

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Mick Earl
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	5 May 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 situated in a large bungalow on a housing estate. The home provides residential care for up to eight young people usually offering short breaks for children, but sometimes they can stay there for a few weeks. Children who use the home have either a physical disability or a learning disability.

Inside the home there is a lounge, a large dining room and a large playroom. It has eight single occupancy bedrooms, a large kitchen, bathrooms, living areas and offices.

The home is close to local shops. There are bus stops nearby and a regular bus service in to the town centre. The home is in a good position to access leisure centres, the cinema and larger shops in the town centre.

Summary

The purpose of this visit was an unannounced inspection to inspect the key national minimum standards. This assesses the progress the home has made with any statutory requirements and recommendations made at the last inspection.

National minimum standards were sampled in all of the outcome areas and identified the home has good strengths. These are in ensuring that young people are safe from bullying, providing individual support and high staffing levels, monitoring young people to ensure they do not go missing from the home and managing young people's challenging behaviours.

There are areas for improvement and these include an annual review of the statement of purpose, regular formal staff supervision, providing an annual development plan, producing an in-house safeguarding procedure and ensuring all management monthly reports are available in the home.

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

There were no actions raised at the last inspection.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people living at the home enjoy a healthy and well-balanced diet. Nutritious meals, which include using food from different cultures are provided, and where able, young people help in the planning of menus. Some young people living at the home have specialist healthcare needs for which they need a specialised diet. Members of staff work in close partnership with healthcare professionals, to ensure young people remain well nourished, fit and healthy.

Young people living at the home have complex healthcare needs. The healthcare needs of young people are promoted and members of staff provide exceptional levels of care. Each young person has a comprehensive healthcare plan, which identifies their specific health needs, what help they may require and any aids and equipment they may use. Members of staff have

developed excellent working relationships with healthcare professionals and parents, to ensure that each young person receives a consistently high standard of healthcare.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Personal information relating to each young person is stored safely and securely. Young people living at the home are treated with dignity and respect. There are sufficient bathrooms, showers and toilets, to meet the needs of the young people accommodated and personal care needs are dealt with in both a sensitive and discreet manner. Each young person has their own bedroom and they are enabled and supported where possible, to attend to their own personal care needs. The home has policies and procedures in place, which explain what action members of staff should take, when it is necessary to search a young person's bedroom. A room search log is maintained and there have been no occasions when it has been necessary to search a young person's bedroom.

There are policies and procedures in place for dealing with complaints in an effective and timely manner. There have been no complaints made since the last inspection. Young people living at the home have access to complaints information and they are encouraged to make their needs known. Complaints information for young people is clearly written using colour, symbols, pictures and plain English. This format is excellent to help aid understanding. Members of staff working at the home have not received training in the complaints process, although it was noted that this has been scheduled to take place in the near future.

Young people living at the home are protected from exploitation and abuse. A copy of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) procedures are available in the home and the home has policies and procedures in place relating to child protection. There have been no child protection referrals made since the last inspection. All members of staff working at the home have undertaken formal training in child protection.

The home has policies and procedures in place, with regard to countering bullying and young people are protected from being targeted by bullies. Some young people living at the home are louder and more vocal than others and may unintentionally intimidate their peers. Members of staff at the home provide close supervision for all young people and they work very hard to protect young people from feeling intimidated. There have been no recorded incidents of bullying since the home opened.

The home has policies and procedures in place with regard to what action staff should take, if a young person is absent without authority. There have been no occasions since the home opened, when a young person has been absent without authority. Members of staff provide consistently high levels of supervision and care to young people to help keep them safe.

The home has policies and procedures in place, relating to the safe holding or restraint of young people and members of staff have received appropriate training. Restraint records are retained within a separate bound and numbered book used specifically for that purpose. The manager and staff promote socially acceptable behaviour through encouragement and rewards. A small number of young people have been held or restrained at the home since the last inspection. The home also has policies and procedures in place, relating to the sanctions that can be used to help young people improve their behaviour. Members of staff prefer to use less punitive

measures to help young people change their behaviour, such as guidance and encouragement. Sanctions are rarely, if ever, used.

Young people are protected from fire and other hazards within the home. There are thorough and robust systems in place to ensure that young people, members of staff and visitors to the home are kept safe and free from hazards. Health and safety risk assessments are carried out at regular intervals and regular fire drills are carried out.

The home has a very stable, consistent and committed staff team. There are good recruitment and selection processes in place. Safety checks are carried out to ensure the suitability of each applicant. Each member of staff has provided references from previous employers or those that know them. The files are very well ordered and include an up-to-date photograph of each member of staff, to help ensure proof of identity.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people living at the home receive individual help and support when they need it, or when they request it. Each young person has their own key worker and meetings between them which take place at frequent intervals. Key workers review each young person's stay at the home following each visit, in order to ensure essential information is recorded. The progress of each young person is closely monitored and their care plan amended in line with changing needs and individual progress.

All young people living at the home attend school. The manager and staff at the home, offer daily practical support and ongoing encouragement to young people, to help ensure their regular attendance at school. Practical help with developing skills for daily living is provided to all young people living at the home. In addition, young people are encouraged and supported with their hobbies and interests. Young people are encouraged and assisted to develop their own community presence.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Young people living at the home are appropriately placed. Each young person has a thorough and detailed placement plan, which outlines what their exact needs are and how they will be met. The admissions process is needs led and specific to each young person. Staff members talk regularly with young people, to discuss issues affecting their lives, to make them feel at ease and to see if they are happy living at the home.

The needs of young people are continually reviewed and close liaison regularly takes place with parents, health care professionals and teaching staff to ensure essential information is shared. The manager and members of staff regularly attend review meetings with partner agencies, changing needs are quickly highlighted and appropriate action is taken to meet those needs. Partnership working in this manner is essential if young people living at the home are supported to progress and develop. The work of staff, and the promotion of partnership working is something to be commended.

The service provided at the home is a short break service and young people continue to live at home with parents. Contact between staff at the home and parents is both positive and essential,

in order to meet the needs of individual young people. Members of staff are in frequent contact with parents, to ensure that young people have a positive experience from staying at the home.

The home has a comprehensive admissions policy and procedure, this includes arrangements for children to visit the home before a placement is agreed and their wishes and feelings will be discussed. The admissions process to the home is very thorough, it is needs led and it remains flexible, to meet the diverse needs of all the young people who live there.

Meetings with young people take place at regular intervals. Records examined show that these meetings are written in a format that aids understanding and actively seeks the opinion of each young person. Records show that the home listens to the opinions of all young people, about what the home does well and what can be improved. In addition, the records show that the meetings address issues of safety and the well-being of each young person.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is satisfactory.

The home is not furnished and equipped to meet the needs of the young people who now use the service. A decision has still not been made as to the future direction of the home and this is reflected in the basic nature of a lot of the furnishings and fabric of the home. The quality of decoration and repair in some communal areas is not of a good standard due to wear and tear and the local authorities own health and safety audit has identified safety risks for young people.

Members of staff work hard to keep the home clean and tidy throughout and try their best to provide a homely atmosphere.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The young people receive an individual service, designed to meet their personal needs and preferences. Staff have a good knowledge of the young people and they try to make sure their needs are being met at all times.

The home has an appropriate statement of purpose that provides information about how it operates, however this has not been reviewed and updated annually. There is a young people's guide that provides a useful introduction to the home.

The records could not confirm that members of staff receive the right amount of formal supervision each month. This is needed, to confirm that the work of staff members is being monitored by the manager and that staff are looking after young people in a safe way.

Young people receive the care and services they need from competent staff. Training for National Vocational Qualification Level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People is available to staff and training records confirm that staff receive training in the required areas. They can also access short courses that cover specific needs of young people. There are clear arrangements in place for members of staff to deputise in the absence of the manager. Staff rotas have designated handover periods built into them in order to help ensure essential information is shared quickly.

The arrangements for the internal and external monitoring of the home and the care and welfare of the young people are appropriate. The Registered Manager monitors, compiles and forwards to external managers the home's records and statistics, to identify any patterns or issues requiring action. The management monthly visits take place at the right times although the last two reports were not available in the home. There is not an annual development plan available for the home showing how the monitoring information is used, and identifying how the home is to be run and any changes that are to be made.

Young people's case files are properly kept and the records of their needs, development and progress, reflects each young person's individuality.

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
1	ensure that the Statement of Purpose is reviewed and updated annually (Regulation 5)	14 December 2009
28	ensure all staff receive the correct ammount of formal supervision each month (Regulation 27)	23 November 2009
33	ensure that there is an annual development plan produced for the home. (Regulation34)	14 December 2009

Recommendations

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

- ensure policy, procedures and guidance on privacy and confidentiality are available in the home (NMS 9)
- ensure in-house safeguarding procedure is produced and referred to the Local Safeguarding Children Board for comment (NMS 17)
- ensure that all monthly Regulation 33 reports are available in the home. (NMS 32)