

Inspection report for children's home

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Date of last inspection	19 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

This home is registered to provide respite care for up to nine children and young people under the age of 18 years who have a learning disability and/or a physical disability. On occasion, the home supports young people beyond the age of 18 until appropriate alternative services are available.

The home is owned by a Jewish charitable organisation. Jewish religious laws and culture are observed. The home cares for children from different cultural backgrounds and staff are able to meet their individual religious and cultural needs as long as they do not conflict with the overall ethos of the home.

One of the stated aims of the home is to work in partnership with parents and the wider professional network to develop a coordinated and accessible support network for children and families. The home has one emergency bed available for children who meet the admission criteria.

Summary

At this unannounced key inspection all of the key national minimum standards were assessed. The rating in four areas are judged as good the rating for being healthy is judged as outstanding.

The home's Statement of Purpose has been reviewed it is available to families and relevant professionals. The children's guide is available on disc, in simple English and in sign. Policies and procedures cover all required areas.

Children receive safe and supportive services provided by experienced and trained staff who know and understand them. There are robust procedures in place for administering medication. Health plans give a detailed account of how individual health needs will be met. All staff are either trained to the level of National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) at level 3 in caring for children and young people or they are undertaking the course at present.

The home provides a pleasant environment equipped to meet the needs of children and young people. Photographs, art work and paintings showing positive images of people from different backgrounds are displayed throughout the home.

Three recommendations have been made at this inspection. These relate to children and young people's risk assessments, statutory childcare reviews and supervision of staff. One action regarding staff appraisals is repeated because the relevant information was not available at the time of inspection.

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 three actions were made. These relate to the review of children and young people's risk assessments, the replacement of blinds in the bedrooms and the annual appraisal for all staff.

It was not possible to check staff appraisals as the manager was on leave and appraisal documents were not available. This action is repeated.

Children and young people's risk assessments have been updated and provide good information to enable staff to meet their needs. All children and young people's rooms have new curtains to replace the broken blinds. This ensures complete privacy when children or young people are in their room.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

The home is providing a range of services that fully meet the health needs of the children and young people. Food is provided according to individual care plans. Health needs related to diet and the likes and dislikes of each child or young person are reviewed for each visit. They are also taken into consideration when planning the weekly menu.

Children and young people's health needs are fully understood by staff and appropriate arrangements are in place to meet them. Files contain clear health plans developed by the home in partnership with families. Details of health professionals involved are fully recorded. Where appropriate staff are able to discuss issues with health professionals such as the Children and Adolescent Mental Health service, Physiotherapists, Occupational Therapists and the child or young person's doctor. All staff working in the home have a certificate in first aid which is updated as required.

The home ensures children and young people's health needs are met. Their welfare is safeguarded by the home's policy and procedure for administering medication and providing treatment. The policy, procedure and practice guide addresses the use of prescribed and non-prescribed medication. Staff are required to read the policy and sign to confirm they have read it. Medication can only be administered by those trained to do so. Training is incorporated into the induction process for each member of staff. It includes all aspects of the administration, safekeeping and disposal of medication. Refresher courses are held least annually. The home's records confirm that medication is administered, stored and disposed of safely.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Staff show respect for the privacy of children and young people and for maintaining an appropriate level of confidentiality.

Complaints and concerns raised about the home are taken seriously. There is a complaints procedures in place which is available in the welcome pack given to all families. In addition there is a simplified version in symbols and simple English for the children and young people. This is incorporated into the children's guide. One notification has been forwarded to Ofsted and this originated from a parent complaint. It wasn't possible to view the complaints book as the manager is on leave and the complaints monitoring book is kept in her locked office. The complaints book was seen on the last inspection and demonstrated on this occasion that complaints are responded to quickly. They are investigated with actions and outcomes recorded.

All staff attend mandatory safe-care and child protection training with refresher courses taking place annually. They respond in a professional way to any issues that may be raised about the

safety of children and young people. The home's safeguarding policy and procedure complies with the guidelines of the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

The policy related to bullying ensures that children and young people are safe in the home. All of the children and young people receive one-to-one care. The high staffing levels help to provide safe care and ensure that bullying is not an issue. Unacceptable behaviour is discussed between staff, children and young people and steps are taken to minimize any risk identified. Behaviour management risk assessments are kept on individual files.

There is a high level of security in place and this reduces the possibility of very vulnerable children or young people going missing. All doors to the outside are keypad protected and high fencing around the garden prevents children or young people leaving the premises without supervision. The home has a robust policy in place for use if a child or young person is absent without authority. Staff on duty understand the policy and would take action if a child or young person were missing. No children or young people have been reported missing in the last six months.

Staff encourage children and young people to understand what behaviours are acceptable and those that are not. All children and young people are viewed positively in the home. Staff are knowledgeable about individual care needs they are providing appropriate support in a calm and caring environment. Children and young people are able to go to their room if they need private time or time out to calm down. The allocated staff member waits quietly outside of the room until they are needed. This ensures children or young people aren't left alone and remain safe at all times. The home does not impose sanctions or restraints and none are recorded. However staff are trained to use restraint if required.

There are records of risk assessments for all aspects of safety of the home and grounds. They include fire risk and risks related to children or young people's behaviours and activities. Children and young people's risk assessments have been updated and reflect individual needs. Staff on duty during the inspection were aware of the needs of the children and young people using the service that evening. However when children and young people's risk assessments have been updated not all staff have followed the home's procedure by signing to say they have read them. This implies that not everyone is fully aware of the risks involved and this may compromise safety. Fire drills are held at least four times a year. They are held when new staff and children or young people are inducted and at times when children and young people are in the home. This helps everyone to understand the procedures to follow in case of fire. Fire safety equipment is checked regularly and detailed records are kept.

The vetting of staff was not seen on this occasion. At the last visit staff files were in good order with appropriate references and checks recorded. All visitors to the home are monitored while on the premises and are required to sign in and out.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children and young people's files indicate who the child or young person's key worker is and how services will be provided. Each child or young person is offered choices with regard to outings, activities and food preferences. Staff are open to addressing a range of possible needs, for example, those related to disability, race, culture, sexuality, religion and language. Key workers are very involved with the children and young people, maintaining regular contact with

families. Key workers support and encourage children and young people to respect others and explore and enjoy their own cultural backgrounds.

The home's role in the education of children and young people is limited. Staff keep in contact with school through parents and through home school books. Children and young people are involved in activities and outings that broaden their learning experiences. They have the opportunity to develop their life skills through cookery sessions and helping in the kitchen where this is safe and appropriate. They also learn through creative play such as art and craft work and sharing games. The art and craft work produced is displayed throughout the home.

Children and young people are able to pursue their own interests and enjoy a range of interesting opportunities. The home has an activities coordinator who is responsible for developing new and interesting activities and outings in discussion with children and young people. Where appropriate individual hobbies and interests are incorporated into daily plans. For example one young person likes a particular video this is made available to him on arrival to help him relax after a long day at school. Children and young people have access to a range of activities organised and chosen with them. These include trips to the local park, leisure centre, cinema, bowling, swimming and trips to the sea side.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children and young people have a placement plan on file. Placement plans are clearly written and easily understandable. They explain how individual needs will be addressed. The specific roles and responsibilities of key people involved are recorded. Placement plans are developed with children and young people's families. They are based on a thorough needs-led assessment prior to and at the beginning of each placement.

The home holds regular in house reviews and plans for each child or young person are updated regularly. Statutory reviews are not always regular and files do not all include details of the dates for these reviews to take place. There is no indication that the responsible person has requested a review date from placing authorities. This implies that not all local authorities are aware of the services being provided.

Families are welcome to visit the home at any reasonable time. They are able to contact by phone and email if they wish. Children and young people are also encouraged to contact their families if they are staying at the home for any length of time. Where required specific visiting arrangements are recorded in the child or young person's plan.

Consulting children and young people is an important part of the care practice in this home. Consultation is carried out in ways that meet their individual needs. For example some children or young people are able to express their views orally. Others use sign and some use facial expression or movement. Children and young people's views are recorded on their files. Prior to and following each stay, key workers contact families to confirm the plans in place and receive feedback about the services provided.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

The home is located close to community facilities. There are train and bus routes nearby. The size of the home and the arrangement of rooms meets the needs of the children and young people using the service. The home is adapted and contains equipment to assist children and young people in their every day lives.

The accommodation is homely. It is decorated, maintained and furnished to a good standard. The bedroom blinds have been replaced with good quality curtains to increase privacy for the children and young people. The bathrooms are in a good state of repair and a new elevated bath with a Jacuzzi has recently been installed.

The lounge and playroom ceilings and the lounge curtains need attention. The manager is aware of this and although no dates for this work have been identified, there is a commitment to ensure that the work is completed in the near future. In spite of this the home remains bright and comfortable with photographs, children's art work and culturally appropriate images displayed throughout the home.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The Statement of Purpose is clear in setting out what services will be provided. The children's guide is available in sign and in simple English. It is also available on disc. The varying formats help to make the information available and understandable to the majority of the children and young people using the service. Copies of all relevant policies and procedures are available. These are read and acknowledged by all staff during the induction process.

Children and young people's welfare is safeguarded by the staff team who are competent with a wide range of knowledge and experience between them. The skills within the team are well matched to the children and young people using the service. Staff are aware of their own support networks and each has a named senior responsible for their supervision and appraisal. Staff said that supervision is not always regular because of the school holidays and situations that arise daily and have to be dealt with. For example, if there is a staff shortage the needs of the children would take priority. Staff confirmed that they are well supported by the home's open door policy and regular team meetings. There is an on-call system in place and there is always a senior available to discuss issues with as they arise. Staff vacancies and sickness are covered by bank staff who know the children and young people well and are able to provide consistency of care. Although supervision is not always completely up to date, the regular support available to all staff each day ensures safe care is provided. Information regarding staff appraisals was not available during the inspection.

The manager has the appropriate qualifications, skills and experience to manage the service. The training programme includes an induction and a six month probationary period for all staff. During the induction period all staff are trained to administer medication and first aid. At least 80% of staff have an National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in caring for children and young people. Those who don't are committed to enrolling on a course as soon as they are confirmed in post.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. There is a balanced mix of male and female staff who represent the different backgrounds of the children and young people. All children and young people have one-to-one support at all times. This ensures that their needs are met and their safety is not compromised.

Monthly monitoring visits are carried out regularly and form part of the quality assurance system. Where possible children and young people are spoken to and observed during these visits. Staff on duty are asked for their views about the services provided. Action points identified during visits are discussed with the manager and reviewed at each visit. The overall focus of the monitoring system is to ensure children and young people enjoy a positive experience at the home and that their needs are fully met.

Individual case files are confidentially stored. They are arranged in a manner that makes them readily useable by staff and accessible to children and young people should they request to see them.

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
28	ensure that staff appraisals are reviewed in reasonable timescales. (Regulation 27(4)(a))	30 June 2010

Recommendations

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

- ensure that staff sign children's risk assessments when they have read them in accordance with the home's policies and procedures. (NMS 26.2)
- ensure that the responsible person informs placing authorities when a statutory child care review is overdue or an emergency review is needed. (NMS 3.3)
- ensure that staff supervision to be provided regularly at least twelve times each year. (NMS 28.2)