

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	David Kidner
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	11 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

The home is registered to provide a home and a short break service for up to nine children of both sexes between the ages of eight years and 18 years of age who have a learning disability. Some children have complex support needs and need support in everyday life and activities. At the time of the inspection two children live permanently at the home.

This home is a detached period property set within with extensive grounds in a village setting. To the ground floor there are a number of communal areas that offer living space, dining facilities, recreational and leisure opportunities. There are adapted bathing, showering and toilet facilities to meet the needs of children and young people who use wheelchairs and have some mobility needs. There are nine single bedrooms situated on the first floor and some of the bedrooms have overhead tracking fitted to meet the specific needs of some children. There is a second fully adapted bathroom and toilet facilities to this floor. The first floor is accessed by a lift and there are mobile hoist and adapted equipment to meet specific needs.

The home has a large garden area offering ample play areas and a covered play area. There is transport provided to take children and young people on social and leisure activities.

Summary

This was an unannounced key inspection and all key standards of the national minimum standards were assessed. Since the last inspection there has been considerable improvement in relation to staffing levels. Documentation viewed and discussions with staff confirmed that there are now adequate staff on duty to meet the needs of the children and young people. Staff commented that they now have more time to spend with children and are able to take children out on trips and activities more often. Also, since the last inspection there has been considerable improvement in the environment and some areas of the home have been redecorated and refurbished, resulting in the home appearing more homely and nicely presented. The action made at the last inspection relating to staff supervision and appraisals has not been met and remains.

The home has undergone a challenging time in relation to staff vacancies and sickness. However, this has now improved and the home has a dedicated and experienced care team who strive to promote a high quality service.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Not Applicable

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The home provides varied, nutritious and healthy home cooked meals. Menus include meals from different cultures and are also devised based on the known likes and dislikes of the children. Alternatives are offered if a child does not wish to have the meal that has been prepared. Some of the children that access the service have specialist dietary needs. The home

is able to meet these needs following individual assessment in conjunction with families and dietitians. Family style mealtimes are promoted and the service has two dining areas in order to manage mealtimes effectively. Staff were observed to promote dignity when assisting children who have complex eating and drinking needs and staff receive specialist training to meet this need. The home has adapted equipment to meet individual eating and drinking needs.

The home identifies the health needs of the children who permanently reside at the home. The care and support plans identify how the health care needs are to be met. Some children have complex support needs and the home ensures that they have access to a variety of healthcare professionals. Training, protocols and guidelines have been implemented for staff to meet the complex health care tasks required for some children. Consents have been obtained where appropriate. The healthcare needs of the children who come to stay at the home for short-term breaks care are met by the parents. Staff receive first aid training.

The home has robust procedures for the management of medicines.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The home promotes privacy and confidentiality. The vast majority of the children and young people require support with intimate care needs. Staff were observed to be promoting privacy when conducting personal care and support needs. There is a variety of overhead hoist and electronic mobile hoists to aid moving and handling.

The home has a detailed complaints procedure. Since the last inspection there has been four recorded complaints. One is from a young person and the remainder from parents. There is good documentary evidence of how the complains are being dealt and most have been satisfactorily resolved. However, the outcome of all the complaints have not been recorded.

There are detailed systems to promote the safety and welfare of children. There are no issues relating to child protection or bullying and the home notifies all appropriate agencies of significant events at the home. It is unclear if all staff have received child protection training.

The home has detailed policies and procedures in relation to sanctions, behaviour management and the use of physical intervention. It is the home's policy that sanctions are not imposed and physical intervention is very rarely used. The home has recording systems to monitor untoward incidents relating to behaviour management. Staff are provided with guidelines and protocols to manage specific behaviours. Some staff have received training in de-escalation and restraint.

The home is proactive in promoting health and safety and fire safety. The fire alarm system and fire fighting equipment have been serviced regularly and staff receive fire training and all mechanical aids and equipment are serviced on a regular basis. However, it was noted that following a recent electrical hardwiring inspection, some work is needed. This was discussed with the home and action has been taken to address this matter. Also portable appliance testing has not recently been conducted.

There is a robust staff recruitment and selection procedure. Staff do not commence employment at the home until a satisfactory enhanced criminal records bureau check has been obtained.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The home ensures that children receive very individualised support. Care and support plans contain comprehensive information as to how the individual needs of the children are to be met and significant areas of risk have been identified and are reviewed on a regular basis. Some children use different methods of communication to express their needs, likes and dislikes. The care staff are very aware of the children's needs in relation to this and alternative methods of communication is promoted and supported in the home. Some staff stated that they wish to have more training in alternative methods of communication. The home operates the key worker system and care staff appear very knowledgeable of the children that access the service.

Children are fully supported to access school when they stay at the home for short-term breaks. Good links are maintained between parents and the school each child attends. Communication books are used for each child that travels with them between school, the child's permanent home and the service. Personal education plans have been developed for the children who permanently live at the home.

Children have access to a large amount of leisure and play equipment. There is an abundance of toys, games, books and DVDs. The home also has a snoozelem, a Wii, indoor soft play area, an art room, computer room and outside play areas. Due to their needs children are supervised at all times. However, staff commented that they feel that some of the toys and play equipment is in need of updating. This was highlighted at feedback. Transport is available to take children on trips out, visit to shops and walks and records are kept of all trips. Staff have reported that since the improvement in staffing levels children are now accessing more leisure and social opportunities out of the home environment.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The home develops individual placement plans for all children and these are known as CHIPS. The CHIPS are very comprehensive and identify their care needs. Some CHIPS have been signed by their parent or social worker. The key worker monitors the CHIPS and conducts regular reviews. Statutory reviews take place as needed.

All referrals to the home are from the local authority. Children and parents are invited to visit the home to meet other children and care staff. Overnight stays can be arranged. Due to the nature of the service the home does not conduct formal house meetings. The care team seeks the views, opinions of the children on a day to day basis.

On the day of the inspection staff were observed to be interacting with children in a very caring and professional manner. To promote continuity and consistency staff support a child one 1:1 basis if needed, during their stay at the home.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

The home is a detached period property set in its own extensive grounds close to a village centre. Since the last inspection some areas of the home have been considerably improved and have been redecorated, re-carpeted and new furniture has been purchased. This has considerably

improved the home's appearance and it is now presented in a more homely manner. Staff stated that pictures and soft furnishing are to be displayed following redecoration. Due to the age of the property some areas still need redecoration. This was discussed at the time of the inspection. The carpet in one dining room area needs to be replaced as it could pose a hazard if not replaced.

The bedrooms of the children who live permanently at the home are nicely presented and reflect the individual child's needs and preferences. The home makes every effort to ensure that those children who access the home for short term breaks usually sleep in the same bedroom. Consents have been obtained from parents for the use of monitoring devices as and when needed. Mechanic aids are fitted in some bedrooms to assist children who require this support.

The home has two specially adapted bathrooms that have overhead hoists and specialist bathing and showering facilities fitted. There is a lift to access the bathroom on the first floor. Toilets are adapted to meet the needs of the children and have appropriate locks fitted to promote privacy.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good.

Placement plans clearly identify children's needs in relation to their cultural and religion. Menus and documentation viewed demonstrate how the home promotes specialist diets and how meals from different countries are promoted. Children are supported to access their favourite activities and specific educational needs. There are many aids and adaptations around the home to meet individual needs and to promote independence, regardless of their ability. Staff are able to demonstrate their awareness of equality and diversity and documentation viewed confirmed that staff receive training in equality and diversity.

The home's statement of purpose clearly sets out the home's function and purpose and there is a children's guide that is presented in symbols and photographs. A parent's guide is also provided and all documents have recently been reviewed.

Staff are not receiving regular supervision and an annual appraisal. Staff meetings occur on a regular basis with minutes kept.

There are clear arrangements for staff to deputise in the absence of the registered manager and the home has shift leaders who have relevant experience. A senior member of staff is responsible for co-ordinating staff accessing a national vocational qualification (NVQ). At present 20 of the 30 care staff have a minimum of NVQ level 3 qualification in Caring for Children and Young people, some staff have obtained Level 4. The home has a development plan to further promote this.

At the time of the inspection it was not clear if all staff have undertaken mandatory training and refresher training such as child protection, de-escalation and restraint and first aid. All staff have individual portfolios but not all of these have been updated. A training matrix is being developed by a senior member of staff in order to easily reference the individual training that staff have undertaken and take appropriate steps for staff to receive such training.

Since the last inspection staffing levels at the home has improved considerably. Documentation viewed and discussions with staff confirmed that there are adequate levels of staff on duty to meet the individual and collective needs of the children accessing the service. Staff recruitment is underway to further increase staffing levels. Agency staff is being used as and when needed and consideration is given to ensure that there is continuity and consistency in the use of agency staff.

There are systems in place to monitor the performance of the home and documentation viewed confirmed that regulation 33 visits are occurring on a regular basis. However, the registered manager's records relating to the monitoring of the care at the home was not accessible at the time of the inspection.

Children's personal files are kept securely in the home's office.

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 the complaints log records the outcome of investigations that have been undertaken (Regulation 24 (5)).	30 June 2009
28	ensure that all staff employed at the home receive regular formal supervision and annual appraisal (Regulation 27 (4) (a))	30 September 2009
31	ensure that all staff receive appropriate training and refresher training in areas such as child protection,de-escalation and restraint and first aid (Regualtion 27 4 (a))	30 September 2009

Recommendations

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

- ensure that the electrical works that was identified following an electrical hardwiring inspection are completed and portable appliance testing is also conducted (NMS26)
- ensure that all staff receive training in alternative methods of communication (NMS7)
- ensure that the home's maintenance and renewal programme continues to take into consideration the redecoration of some communal areas and the replacement of one dining room carpet (NMS24).