

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	David Kidner
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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 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

The home is registered to provide a service for up to eight children and young people of both sexes with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties, from the age of 13 years up to the age of 18 years.

The home is a large purpose-built detached bungalow located close to local facilities and services. The accommodation is arranged into four distinct living areas comprising two separate single bedroom self-contained flats and two other larger living areas. Each larger living area has all appropriate facilities and has four single bedrooms. There are adequate bathing and toilet facilities throughout the home and the home is decorated and furnished to a good standard. Ofsted has received positive comments from a parent and a social worker about the care and support that is provided at the home.

At the time of the inspection two children were residing at the home on a permanent basis and the home was providing at short break service to five children.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

The home continues to provide a good standard of care to children who live at the home permanently and for those who access the service for short breaks. The Registered Manager and care staff are very committed in providing a high quality service and on the day of the inspection staff were observed to be interacting with children in a very caring and professional manner. The service is committed in ensuring that it has a well qualified workforce. At the time of the inspection the inspector met five children and the children appeared very happy and relaxed in the environment and were engaging in their favourite activities.

The service is very proactive in addressing the behaviours that some children and young people may present and works in close partnership with families, health care professional and other appropriate external support agencies to address behaviours and to strive for the best outcome for children.

As a result of this inspection one action has been made in relation to staff appraisals. Five recommendations have been made in relation to staff supervision and team meetings, menus and health care plans, fire drills and maintenance and repair of the building.

Improvements since the last inspection

An action was made at the last inspection to ensure that all staff employed at the home receive regular formal supervision and annual appraisal. There has been some improvement in staff supervision but staff have not received an annual appraisal. Therefore, an action remains to ensure staff receive an appraisal.

Two recommendations were made relating to staffing levels being reviewed to ensure that children have regular opportunities to access activities and leisure opportunities outside of the home. This recommendation has been met. The other recommendation related to the temperature that some medicines were being stored, this recommendation does not apply now.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children enjoy home cooked meals that provide a nutritious, balanced and healthy diet. Menus are based on the known likes and dislikes of the children and specialist diets are provided if required. Menus viewed demonstrated that the home serves meals from different countries with two choices at the main meal, and a vegetarian option. Menus viewed did not always record the actual meals that are served, however, individual records are kept in each child's daily record. Mealtimes are social occasions and the dining areas are nicely presented. Staff give praise and encouragement to children when promoting good table manners and ensure that children are offered choices of meals and drinks. The home employs a cook and all staff who prepare food have undertaken food hygiene training.

Children's health needs are identified and detailed written health care plans are developed. However, some health care plans have not been formally reviewed. The home ensures that children who live permanently at the home have access to a variety of health care professionals with written records maintained of visits. Staff spoken with at the time of the inspection clearly demonstrated a good understanding of children's health care needs. The parents of children who access the service for short term breaks advise the home of any changes in medical needs and take responsibility for arranging and taking their child to such appointments. However, the care team take children to appointments if staying at the home in agreement with parents. The home ensures that written records are kept of significant illnesses, accidents and injuries.

The home has robust systems for the management of medicines and has developed procedures and protocols for medicines coming into, and out of the home. Medicines are kept safe and secure and the home ensures that records are maintained of the fridge that is used to store some medicines. A written record is kept of all medication, treatment and first aid given to children. Consents have been obtained from parents for the administration of non-prescribed medicines and first aid. All staff receive medicines training and specialist training from health care professionals as required. All staff receive first aid training and refresher dates are identified.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The service continues to promote privacy and confidentiality and at the time of the inspection staff were observed to be fully promoting this when undertaking children's personal care tasks. The home has adequate bathing, showering and toilet facilities that are homely and nicely presented and have appropriate privacy and safety locks fitted. Some facilities are designed to meet the needs of children with specific mobility and care support needs. Children have access to a telephone in order to make calls in private.

The service has a robust complaints procedure. There has not been any recorded complaints since the last inspection. The welfare of children is promoted and children are protected from abuse. There have not been any matters relating to child protection. Staff spoken with at the time of the inspection clearly demonstrated their understanding of safeguarding procedures and staff training records confirmed that all staff have received safeguarding training and refresher training is provided when needed.

The Registered Manager confirmed that bullying is not an issue at the home as staff are in sufficient numbers to ensure that more vulnerable children are appropriately supported, thus reducing the possibility of bullying occurring. The service provides staff with guidance entitled 'Bullying: Guidelines for individuals working with children with disabilities'. There are policies and protocols for when children are absent without authority, however, the Registered Manager confirmed that this has not been an issue at the service.

The home has detailed policies and procedures in relation to sanctions, behaviour management and the use of physical intervention. Good records are maintained of the incidents, the use of physical intervention and of any accidents or injuries. The care team are very proactive in addressing the behaviours that some children and young people may present, and are supported by guidelines and risk assessments where needed. The service continues to work very closely with families, healthcare professionals and other external support agencies when managing children that exhibit extreme behaviours and ensures that regular reviews and multi-disciplinary meetings are conducted. All staff receive training in de-escalation techniques and the use of restraint.

Health and safety and fire safety are promoted with good records maintained. All staff receive regular fire awareness training, however, records viewed confirmed that a small minority of care staff have not received regular fire drill training.

The service has a robust staff recruitment and selection process which safeguards young people by ensuring only those adults who are suitable are employed. Staff do not commence employment at the home until a satisfactory enhanced criminal records bureau check has been undertaken.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children receive individualised support and the care team are very knowledgeable of the needs of the children who access the service. The home promotes the use of alternative methods of communication and staff were observed in promoting choice and giving information and guidance to children in their preferred method of communication. The Registered Manager confirmed that there is a drive to further improve in this area. Individual children's files viewed contained speech and language therapy assessments offering staff guidance and recommendations to promote communication. Individual risk assessments are completed to address areas of significant risk.

The home fully supports and promotes the educational needs of children. Children's personal files viewed contained documentation from school and the outcome from recent education reviews. Communication systems and regular review meetings between the service, school and the children's permanent home promote continuity and consistency of care.

Children are encouraged and given opportunities to take part in a variety of activities and personal leisure interests. The home provides children with easy access to an abundance of play equipment, educational toys, books, games and soft play equipment. There are pleasant, safe and secure outdoor play facilities. Staff spoken with confirmed that due to more staff availability, the children are now accessing more leisure and social activities outside of the home. As part of the home's audit process, the Registered Manager confirmed that the service will be developing a recording system to demonstrate the frequency and type of activities that children access out of the home.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children have their needs assessed effectively and comprehensively and written placement plans known as CHIPS sets out their assessed needs. These are monitored by key workers who complete a key worker report prior to children's individual reviews. The service ensures that children's individual files contain the outcome of their most recent statutory review. Wherever possible children are supported and encouraged to attend their review.

Children are able to maintain constructive contact with their families, friends and other people who play a significant role in their lives. Any restrictions in contact is clearly identified in individual placement plans.

The service ensures that children are able to move into and leave the home in a planned and sensitive manner, and are able to bring favourite possessions with

them. The home ensures that wherever possible children who access the service for short breaks access the same bedroom on each visit. Transitions workers have been identified for young people who are due to access adult services.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

The home is a modern single storey purpose built property that is situated in a residential area. There are four main living areas comprising of two single self-contained flats and two other separate living areas that each accommodate three children.

The single self-contained flats contain a single bedroom with full en-suite facilities, a lounge and a separate fully fitted kitchen. Each main living area has a lounge, dining room and adequate bathing, showering and toilet facilities. There is a main kitchen that provides the main meals of the day. Most areas of the home are well maintained, decorated and furnished to a good standard, with lots of soft furnishing that promote a homely environment. However, some areas have been significantly damaged and the home has ensured that the service's maintenance team have been informed. This maintenance work has still to be addressed. All bedrooms are of single occupancy and are very well presented and child-friendly. Children receiving short term breaks usually have the use of the same bedroom at each visit. On the day of the inspection the home was clean and hygienic.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Placement plans identify children's needs in relation to their culture, religion and specific care needs. Menus viewed demonstrate that the home promotes specialist diets and meals from different countries. The home ensures that alternative methods of communication are promoted in order to encourage and promote choice and decision making. All staff receive training in equality and diversity.

The home has a detailed Statement of Purpose dated October 2009. The young person's guide is presented in an accessible format for children who use alternative methods of communication.

Formal staff supervisions have improved since the last inspection but not all staff are receiving regular supervision and monthly team meetings with an agenda are not being held.

The service has clear systems and lines of accountability in place for staff to deputise in the absence of the Registered Manager. Staff spoken with stated that they feel well supported by the home's management structure. The service is fully committed in ensuring that at least 80% of the workforce have achieved National Vocational

Qualification at level 3 or above and some staff have achieved a National Vocational Qualification at level 4. Staff stated that they feel that they have good access to training opportunities and records viewed confirmed that staff receive the appropriate training to meet the needs of the children. Individual staff training records are kept.

Discussions with the Registered Manager, care staff and staffing rotas confirmed that there are adequate numbers of staff on duty to meet the needs of the children. Staffing levels vary according to the individual and collective needs of the children staying at the home and if required staff will work extra shifts to support this.

The service is well managed and there are good systems to monitor the welfare of the children. Children's needs, development and progress are recorded appropriately.

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
28	ensure that all persons working at the home receive an appraisal. (Regulation 27 (4) (a)).	31/03/2011

Recommendations

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

- ensure that the home maintains a record of menus as served to further demonstrate the provision of a suitable and varied diet (NMS10.4)
- ensure that all children's health care plans are regularly reviewed (NMS12.2)
- ensure that all staff working at the home receive regular fire drill training (NMS26.8)
- ensure that all areas of the home are well maintained in a good state of structural and decorative repair (NMS24.3)
- ensure that all staff working at the home receive regular formal supervision and that team meetings occur at least monthly, with an agenda. (NMS28).