and sensitive manner. Significant time is taken to build relationships and share information with families, social workers and external agencies to promote individual care programmes. This good working partnership promotes young people's welfare as they get consistent messages from both their family home and school. Staff are proactive in ensuring that young people maintain contact with parents and significant others.

Positively, the level of consultation with young people is good. The home is proactive in ensuring that all young people are aware that they can speak to independent agencies and professionals. Staff demonstrate a clear commitment to promoting consultation and successfully involve young people in the running of the home. Staff receive regular training in augmentative communication to equip them with the necessary skills to enable them to adequately communicate with all their young people.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Young people develop good independence skills to help them in their future. They learn how to act in safe, healthy and hygienic ways. Learning how to relate socially to others around them and how to cooperate with their peers and adults is given a high priority by staff. Consequently, young people's self-confidence and self-esteem increase massively.

The home provides a comfortable environment for young people which assists them with domestic style living. Young people have their own bedroom which is personalised to suit their needs and interests. Space and resources are well-organised to provide young people with the opportunity to access appropriate indoor activities. Although the garden is an inviting space, it is not a fully inclusive environment for young people. The garden begins with a paved patio which young people who are in wheelchairs would be able to access independently. However, the grassed area and the path that leads down the garden are on different levels. Staff have

to physically push young people in their wheelchairs onto the grass, taking away their independence. Equally, given the different levels it has the potential to be unsafe as the wheelchair might overturn.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The home has a written statement of purpose and young people's guide that provides information about what it sets out to achieve. However, the statement of purpose does not currently contain all the information as detailed by Schedule one. The staffing levels provide young people with access to a diverse staff team both in terms of their gender and experience.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Policy, procedure and good practice helps young people to know that their individual needs on the basis of race, ethnicity, disability, sexuality, gender, age and religion are valued; and the service is able to meet their diverse needs in everyday life in the home.

Young people are looked after by staff that understand their needs and are able to meet them consistently. Affection is clear, but staff are also able to give young people good direction when it is needed. Young people do have plenty of adults who actively engage and play with them. Respect and friendship is evident and staff act as good role models.

Staff clearly like being at the home and see the value of the work they do, some have worked there for many years, whilst others have begun recently. Staff have good skills and experience and are supported by good induction and training. Around 68% have achieved the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Level 3 in working with children and young people. However, more are enrolled to complete this study and the home continues to show a good working commitment in achieving the 80% target. Staff are themselves well supported and guided in safeguarding and promoting the young people's welfare through regular professional supervision.

Young people and staff enjoy the stability of an efficiently run home. The leadership and management is responsive and effective and is supported by good monitoring visits to further drive improvement and development.

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 care planning contains the key workers signature to demonstrate that the plan is being actively monitored (NMS 2.2)

- improve the garden area to create a fully inclusive environment that all young people can safely access (NMS 24.3)
- ensure the Statement of Purpose contains all of the required information stipulated by Schedule 1 (NMS 1.2).