

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Keith Riley
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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

The children's home is registered to offer placements to children with learning disabilities, physical disabilities and children with sensory impairment, on a respite basis. The home is owned and run by a charitable organisation. The home is a respite facility and accommodates children of both genders up to 18 years of age. It is currently offering a respite service to over 90 children and young people.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

This unannounced interim inspection took place on a weekday. The purpose was to examine any actions or recommendations from the previous inspection and all key outcomes under staying safe.

Recent funding has enabled the home to purchase new indoor and outdoor play equipment which is to a high standard. There has been an extension to the building to accommodate offices and the fire alarm system has been renewed throughout the building. Regular trial evacuations take place where each child is monitored for their response. However individual personal evacuations plans are not written down. An excellent standard of care is provided in a well maintained environment where children are kept safe.

Staff are very well motivated and have a detailed individualised approach to each child underpinned by training and management support.

A positive and proactive approach to behaviour management minimises the need for staff intervention and any issues that may cause distress or upset. The practice of restricting access to bedrooms when children are engaged in communal areas is not made clear in the home's statement of purpose.

Comprehensive risk assessments keep children safe while doing activities they enjoy. However these need to include the occasions when bedroom windows are locked for the children's own safety.

Improvements since the last inspection

There were two actions and five recommendations from the previous inspection.

Records examined at inspection demonstrated that the fire alarm system is now being tested regularly to keep children safe and that placement plans are kept under review.

There was one recommendation under the outcome of staying safe: a log recording the incidences of time out has been introduced and is kept up to date. This is checked and signed by the manager as to its proportionality and effectiveness.

The remaining four recommendations were to do with organisation. These have been addressed in the interests of children. Information about the home is now available in a variety of formats for children such as a welcome book in picture form. Staff are receiving regular supervision and there are monthly meetings to discuss all aspects of the home. There is an excellent system in place to monitor matters set out in Schedule 6.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is not judged.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Privacy is respected and promoted by the staff team and confidential information is stored securely. Detailed individual protocols ensure that when young people are assisted by staff members with personal care that this is carried out in a sensitive manner which promotes their safety while preserving their dignity.

The learning difficulties of some of the young people means that they might not understand what constitutes a formal complaint. The members of staff use their knowledge of the young people, underpinned by detailed care plans and information from relevant others, such as parents and professionals, to ensure that they understand how the young people make their feelings known. Parents' views are sought at informal meetings and formal reviews. Parents say they know how to complain and to whom this can be addressed. There have been no complaints since the last inspection.

Young people are suitably protected from harm and receive a high standard of individualised care. Staff know individual young people and their needs intimately and successfully develop extremely positive relationships with them. Programmes of respite are arranged so groups of young people are as compatible as possible, staff are extremely vigilant and there are no significant concerns about any young person presenting a risk to others. The unit provides a safe and secure environment for young people within which they are protected from harm. Staff are very aware of their responsibility to safeguard young people and receive excellent guidance in listening to young people.

Staff are very aware of the behaviours and dynamics in the home at any one time. Strategies are agreed in advance and regularly reviewed. This means that any issues which may cause distress or disruption can be proactively managed. The cognitive

disabilities of the young people means that not all of them necessarily understand the concept of bullying. Staff understand what constitutes bullying and intervene promptly where there is any negative effect on other young people due to any presenting behaviours.

Due to the high staff ratio in the home there is minimal risk of absence. There are clear plans in place, known by staff, should the occasion happen. Bedroom windows are sometimes locked for children's own safety although there are no clear protocols in place to avoid this being misconstrued as restrictive practice. There have been no incidences of unauthorised absence since the last inspection and parents say their children are safe at the unit.

A constructive approach to behaviour management underpinned by robust policies keep young people safe. Staff adopt a positive approach to working with the young people they care for and are skilled in doing so. Opportunities are regularly provided for young people to engage in constructive activities and to do the things they enjoy doing. Sanctions are not imposed and time out is used only as a last resort and as a positive response to unacceptable behaviour. Risk assessments are made with regards to the premises and activities in which the young people partake. They are regularly reviewed and updated. Additionally, individual risk assessments are completed on the young people with regards to their behaviour and potential vulnerability. The risk assessments ensure that the staff team are prepared to undertake activities in a safe and well organised manner and that the risks to the young people are minimised without depriving them of stimulating and enjoyable experiences. The likelihood of a young person entering another bedroom is not assessed although these are routinely locked during the day while young people are accessing the communal areas.

Arrangements for fire safety at the unit are good with an up to date fire risk assessment, and all checks and tests being carried out and recorded as required. An obsolete fire extinguisher, identified at such a check, was removed during inspection. The home has recently finished a new extension which has provided the children with excellent new facilities designed in a way that they are accessible to all children at the unit. Although the responses of children are monitored in a trial evacuation there are no written personal emergency evacuation plans for individuals if required.

There is a robust recruitment procedure in place which includes volunteers. All necessary safeguards are in place to protect children. Visitors are vetted before entering.

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 not judged.

What must be done to secure future improvement?

Recommendations

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

- extend the steps taken to keep children, staff and visitors safe from risk from fire and other hazards, for example by considering having written personal emergency evacuation plans (NMS 26.1)
- review the protocols and agreements for measures of control such as occasions when doors or windows are secured. (NMS 22.12)