

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Merryl Wahogo
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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

This is a service for children and young people with disabilities and their families. It provides short breaks for young people who have a learning and/or physical disability, who may require nursing care and are living at home with their family; many of the young people may also present challenging behaviour. It is jointly funded by a Primary Care Trust and a local authority, and managed by the Children and Young People's Directorate of the local authority. The unit is registered to accommodate up to six children and young people, two of whom may be under eight years. Other services offered include day care, after school care and support groups. The unit is closed overnight on a Monday when it is used by a young carer's group.

The centre is a detached two-storey building, about one-and-a-half miles from the town centre. It is not easily accessible via public transport, but has the use of transport for the young people, to enable good links with neighbouring towns and local facilities. The building has its own large secure garden area with lawn, patio area and outdoor adventure play equipment. The interior of the building has been developed to provide accommodation that is accessible to all. The premises have been equipped with additional overhead hoists and other specialist equipment to meet the complex physical needs of children and young people using the service.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

This was an unannounced interim inspection. It covers the staying safe and positive contribution outcome areas and also a review of the actions and recommendations arising from the last inspection. Staff are clearly committed and good at keeping young people safe, despite minor lapses in judgement in relation to protecting dignity. The manager is driving a number of improvements, some in conjunction with the school linked to the home. She has also acted on all the requirements and recommendations from the previous inspection.

Improvements since the last inspection

The manager was asked to improve a number of areas of recording. She now ensures that staff record whether or not a complainant is satisfied with the outcome. A record is now kept of the outcome of reviews on a separate sheet for easy access by staff. Staff have always recorded injuries on body maps, but are now careful to record the colour, as well as the type and site of the injury.

The manager was asked to replace the sofa covers. New covers are on order for all sofas, but the process has been rather lengthy.

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 are usually good at respecting young people's privacy, but do not reliably discuss intimate care issues in private areas. This means that, very occasionally, there is a risk that young people may be embarrassed.

Complaints are rare, but the manager deals with them respectfully and efficiently. There is a notice for young people explaining in text and symbols, how to complain. This process is enhanced by a symbol for 'listen to me', which can be detached from the notice and handed to staff. As a result, parents and staff can feel confident that many young people can raise issues that may be bothering them.

Staff are vigilant about recording any injuries they find on young people. Excellent body maps support them in recording any necessary detail. This means that any child protection concerns can be spotted and dealt with quickly.

Most young people in this setting might only target others because of certain behavioural triggers. If staff notice one young person targeting another, they ensure that the two do not attend on the same day. As a result, there is no bullying in this setting. Security and staffing is so good that young people can not leave without permission.

Staff use detailed understanding of each young person, which is recorded on care plans, to manage behaviour with a minimum of sanctions or physical interventions. On the rare occasions that either sanctions or physical interventions are used, staff record them well.

The manager ensures that all necessary risk assessments are carried out and recorded. Staff are well aware of the need to complete risk assessments before any trip out, for example. Some young people need additional protection measures, such as wearing helmets. In these circumstances, staff work well to encourage and persuade them to maintain the necessary measures. Staff ensure that all fire and other safety checks are completed and recorded regularly.

The manager ensures that the recruitment process, including all necessary checks, is thorough and well documented. As a result, parents and carers can feel confident that staff are safe to be with their children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is not judged.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

In conjunction with teachers from the linked school, the manager is developing more person-centred planning. Some young people come in to the setting with their own communication resources. Care plans address communication issues, but staff do not yet have easy access to information about how best to communicate with all young people. This means that new or agency staff might find it difficult to maximise communication or develop the best possible relationship.

The manager ensures that reviews take place regularly. Key workers are good at contributing useful updates to these reviews.

The manager is also developing new booklets to facilitate communication between the home, parents and school. These are clear and accessible and the project is ongoing following a successful pilot.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

The sofa covers are in good condition, other than having shrunk somewhat. Nevertheless, the manager has placed an order for new ones. There is no evidence that other standards are not being met.

Organisation

The organisation is not judged.

What must be done to secure future improvement?

Recommendations

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

- remind staff that any discussion relating to intimate care should happen privately

(NMS 9)

- develop separate sheets detailing communication methods and needs for young people who do not already have them. (NMS 2)