

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	3 December 2009
Inspector	Jill Marriott
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	23 July 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 home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to four young people between the ages of 12 and 18 years with learning and multiple disabilities. Adaptations have been made to the building to meet the needs of the young people placed. The accommodation is a large detached bungalow set in a residential area. There is parking space at the front and a large well kept garden with play equipment at the rear. At the time of inspection there were four young people living in the home.

Summary

At this unannounced random inspection only national minimum standards relating to staying safe, economic wellbeing and organisation were inspected. Staying safe is judged as good and both economic wellbeing and organisation are judged as satisfactory.

Young people are kept safe in the home. Records show that child protection issues are fully investigated. Complaints are dealt with in line with the homes procedures. However the home does not have a complaints book so a records of complaints with actions taken and outcomes is not available in the home.

Where appropriate young people have a pathway plan on file. There is limited information related to the progress made by young people who are working towards developing their skills for adult living.

The home has a range of adaptations in place and young people have access to a range of facilities to meet their individual needs. There is an adapted bathroom but this is in need of refurbishment. The hoist facilities are broken which means not all young people have a choice in using the bath or shower.

Over 80% of the staff team are qualified to the level of National Vocational Qualification level 3 in child care. Staff are supported to attend regular training events and short courses. Staff say that they receive regular supervision and a yearly appraisal. There are very few records of supervision on file and appraisal reports are not available in the home.

The home continues to offer a supportive service with good relationships observed between staff and young people. However 10 requirements and 1 recommendation have been identified at this inspection. As a result the service rating has been reduced from good to satisfactory.

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

There was one action and two recommendations identified at the last inspection. The home was asked to review the children's guide and ensure that copies of the revised guide are available in the home. The Responsible Person said that the guide is in the developmental stage and will be available in the near future. This requirement is repeated in this report.

The manager was asked to make supervision records available in the home. This has not been fully addressed, some records are held on a computer file but not enough to show that staff are supervised regularly each month.

Plans are now in place to address the needs of young people over the age of 18. Issues have been identified relating to the support offered to this older group of young people. The manager said that a system is being developed to monitoring independent living plans. This system is not yet in place.

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.

Staff show respect for the privacy of young people and for maintaining appropriate levels of confidentiality.

The service has a complaints policy and procedure in place and information regarding this is available in the home. Staff take seriously any concerns or complaints raised by young people, families or outside organisations. These are addressed within appropriate timescales. The home does not have a complaints book and one recent complaint being dealt with by The Responsible Person has not been recorded in the home.

Staff have responded in a professional way to any allegations or serious concerns raised about the safety of young people. The home has a clear procedure for responding to child protection concerns and has links with the Local Children's Safeguarding Board. Training for staff in child protection is kept up to date.

The staff team are clear about the homes policy regarding bullying. The high staffing levels in the home minimises the possibility of bullying taking place. Staff are observant and would act immediately to ensure the safety and wellbeing of young people.

The home has a written procedure for action if young people are absent without authority. Relevant professionals and families are always informed. Staff go out and look for young people and make arrangements to collect them if their whereabouts are known. Young people are welcomed back to the home on their return. There are no reports of young people being absent without authority since the last inspection.

The home notifies all those persons and appropriate authorities listed in schedule 5 of any significant events that have occurred. Parents and other people who are important to the young people are also informed where this is appropriate.

Staff view young people positively. They base their management of behaviour on encouraging acceptable behaviour. Young people are supported to understand what the standards of acceptable behaviour are. Restraint is not used in the home and sanctions involve time out to give young people the opportunity to regain control of their behaviour. All sanctions are fully recorded.

The home has risk assessments in place for all aspects of safety in the home and the grounds. Risk assessments include fire, and young people's behaviour and activities. The assessments are taken into account when planning the daily activities in the home. The fire precautions in place are appropriate and all staff are given fire safety instruction. Fire drills are carried out regularly at different times of the day. Fire safety equipment is checked regularly and detailed records are kept.

The vetting of staff and visitors is thorough. Visitors are required to sign the visitors book on arrival and when leaving the home. They are monitored while in the home. Recruitment procedures include evidence of full employment history, two references, proof of identity and a clear enhanced Criminal Records Bureau disclosure. All staff are interviewed and undergo an induction and probationary period before being confirmed in post.

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 satisfactory.

Preparing for leaving care and developing the skills required for adulthood are usually matters addressed by the staff with young people. Issues that arise from ethnicity, race, disability, sexuality and religion are included in individual plans. Young people have a number of planned targets set to help them prepare for adulthood. These are reviewed six monthly or sooner if they have been successfully completed. The homes plans are limited. They do not include a daily timetable for young people and they are not routinely followed each day. Staff have a basic knowledge about helping young people move toward independent living. The home has some links with other relevant helping agencies.

Young people are encouraged to shop for their clothes and choose what they wear each day. Staff are aware of the young peoples needs and take account of allergies and skin conditions when young people are choosing toiletries and personal requisites.

The location of the home is convenient for schools, leisure facilities, transport links and other community facilities. The home has its own adapted transport for the young people. Its size, design and layout provide enough private and communal space for young people. The bathroom is in need of refurbishment and the hoist to assist young people in and out of the bath has been condemned. This means that not all young people have the choice of having a bath or shower.

The accommodation is domestic in style and is decorated and furnished to minimum standards. Staff sleeping in facilities are very small with the limited space available shared with a range of items and equipment stored in the same room. The managers office is equally small and cluttered. The ability for staff to discuss confidential issues in private is limited by the lack of office space available in the home.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The Statement of Purpose sets out what care the home will provide and how this will be provided. It is written in simple English that can be translated into different languages on request. The development of the children's guide has not been completed. The current guide does not meet the required standard as it does not include details of Ofsted.

Staff are clear about which manager is responsible for their support. They say they receive regular one to one supervision each month but there were very few supervision records available to confirm this. The manager said that staff appraisals have been completed. They were not available in the home during the inspection.

At least 80% of staff have an National Vocational Qualification level 3 in child care. Each member of staff receives an initial induction and a probation period prior to being confirmed in post. In the past year staff have received a range of short courses including safe care and protection, health and safety in the work place and first aid. Training profiles for all staff are kept in the home.

The number of staff on each shift is sufficient to meet the needs of the young people and to support them in their activities, visits and appointments. The organisation has a bank staff team on call who are known to the young people. Arrangements for care are rarely disrupted by changes of staff. There is a balance of male and female staff in the home who reflect the backgrounds of the young people.

Monthly monitoring visits are carried out on time. Copies of the reports are not at present being sent to Ofsted but are available in the home. Children are observed and spoken to as part of the monthly visit. The home has a limited quality monitoring system in place which does not include regular monitoring of matters set out in Schedule 6 (matters to be monitored by the registered person) and does not fully meet the required standard.

The case files for young people are somewhat confusing as they do not include all relevant information. Care plans, risk assessments and pathway plans are included but related information is recorded elsewhere. From the files seen it was not possible to gain a complete understanding of individual progress made by young people.

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
16	ensure that the home has a complaints book and all complaints are recorded with actions taken and outcomes. Regulation 24 (5)	15 January 2010
6	ensure that individual pathway plans specify the support and assistance young people will need daily to enable a successful transition into adulthood. (Children Act 1989, Section 22, 61, 64)	14 January 2010

24	ensure the sleep in room and staff office is kept clear of clutter and is not used as storage space. Reg 31 (10)	14 January 2010
24	ensure that the refurbishment of the bathroom is completed to enable young people to have the choice of using the bath or shower facilities. Regulation 31 2 (f) and 31(4)(a)	28 February 2010
24	ensure that broken light shades are replaced soft furnishings are kept in good order and where required beds in young peoples rooms have a suitable valance sheet. 31(2)(c)	14 January 2010
1	ensure the review of the children's guide is completed. Ensure the new guide is produced in a format appropriate to the age, understanding and communication needs of the young people. Ensure details of how to contact Ofsted are included. Regulation 4 (3)(a,b,c) (4)	29 January 2010
28	ensure staff files include copies of staff supervision records and appraisals Regulation 27 (4)(a)	29 January 2010
32	ensure that reports of monthly monitoring visits are sent to Ofsted. Regulation 33 (5)(a)	14 January 2010
33	the Responsible Person is to ensure that a system for improving the quality of care provided and for monitoring the matters set out in schedule (6) at appropriate intervals is establishes and maintained. Regulation 34(a)(b)	29 January 2010
35	ensure that children's case records include a review of pathway plans and up to date information regarding the progress made by individual young people. Regulation 28.	29 January 2010

Recommendations

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

- incorporate a daily time table into the plans for young people who are no longer receiving education. NMS 6