

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Seka Graovac
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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 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 for children and families. The home has one emergency bed available for children who meet the admission criteria.

The home currently provides a short breaks respite service to over 40 children and families from 14 local authorities. At the time of this inspection, two children stayed overnight at the home. However, children were at school while the inspector was on the premises. Children's and parents' views about the quality of the service were gathered through a written survey that was conducted by Ofsted.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

This was an unannounced interim inspection. The visit had two main aims: to follow up on the progress the home has made in addressing the action and the recommendations given at the previous inspection and to assess the quality of the safeguarding in the home.

The main outcomes of the inspection is that the home provides a safe environment for children and continues to improve. The home works in effective partnership with parents, social workers, teachers and other professionals to promote children's welfare and wellbeing effectively. The home provides a good quality, valuable service to the Jewish community in particular and to the wider community.

Improvements since the last inspection

The last inspection was conducted in May 2010. To aid improvement of the service, one action and three recommendations were made. The home has taken appropriate steps to address all identified weaknesses effectively.

The action and one recommendation related to staff support in terms of the frequency of staff appraisals and formal supervision sessions. The home has developed a logging system for planning and monitoring of staff appraisals and monthly supervision sessions. The system ensures that all staff receive adequate formal supervision and have their performance appraised on at least annual basis. The staff are happy with the arrangements made. They expressed feeling appropriately supported by the management to do their job well.

Ofsted also recommended that staff sign children's risk assessments when they have read them in accordance with the home's policies and procedures. The home has developed a system to ensure that this happens. The staff signatures on the children's files demonstrate that they know what actions to take to keep the children safe.

Ofsted also recommended that the responsible person informs placing authorities when a statutory child care review is overdue or an emergency review is needed. The home has developed a logging system to help planning and monitoring of the frequency of statutory reviews. The management works in effective partnership with parents, social services, teachers and other professionals to ensure that children's progress is regularly reviewed. The home contributes effectively to the statutory reviews of the arrangements for the support given to children and their families.

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.

The home provides a physically and emotionally safe environment to children.

The health and safety arrangements are good. Risk assessments are reviewed regularly and updated. The identified safety controls that aim to minimise potential hazards are in place. Regular checks ensure that the premises remain secure and safe at all times. Regular fire drills contribute to the staff awareness of fire safety and ensure that they know how to protect children and themselves in case of fire.

Staff have access to a number of policies and procedures that clearly promote good safeguarding practice. They include written guidance on dealing with complaints, child protection concerns and incidents of bullying, challenging behaviour and children missing from the placement. Staff receive regular training on a range of topics that enables them to implement good practice when caring for children.

Due to the exceptionally high vulnerability of children who use the service, all

bedrooms are fitted with sound monitors. The system is used appropriately for the purpose of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who stay overnight. The home's Statement of Purpose makes this very clear. However, no records are available to demonstrate that the placing authorities consented to the use of the surveillance and it has not been provided for in the children's placement plans.

The home's staff know how to keep children safe and how to consistently promote their welfare. The comprehensive records kept on children's files contain information on the individual child's behaviour, their safety awareness and risk assessments. The risk assessments relate to the children's engagement in various activities, such as the activities of daily living and recreational activities. The suitably high staffing levels and the staff vigilance guard against bullying and protect children effectively. There have been no incidents of children missing from the placement. The home is effective in providing children with positive and new experiences while ensuring they remain safe. The home's logs of significant events show no use of sanctions or physical interventions by the home's staff, since 2004. The concern recently expressed by a parent about their child has been swiftly resolved to the parent's satisfaction in line with the home's complaints procedure.

As the manager was on leave, no access to staff recruitment records was available. The home demonstrated at the previous inspections that all staff are rigorously vetted before being given opportunities to work with children.

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 good.

The home provides clear, comprehensive and accurate information about the service offered, to all interested parties. Parents are given a pack that contains several documents including a Statement of Purpose , brochure, introduction and information

guide for parents/ guardians, care plan form, agreement form, complaints procedure and children's pictorial guide. The children's guide has been specifically designed to ensure that it is suitable for children with disabilities. There is also a DVD version of the guide to the service.

The service is efficiently managed in line with its Statement of Purpose. The staff roles and responsibilities are clear. The registered manager is supported by two deputies and other senior staff. Appropriate cover arrangements are in place when the manager is on leave or on other occasions when it is needed. The staffing levels are maintained suitably high in line with the very high needs of children who use the service. The home provides usually one-to-one and sometimes, two-to-one support. Children benefit from being looked after by qualified and well trained staff, who themselves receive good support from the management. The team is stable and committed to providing a continuity and consistency of the service. The staff are dedicated to provide a high quality service. The communication within the home and with the external parties is good.

The care of children is monitored and discussed at daily handovers and at the staff meetings. The handover meetings on Fridays are particularly comprehensive, as the service is the busiest at weekends. However, there have been only four formal team meetings in the last 12 months. The infrequent meetings limit the opportunities for the staff and management to review the home's practices.

The children's records are comprehensively kept and reflect their individual needs and progress well. However, the arrangements for keeping some of these records compromise their confidentiality. For example, some children's records were found in an open filing cabinet in the main communal area.

The quality of the service is monitored by lay visitors and an independent visitor on behalf of the organisation. Copies of the monthly monitoring reports are given to the home and sent to Ofsted. However, this excluded the visits for September 2010 and October 2010. The home is committed to improvement and any issues raised in the reports are appropriately followed up.

The children and parents who responded to Ofsted survey expressed a very high satisfaction with the service. It was evident that they very much valued the difference that the service brought to their lives.

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
9	ensure that all conditions are met for the use of surveillance for each child. This includes the evidence that the child's placing authority consents to the use of the measure in question and that it is provided for in the child's placement plan (Regulation 22)	25/02/2011
32	ensure that the monitoring visits by or on behalf of the registered provider take place at least once a month and that a copy of each report is supplied to Ofsted and to the home. (Regulation 33)	31/12/2010
35	ensure that children's case records are kept securely. (Regulation 28.(3)(a))	24/12/2010

Recommendations

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

- increase the frequency of formal and recorded staff meetings. (NMS 28.10)