

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	16 November 2009
Inspector	David Kidner
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	21 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

The home is registered to provide a short break 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 of 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.

Summary

This was a full unannounced key inspection. All key standards under Every Child Matters outcome groups were assessed.

The home is currently providing a permanent home for two children and offers a short break service to eight children and their families. Ofsted has received very positive comments about the service from social workers. The home is very well managed and the registered manager offers direction and leadership. Children and young people appear to be very happy and well cared for. Staff interact with children in a very professional and caring manner. It is evident that staff are experienced and have the skills to support children and young people with specific needs in communication and behaviour management.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last inspection the home has made the following improvements.

It now ensures that Ofsted is notified of any significant events in the home, the boilers are now serviced on a regular basis and the recommendations made at the last electrical hardwiring inspection have been completed.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The home continues to provide nutritious, balanced and healthy meals based on the known likes, dislikes and individual needs of the children who permanently live at the home and those who come for short term breaks. Young people confirmed that they can choose their food and if they change their mind they can have an alternative. Mealtimes are social occasions and the dining areas are nicely presented. Staff support children to assist in their eating and drinking needs if appropriate and specialist and adaptive crockery and utensils are provided. Menus viewed confirmed that meals from different countries are provided and there is a vegetarian option at every main mealtime.

Children's health needs are clearly identified and detailed written health care plans are developed to meet their individual needs. Good records are maintained of visits to health care professionals.

Children who live more permanently at the home have access to a variety of health care professionals and records are kept of these visits. The parents of children who access for short term breaks advise the home of any changes in medical needs. Consents have been obtained and all staff have received first aid training.

The home has robust systems for the management of medicines. Fridge temperature records are kept in relation to the storage of some medicines however, the temperature of another area used is not being maintained. Staff receive specialist training in the administration of certain medicines from appropriate healthcare professionals, staff who have not received such training cannot undertake these procedures.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The home continues to promote privacy and confidentiality. There are adequate bathing, showering and toilet facilities that are homely in appearance and have appropriate locks fitted for privacy and safety. Children have access to a telephone in order to make calls in private.

The service has a robust complaints procedure. There has been one recorded complaint since the last inspection and records viewed confirmed this was satisfactorily resolved.

The welfare of children is promoted and children are protected from abuse. There has not been any matters relating to child protection. All staff have received child protection training and refresher training is provided when needed.

Bullying is not an issue and staff are in sufficient numbers to ensure that more vulnerable children are appropriately supported when staying at the home.

The home has detailed policies and procedures in relation to sanctions, behaviour management and the use of physical intervention. The home develops individual guidelines to support staff in the management of behaviours. Sanctions have not been imposed since June 2009 and minimal restraint is used. All accidents, incidents, sanctions and episodes of restraint are audited by the registered manager. All staff receive training in de-escalation and restraint.

Health and safety and fire safety is promoted in the home with good records kept. The service has a robust staff recruitment and selection process.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children and young people receive very individualised support. On the day of the inspection staff were observed using alternative methods of communication in order to seek their views and to assist them to understand what was happening that evening. Children have access to speech and language therapy services and staff have received training in using alternative methods of communication. The home ensures that individual risk assessments are completed to address areas of significant risk. However, it was noted that two risk assessments have not been updated to reflect current need. This was discussed with the registered manager who took steps to address this at the time of the inspection.

The home supports and promotes the educational needs of children and young people. All children and young people access school or a work placement and personal education plans are developed.

The home provides children with a variety of activities and leisure interests. There are ample games, toys, books, DVD and videos as well as a light room and computers. Records are kept of all activities. However, staff commented that that they feel that they would like to take children on more activities out of the home setting.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children have their needs assessed effectively and comprehensively. Each child has a detailed care plan known as CHIPS that sets out their assessed needs. Specific individual guidelines have been developed to support and guide staff in meeting specific areas of need. However, it was noted that not all children's care plans have been amended to reflect their current need. This was discussed with the registered manager at the time of the inspection. Children and young people are encouraged to take part in their review and minutes are kept of the reviews including statutory reviews.

Children who permanently live at the home are encouraged to keep in regular contact with their families. A large number of children live at home with their families, however agreed and appropriate contact is maintained whilst staying at the service.

Children are able to move into and leave the home in a planned and sensitive manner.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

The home is a modern single storey purpose built property that is situated in a residential area close to the town centre. Living areas are well maintained, decorated and furnished to a good standard. However, some parts of the accommodation have been damaged by young people but the service ensures that repairs are addressed without delay. Most areas of the home feel very homely and there are pictures and soft furnishings to promote this. There are games areas and quiet/study areas and large outdoor play areas. There is a central kitchen and separate kitchenettes. All bedrooms are single occupancy and children receiving short term breaks usually have the use of the same bedroom. Bedrooms are very nicely decorated and are personalised and reflect the individual needs of the children.

On the day of the inspection the home was very clean and hygienic.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good.

Care plans that are known as CHIPS clearly identify children's needs in relation to their culture and religion. Menus viewed demonstrate how the home promotes specialist diets and meals from different countries are promoted. 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 appropriate format.

Not all staff are receiving regular formal supervision and an annual appraisal. However, staff spoken with stated that they feel well supported. Regular team meetings are held with detailed minutes kept.

There are clear systems and lines of accountability in place for staff to deputise in the absence of the registered manager. There is good access to training and development and individual records are kept of the training that staff have undertaken. The service is committed in ensuring that there is a well qualified workforce and has achieved the standard that at least 80% of the workforce have achieved National Vocational Qualification Level 3 or above. All staff have received mandatory training including child protection, first aid, food hygiene and restraint training. Records viewed also confirmed that all staff have received equality and diversity training.

Staffing rotas viewed 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 staff will work extra shifts to support this. However, discussions with staff highlighted that although they feel they have adequate numbers of staff on duty, staffing levels do not always allow the ability to take children on as many outings and trips as they would like.

The service is very well managed and there are good systems to monitor the welfare of the children. However, it was noted that the registered manager has not always completed the documentation relating to the monitoring of the care the children are receiving.

Children's and young people'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 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
7	ensure that any unnecessary risks to the health and safety of children accommodated in the home are as far as possible identified and eliminated (Regulation 23)	20 November 2009
2	ensure that all care plans are reviewed and revised to reflect the individual needs of children (Regulation 12)	30 November 2009
28	ensure that all staff employed at the home receive regular formal supervision and annual appraisal (Regulation 27 (4) (a))	31 December 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 temperature of all areas where medication is stored does not exceed the recommended temperature (NMS13)
- ensure that staffing levels are reviewed in order to provide children with regular opportunities to access activities and leisure opportunities outside of the home (NMS30)
- ensure that the documentation relating to Schedule 6 of the Children's Homes Regulation 2001 is completed on a regular basis (NMS33).