

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	17 February 2010
Inspector	Cheryl Carter
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	9 September 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 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

This was an interim unannounced inspection that looked at the key standards under staying safe and organisation. The home provides a good standard of care to the children accommodated. The policies and procedures ensure children are properly safeguarded in the home. There are good staffing levels that ensure children's individual needs can be met. Staff are receiving regular supervision and there are clear lines of accountability. There was one new shortfall identified as a result of this inspection. All but one of the recommendations from the previous inspection have been addressed. One action is repeated as is one recommendation. Children enjoy good outcomes in all aspects of their care.

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 the service was required to address one action and four recommendations. The children's guide has been updated. Risk assessments for activities are now undertaken and recorded and the children's clothing money and toiletries are now recorded and signed for. A staff training programme is in place and progress has been made in the introduction of personal development plans for staff.

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.

Satisfactory arrangements are in place to protect the privacy of children. Bathrooms and bedrooms have appropriate locks, as do children's bedrooms. Confidentiality policies and procedures are in place and records are kept securely to safeguard the children.

Children are encouraged to voice their concerns, and complaints are responded to promptly and satisfactorily. There have been no complaints within the home since the last inspection.

Clear information is provided to children about making a complaint, both informally and in the children's guide for the home.

There are systems in place for responding to safeguarding issues, all staff have had the updated safeguarding training. There is also appropriate written guidance in place for dealing with any concerns staff have about the welfare of the children placed in the home. Relationships between the children are monitored and any bullying in the home is responded to promptly. Good systems are in place for responding to incidents where children are absent without authority and records are maintained so that patterns of behaviour are identified and addressed.

Appropriate behaviour management policies and procedures are in place, however, staff have not had up to date training in the use of physical restraint. Staff say that this is because there is a policy on no restraint in the home. Records are kept for any sanctions imposed. The records relating to sanctions are not always relevant and in some cases sanctions are unacceptable. For example, giving a sanction twice for the same incident. The records do not currently show how children are rewarded for positive behaviour. The atmosphere in the home is one of mutual respect between staff and children in the home.

Good systems are in place for monitoring health and safety, and weekly and monthly checks take place to ensure that all fire safety equipment is in good working order and the environment is safe for staff and children. Fire drills take place on a regular basis and the required electrical and gas safety checks are carried out by the relevant professionals. The portable appliances tests are out of date.

Thorough procedures are in place for the recruitment of staff and the Criminal Records Bureau checks on staff are renewed every three years. Clear systems are in place for supervising visitors to the home, staff check identification and all visitors to the home are required to sign in and out of the home.

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.

Following the key inspection, the home has now developed a system whereby all allowances paid to children are signed for. The record of clothing allowances and toiletries all appeared to be managed well.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The home has a comprehensive Statement of Purpose that clearly reflects the nature of the service on offer. The children's guide has also been updated but this does not reflect the age and understanding of the children.

Staff have the skills, qualifications and experience to meet the needs of the children presently accommodated. Supervision of staff is carried out monthly and staff receive a copy of their supervision records. An appraisal system is in place and it is planned that personal development plans are developed. A staff training programme is in place and this supports staff in meeting children's needs. The home has a comprehensive range of policies and procedures that are accessible to all staff. The home is subject to monthly monitoring visits, undertaken by the responsible individual and reports are sent to Ofsted.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Children's daily plans reflect their individual racial and cultural needs. Each child has a dedicated record that contains the information required in the Children's Homes Regulations. Records examined contain recent and relevant information and are kept in an appropriately locked cabinet.

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 Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

Standard	Action	Due date
22	ensure that the use of sanctions is not excessive (Regulation 17)	25 March 2010
1	ensure that the children's guide is produced in a form appropriate to the age, understanding and communication needs of the children accommodated in the home (Regulation 4.4)	25 March 2010

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 have training on the use and techniques of physical restraint (NMS 22.8)
- ensure that safety checks are carried out promptly (NMS 26.4)
- ensure that all childcare staff have a personal development plan. (NMS 31.4)