

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC025657
Inspection date	9 September 2009
Inspector	Cheryl Carter
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	6 November 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

This children's home provides respite care as well as medium to long term care for children aged seven years to under 18 years.

The home provides medium to long-term residential care for up to three younger children and sibling groups. The home is also registered for a further three children aged between seven and 17 years on admission, who may have emotional or behavioural or learning disabilities.

The home aims to work positively with the child's family and external professionals, such as placing authorities, schools or health services.

The home is one of a modern terrace on a residential estate; it has access to community and leisure facilities within the area and there are good transport links.

Summary

This was a key unannounced inspection of all the key standards.

Children are encouraged to eat healthy meals in line with their needs and their likes and dislikes. There are good health provisions in place. Essential information is provided to ensure that children's health needs are met.

The manager of the home is currently undertaking the Level 4 National Vocational Qualification (NVQ). The strengths of the service are seen in the commitment of staff to support the children's needs. There is however concerns around safeguarding of the children, staff training and supervision and the slow progress made to refurbish the unit and the lack of maintenance of the front and rear gardens.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

The home had been redecorated. There is now a designated room for activities. Children now have access to a computer, electric organ, play station and art equipment.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are provided with varied, balanced and healthy meals. Staff are aware of the dietary needs of the children and plan and prepare children's meals. There is detailed information kept about each child's dietary requirements.

Children's health care needs are well met. Each child has a 'Personal Health Plan'. The staff works in partnership with the parents, health professionals and social workers to ensure that the health care needs of the children are identified and met. Staff are able to access training to develop their knowledge and skills in order to meet children's health care needs. Staff has recently had training relating to epilepsy in line with the needs of a child currently placed. Good records of all appointments that children have attended are maintained. Children are accompanied to medical appointments by staff if appropriate or necessary.

Staff have received training in the administration and storage of medication. Records of all medication administered to children are kept. Medications are safely stored in a locked cupboard. Staff also monitor the effect of medication and pass relevant information on to parents and healthcare professionals. Sufficient numbers of staff have undertaken first aid training.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children privacy is promoted by the policy in place. Children's records are securely stored and all children have single bedroom accommodation. Staff also ensure that they knock on children's bedroom doors and announce themselves before entering.

Children are safeguarded through the home's complaints policy and procedures. A record of all complaints received and how these are investigated are maintained. The home has an anti-bullying policy. Bullying is not an issue at the home at the moment. There are good levels of staff supervision which helps to minimise the likelihood of unacceptable behaviours between children. Staff are provided with appropriate training, such as managing challenging behaviour, safeguarding and the use of restraint. There is however a shortfall in the training, staff have not received training in the Children's Act 1989, consequently there is a gap of knowledge and understanding by staff about how the children's act will support their work around safeguarding children in their care.

Staff take appropriate action to keep children safe from the risk of fire by carrying out regular fire alarm testing and fire drills. A comprehensive risk assessment of the premises is in place. Staff has had training in health and safety.

There are good recruitment practices in the home and the provider ensures that all necessary documents are obtained prior to the appointment of staff in order to protect children. All staff have current Criminal Record Bureau checks.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are given support in line with their needs and wishes. They can approach any member of staff if they have concerns. Staff develop an individual risk assessment for each child and a strategy is in place to eliminate or reduce any identified risk factors.

The home operates a key work system. Currently there are only six children receiving the respite service and two children on long term placements. The children who are currently on long term placements have current individual education plans on file and staff work quite closely with the schools to ensure that children's education needs are being met. Staff support children attending the home for respite care to attend school during their stay at the home.

The service offers a range of activities and there are opportunities for children to go out to the park to go swimming, walks in the countryside and other activities. There are also a range of indoor activities. The home has an activity/art room. The outside play area has been made safe and there is a trampoline with a safety frame which children can use supervised. The use of the trampoline has not be risked assessed for individual children.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children benefit from placement plans that set out their assessed needs. Placement plans also detail how these needs would be met on a day to day basis. Children are encouraged to attend their reviews. Evidence shows that statutory reviews take place on time. Children and their family members attend and contribute to their review meetings.

Care packages are regularly reviewed by the placing authority and staff in the home contribute fully to this process. Reviews usually involve parents and other professionals. Staff support children to present their views about the placement.

The religious, linguistic and cultural needs of children are taken into account when care plans are being drawn up. Children are consulted during key work sessions on issues relating to the running of the home. Evidence shows family members are also consulted regularly to improve the service delivery. Information regarding access to advocacy services is provided.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Staff encourage and support children to develop independent living skills. Staff encourage children to look after their personal space. Children who are in long term placements have opportunities to be involved in shopping and cooking meals under staff supervision.

Children on long term placements also have the opportunity to shop with staff for their clothing and toiletries. There is however no record of how clothing and toiletries money is allocated or how much is allocated to each child.

The home is split into two units, one being for long term placements and the other for respite care. The respite unit has three beds. The long stay unit has three beds. The ground floor comprises a large living room with television and a variety of toys. There is a kitchen, two toilets and one bathroom in each unit. There is an activity room with art equipment, games, toys and books. A new trampoline has been bought for the unit and this has a safety frame, however there is no risk assessment in place for using this piece of equipment.

The home has recently been redecorated. Children's bedrooms are well maintained and personalised.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The Statement of Purpose has been updated, and includes all the required information such as the aims and objectives of the service. The Children's handbook has not been updated to provide all the information and facilities available at the home and does not contain any information relating to Ofsted

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Evidence supports a consistent commitment to improving equality and diversity in practice. Children receive an individualised service in the home which is designed to meet their personal needs.

The staff rota confirms that a sufficient number of staff are on duty at all times. The Registered Manager reviews staffing levels in accordance with the assessed needs of children. In the absence of the manager a senior worker steps in and staff are made aware of the chain of accountability. The registered manager is currently undertaking the Level 4 NVQ and the Registered Manager's Award (RMA). The Registered Manager is available to both staff and children for support and advice. Sufficient numbers of staff have completed their NVQ level 3 in childcare.

All staff receive regular supervision and annual appraisals from the manager. Monthly staff meetings are held and staff have opportunities to contribute to the meetings. Staff receive additional training to enable them to develop knowledge and skills to meet the needs of children in their care. There are no personal development plans in place for the staff.

There is a system in place to monitor the performance of the home against the Statement of Purpose. The responsible individual conducts the visits in accordance with Regulation 33. The Registered Manager monitors and signs the home's records and takes appropriate steps on issues requiring action.

Each child or young person has a permanent private and secure record of their placement in the home.

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
1	ensure that there is a guide to the children's home produced in a form appropriate to the age and understanding and communication needs of the children to be accommodated in the home Regulation 4.4	13 October 2009

Recommendations

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

- ensure that all staff receive training that ensures the safety of the children (NMS 17)
- ensure that there are individual risk assessment in place for each child before undertaking activities. (NMS 15)
- ensure that the allocation of money for clothing allowances and toiletries are recorded (NMS 6)
- provide personal development plans for staff (NMS 31)