

Inspection report for Children's Home

Unique reference number	SC025657
Inspection date	11/03/2011
Inspector	Cheryl Carter
Type of inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	28/06/2010
--------------------------------	------------

© Crown copyright 2011

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

You can obtain copies of The Children Act 2004, Every Child Matters and The National Minimum Standards for Children's Services from: The Stationery Office (TSO) PO Box 29, St Crispins, Duke Street, Norwich, NR3 1GN. Tel: 0870 600 5522. Online ordering: www.tso.co.uk/bookshop

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 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 and for a further three children aged between seven and 17 years on admission, who may have emotional, 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; there is access to community and leisure facilities within the area and there are good transport links.

Summary

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

This was an unannounced interim inspection which looked at the outcome areas of staying safe and organisation. It also looked at the progress the service has achieved with the previous action made at the last inspection. The Registered Manager has left and a new manager is in post. As a result, not all the actions and recommendations have been addressed and these have been raised again following this inspection. There are also some shortfalls around training and appraisals for staff, which may impact on the children's care, as well as shortfalls around health and safety. This is reflected in the judgement for the home.

Improvements since the last inspection

Five actions and three recommendations were made at the last inspection. The Registered Manager has left and a new manager is in post. As a result, it has not been possible to achieve all the actions and recommendations, which is why these are repeated in this report.

The Statement of Purpose has been updated to provide more accurate information on what the service provides. A children's guide to the service has also been improved. It is more child-friendly with colours and pictures, however the manager is keeping the guide under review until the staff team can obtain the children's views on the suitability of this document.

There has been a programme of maintenance and redecoration carried out in the

home and some new furniture, which has improved the general appearance of the home and created a more homely environment.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is not judged.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are provided with single-bedroom accommodation and a sufficient number of bathrooms and toilets. Staff are sensitive to gender issues when dealing with children of the opposite sex. The home has purchased new cabinets to ensure the safe storage of information relating to staff as well as children

The service has an appropriate complaint's policy and procedure. Staff maintain a complaint log book. However, staff have not received any complaints since the last inspection.

The home has clear systems in place that safeguard the children and protect them from abuse, however, staff training focused on safeguarding children has not be updated. The newly appointed staff have not undertaken any safeguarding training to ensure that they can safeguard children with disabilities and protect them by having an understanding of safeguarding and anti-bullying issues and by following robust procedures.

There are high levels of supervision and security in the home. In the event that a child goes missing from care the home has an appropriate policy in place for dealing with unauthorised absence. There is a system in place to notify appropriate authorities, including Ofsted, of the occurrence of significant events.

There is a lack of training in key areas, such as such as managing challenging behaviour, safeguarding issues and the use of restraint, and health and safety. Steps to keep children, visitors and staff safe from the risk of fire and other hazards are not consistently carried out. Weekly smoke alarm tests have not been completed and this has not been identified during the Regulation 33 visits. Current gas and electric test certificates are available for inspection.

Staff are recruited according to the policy of the local authority, which ensures that children are protected. All necessary documents, including enhanced Criminal Records Bureau Disclosure certificates are obtained prior to the appointment of staff.

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 good.

The home has undergone a programme of redecoration and refurbishment. New furniture has replaced the old in the lounge, which creates a more homely environment.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The home has developed a Statement of Purpose, which includes all the required information, such as the aims and objectives of the service. The children's guide tells children about the service provided and also provides information regarding the facilities available to them. The children's guide has been updated and is now more child-friendly.

The current manager of the home holds a Level 3 National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Caring for Children and is currently enrolled on a course to undertake the Level 4 NVQ Management, to acquire the skills and qualifications to manage the home. Staffing levels are kept under review to ensure that there are appropriate levels of staff always in the home. Children are looked after by staff who are committed to their work. Children live in a caring environment. However, staff lack the necessary statutory training and insufficient numbers of the staff team have acquired the minimum national qualification of Level 3 NVQ Caring for Children.

All staff receive regular supervision, although no appraisals of staff have been completed. As a result, none of the staff have personal development plans that identify their training and developmental needs. There are currently some staff vacancies in the home and these are covered by agency staff. Staff meetings are monthly and aim to promote good communication among the staff team. There is no system in place to monitor the performance of the home against the Statement of Purpose, according to Regulation 34. Regulation 33 visits take place on a monthly basis and reports are sent to Ofsted. While the quality of these reports have improved, as a result of the action from the last inspection, they still do not reflect

the running of the home. Each child has a permanent, private and secure record of their history, development and progress throughout their stay at the home.

The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. Evidence supports the staff promote anti-discriminatory practice through working practice and understand that each child is unique and a valued individual with the right to respect and positive self image.

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
22	ensure that a written record of all sanctions are kept and reviewed regularly (Regulation 17 (4))	15/04/2011
26	ensure adequate precautions against the risk of fire, and make adequate arrangements for giving warning of fires and for reviewing fire precautions and testing fire equipment at suitable intervals (Regulation 32 (c)(ii)&(V))	15/04/2011
28	ensure that all staff receive appropriate supervision and appraisal (Regulation 27(4)(a))	15/03/2011
33	establish and maintain a system for monitoring the matters set out in Schedule 6 at appropriate intervals and improve the quality of care provided in the children's home (Regulation 34 (1)(a)(b))	15/04/2011

Recommendations

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

- ensure that all childcare staff have personal development plan (NMS 31.4)
- ensure that the Regulation 33 visits are conducted according to regulations and the reports are a reflection of how the home is functioning (NMS 32)
- ensure there are clear lines of accountability in the home in the absence of the manager. (NMS 34)