

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Jill Marriott
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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. All young people communicate non-verbally they were able to indicate that they are relaxed and comfortable in their surroundings.

Summary

At this unannounced full inspection all key standards were inspected. The home is providing good quality services in a safe and caring environment. The welfare of young people is enhanced by the good relationships which exist between them and the staff team. In particular health needs are monitored regularly and young people are encouraged and supported to eat nutritious foods and live healthy lifestyles. Staff work in partnership with other professionals and families to ensure that specific identified health needs are met.

Individual needs are assessed regularly and statutory review meetings are held at least six monthly. Young people's needs in relation to their ethnic and cultural backgrounds are incorporated into their care plans. The home promotes family contact where appropriate and staff are available to supervise if required.

The home has a quality monitoring system in place. This is centred around the experiences and views of young people. Monthly quality assurance reports (Regulation 33) are used to inform the homes yearly development plan.

Three shortfalls were identified at this inspection. These relate to updating the children's guide, keeping copies of electrical, gas and water certificates on site and staff receiving copies of their supervision records within reasonable timescales. One action and two recommendations have been made.

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, one action and two recommendations were made. One recommendation is repeated at this inspection. The first recommendation was regarding the development of a plan to address the issues of accommodating young people over the age of 18 years. The manager said that a plan is being developed but is not yet available in the home. This recommendation is therefore repeated. The second recommendation referred to the home keeping monthly Regulation 33 reports and these are now kept in the home. One action was required to ensure a complaints procedure was produced with the relevant details related to Ofsted included. This action is complete and the complaints procedure and easy read material about how to make a complaint is available on the young people's notice board. Improvements made since the last inspection ensure that the views and wishes of young people are listened to.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

The food provided for children and young people shows that staff have a very good understanding of what makes up a good, balanced diet. They have received training about nutrition and they put this into practice. Staff have a good knowledge of eating disorders and difficulties with eating. They work closely with health professionals who are helping young people to overcome such difficulties. The home has excellent food hygiene practices in place and have received a five star award from the local authority.

Menu planning incorporates culturally appropriate food and encourages young people to try new dishes. Young people are generally seen to treat mealtimes as an enjoyable social occasion and understand that good standards of behaviour are expected at the table. Staff encourage individual involvement in menu planning, buying food and preparing meals.

Health needs including those related to culture and ethnicity are identified and assessed at an early stage. This is recorded in a clear easily accessible individual plan detailing how specific and general health needs will be met. Particular health needs which may impact on future outcomes for young people are identified at the earliest opportunity. Staff seek out services to address these by involving specialists such as the children and adolescent mental health service (CAMHS). All staff are trained in first aid. They promote healthy lifestyles and actively encourage young people to take an interest in looking after themselves. There is information in the home about health and social issues and this is displayed on the notice board. Staff accompany young people to doctor, dentist and optical appointments and to see specialists when required.

Issues relating to young people's health are monitored through key work sessions, staff meetings, and through the child care review process. The school nurse sees the children regularly. Individual health plans are kept under review they are up dated regularly and specifically if changes are required. The home's practices promote the health of young people.

An effective medication policy, procedure and practice guidance which addresses the use of prescribed and non-prescribed medication is in place. Staff read the policy as part of their initial induction they receive medication training and understand their individual roles and responsibilities. Quality assurance systems confirm that the policy is put into practice. Medication records are seen as key to the effective management of health care matters, staff are aware of the importance and necessity of them always being up to date and fully comprehensive. The home has a sustained record of full compliance with the administration, safe keeping and disposals of medications.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The practices in this home promote the safety of young people. Staff show a respect for the privacy of young people and for maintaining appropriate levels of confidentiality.

The organisation has a complaints procedure and there are posters on display highlighting what young people should do if they are not happy. The new complaints form and the complaints policy includes the Ofsted address should young people wish to make contact. The names and addresses of advocates and agencies that support young people are also available in the home.

Young people receive appropriate protection from the organisation's safeguarding arrangements. The last training related to safe care and protection was attended by staff in December 2008. The organisation ensures that the focus of the training is mainly on the protection of young people with disabilities. Staff monitor young people and take particular care to ensure that any marks or bruises are recorded and any concerns are reported to the appropriate professionals.

Bullying is not accepted in this home. The staff team are vigilant at all times and high staffing levels reduce the opportunity for bullying to occur. Staff are clear about the home's bullying policy and implement it in every day practice.

The home has a procedure in place that details action to be taken when a young person is absent without authority. Staff are aware of the procedures in place. They will always go out and look for young people ensuring first that the other children in the home have adequate staff cover. Young people would be welcome back to the home on their return. There have been no missing reports made in the last six months.

All relevant people and appropriate authorities are notified of significant events. Staff routinely make personal contact with parents and other people who are important in the lives of young people to inform them of incidents that have occurred.

Staff view the young people they care for positively. The management of behaviour is based on encouraging acceptable behaviour. Young people are supported and encouraged to understand what the standards of acceptable behaviour are. Restraints are not used in the home and sanctions are appropriate and relate to time out to enable individuals to become calm and regain control of their behaviour. All young people have an up to date behaviour management plan on their file.

The home has a designated health and safety officer and the home undertakes all checks necessary to promote a safe and secure environment. Risk assessments are in place for all aspects of the safety of the grounds and premises. They take into account the daily activities in the home, holidays, outings and local trips.

There is a good awareness of fire safety among staff and fire drills are held at least monthly on different days and at different times. Records detail how many people are involved and how long the fire drill has taken to complete. The manager confirmed that checks of gas, electric and water supplies are undertaken as required. Certificates of these checks are not kept on site so were not available for inspection.

The vetting of staff and visitors is comprehensive and thorough. The home is selective with the recruitment of the right person for the job being more important than filling the vacancy.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Placement plans address how support will be provided to meet individual need. Staff are open to addressing a range of possible needs including those related to disability, race, culture, sexuality, religion and language. Development plans detail individual goals and achievements. The staff team focus on assisting young people to maximise their potential and improve their quality of life. Key workers support them to get their voice heard at child care reviews and planning meetings.

The home has links with a range of helping agencies and where required staff look for services to fit the needs of specific young people. A range of information about useful agencies and organisations is displayed in the dining area of the home. These include services that could if required be used without reference to staff.

Staff are positive about education and its value for young people. Education is not seen as an activity confined to attendance at school. Communication books act as a go between and show home and school what is happening in each establishment. Programmes in place for young people at home are carried on in school and visa versa. Daily attendance at school and planning for moves to further education are an established part of the pattern of daily life at the home. Placement plans explicitly address how educational needs will be met. Staff have established good links with the schools attended. They ensure they attend open evenings where appropriate and act to address any difficulties that may arise during school time. Education certificates and school reports are kept on individual files.

Children and young people are encouraged by staff to take part in leisure activities both inside the home and in the local community. Young people have individual communication systems in place and are able to make choices about what they want to do. Specific interests are supported and those known to be particular favourites are included in the overall planning of activities, outings and holidays organised throughout each year.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Care plans detail how the assessed needs of young people will be met. Care plans cover overall personal care needs, health needs and those related to individual disability, racial and cultural backgrounds. Statutory child care reviews take place regularly every six months and individual plans are reviewed by the home during key work sessions and at team meetings. Care plans are updated as necessary in accordance with the decisions of each review meeting and the developing needs of individuals. Young people and their families are encouraged to attend and contribute to the statutory review process.

The families, relatives and friends of young people visit the home if appropriate. Young people are encouraged to keep in contact with their families and staff give practical support to make this possible. The arrangements for maintaining contact is addressed in individual care plans.

Consulting with young people, listening to them, discussing the running of the home and helping them make decisions on matters that affect them is part of the care practice in this home. Staff demonstrate that they value young people and support them to express their views and opinions about the services provided. The home's quality assurance systems take account of the experiences of young people and those put forward by family and friends.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

All young people are supported to acquire the skills needed for adult living. They are able to learn age and ability appropriate skills through joining in with shopping, budgeting, preparing and cooking meals. They are also expected to help keep their rooms clean and tidy. The home has plans in place for individuals moving towards adulthood and these are reviewed regularly.

Young people are involved in the planning and spending of the budget allocated to their clothing and personal allowances. Detailed records of personal allowances are kept for each young person.

The accommodation is domestic in style, homely and decorated, maintained and furnished to a good standard. Young people are comfortable and relaxed in their surroundings. The location of the home is convenient for schools, leisure services, transport and other community facilities that are important for individual development. Adaptations for young people with disabilities have been integrated into the design and layout of the home.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The Statement of Purpose clearly describes what care the home will provide and how it will be provided. It is presented in a form that is easily understood. The children's guide has not been updated recently and does not reflect the current services provided.

The manager is registered with Ofsted and has the relevant skills, qualifications and experience for the manager post. Staff are clear about the line management responsibility and who will take the lead in the absents of the manager. They confirmed that they have a full induction when they join the organisation and undergo a probationary period before their permanence in post is confirmed. One to one supervision takes place each month. Notes are taken of supervision meeting but these are not always given to the supervisee. All staff have an appraisal meeting at least once each year and training needs identified during this meeting are used to inform the organisation's training programme.

Over 80% of the staff team have a National Vocational Qualification Level 3 in child care. Each member of staff has received a range of training including a course on safe care and protection in the last six months. Training profiles are kept for all members of staff and these are reviewed as part of the appraisal process.

Staffing levels are appropriate, rotas show that the staffing is consistent each day and bank workers who know the children are called in to cover annual leave and sickness. The team has a balance of male and female workers who reflect the ethnic mix and cultural backgrounds of the young people.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The home promotes an environment which values all young people and respects their race, culture, gender, sexuality and religious backgrounds.

Regulation 33 visits are carried out each month and copies of the reports for the last six months were available in the home. The visitor clearly interacts with the young people and the reports centre around their wishes and feelings. Identified action points are followed up by the manager. The monitoring visit reports form part of the quality assurance system and inform the yearly development plans for the home.

The home is providing 50% of the care offered to young people over the age of 18 years. Transition plans are in place for individual young people who hope to move on in a planned way in the near future. At the last inspection it was recommended that a plan be developed to

address the issues that arise from accommodating young people over the age of 18 years. The manager explained that this work is underway but has not yet been completed.

Young people's files contain all records required by regulation and are confidentially stored. Files are readily useable and staff will support young people to read them if they wish to do so.

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
1	ensure that the children's guide is reviewed and copies are available in the home. (Regulation 4(3)(4))	31 August 2009

Recommendations

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

- produce a plan to address the issue of accommodating young people over the age of 18 (This recommendation is repeated.) (NMS 33)
- make copies of supervision notes available to staff after each supervision within reasonable timescales. (NMS 28)