

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	15 December 2009
Inspector	Liz Daniels
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	12 June 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

This service is situated in a residential part of the town. Respite care is provided for up to seven young people with learning disabilities, some of whom also have a physical disability; the service also has a condition that permits the permanent accommodation of up to two young people for a defined period, while an alternative placement is being sought.

The unit is located within a resource centre which also houses the social work team for children with learning disabilities. It is self contained, with its own entrance. Externally the unit is enclosed within its own gardens which also include a shaded patio. Within, there is a large lounge and dining area, with kitchen facilities nearby. The bedrooms are spacious, some with electric-powered beds, and ceiling tracking for hoisting is available throughout. A large playroom in the resource centre provides extra space for indoor activities and the sensory room there also offers a safe space. The outreach service is also based at the complex and there is some contact between young people attending there and the young people staying in the unit, when activities take place.

Off road parking is available in front of the complex and is possible in the road outside. A bus service passes the complex and the unit has its own adapted transport, enabling the young people to access activities and education in the local community.

The complex is run by the local authority and the young people who receive respite care at the setting live within the county. Copies of the Statement of Purpose are available from the unit. A young people's guide and a DVD presentation of what the unit is like are also given to new young people entering the service.

Summary

This unannounced inspection was the second visit to the unit for the year April 2009 to March 2010. The service was judged as outstanding at the key inspection in June 2009; the aim of this inspection was to inspect those standards that ensure the young people are safe and to inspect the progress made in implementing the recommendations previously made. The manager was not at the unit during the inspection but the visit provided the opportunity to meet with several of the staff and many of the young people while they enjoyed their Christmas party.

Excellent arrangements continue to meet the young people's health needs, and keeping the young people safe remains an integral part of how the unit is run. The staff remain proactive in their approach, readily introducing new ideas to enhance the young people's care and develop the service they offer. However, although details of behaviour management are included in the regulation 33 monitoring, records of sanctions and physical interventions are not signed to confirm they are scrutinised during the visit.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Two recommendations were issued at the last inspection and both have been met. As a result, comprehensive menus in written and pictorial format, as well as consistent record keeping,

confirm a healthy nutritious menu is provided for all the young people. Similarly, staff information held at the unit now enables the manager to lead and monitor staff recruitment.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

The meals for the young people continue to be prepared in a well-designed, spacious kitchen. A menu is planned which now includes alternative choices suitable for those young people with specific dietary needs; a pictorial menu is also being introduced to clearly identify all the food provided for the young people. In addition, the food they eat is now consistently recorded in their daily logs; this enables the staff and each young person's family to clearly track that the young people are eating a varied, nutritious diet that meets their specific needs. Meals are happy, sociable occasions; the staff and young people eat together in the dining area, and all the staff are appropriately trained.

The standards in this outcome group have not all been fully inspected; however, discussions during this inspection confirmed that the outstanding practices found to be in place at the last inspection continue. The judgement for this group of standards therefore remains as found at the full inspection in June.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

The young people's privacy is respected and any information about them is handled with sensitivity. Any room searching, entering rooms or sharing of personal information continues to be underpinned by comprehensive procedural guidance. Single rooms that are lockable from the inside provide privacy and the staff knock before entering. They support the young people in using the unit's telephone to make private calls to their families and, wherever possible, a mixed staff group is on duty, enabling sensitivity to gender issues. Personal care is appropriately managed, either in the room or in a well-equipped bathroom.

Formal complaints continue to be well managed through the local authority complaints officer. Similarly, the staff are very responsive to any concerns raised informally by the young people, strongly believing that they have the right to complain and that their concerns must be taken seriously. Very positive feedback from parents confirms that they believe concerns are acted upon and they are kept informed. A complaints log is maintained although there have been no entries since the last inspection.

Comprehensive safeguarding policies and procedures remain in place and the local safeguarding procedures are also available for reference whereby the welfare of the young people is promoted. Past practice demonstrates that the staff are alert to and respond appropriately to any concerns or allegations made.

The unit continues to promote that bullying is unacceptable and the staff ensure there are minimal opportunities for it to take place. Consideration for those who are likely to bully as well as those who are vulnerable results in careful planning of the groups of young people accommodated, as well as appropriate staffing levels to allow good supervision. The staff are very alert to what constitutes bullying, and its incidence is minimal. In the event, records are maintained and strategies put in place to reduce the risk of it re-occurring.

Similarly, clear strategies ensure those young people at risk of unauthorised absence are identified and that the staff are responsive; this continues to result in no incidence of absence outside the complex's boundaries. The unit's policy outlines that if an absence occurs, records are maintained as events unfold and the police are involved when appropriate. If required, the young people can then meet with their social worker when they return, to discuss their reasons for absence; they can also contact the independent person who visits the unit.

The good measures used to manage the young people's behaviour are resulting in minimal physical interventions or sanctions being needed. The staff respond very positively when the young people behave well and are constructive when their behaviour is inappropriate. The unit's comprehensive records are well monitored as part of the unit's quality assurance, although the logs are not signed to confirm they are scrutinised during the regulation 33 visits. All the staff are trained in behaviour management techniques; they continue to encourage the young people to express their views and support them in developing strategies they can use to manage their feelings.

Robust measures maintain the safety and security of the young people. The necessary risk assessments continue to be undertaken; similarly, positive steps to protect against the risk of fire and other hazards continue. Equipment is appropriately checked and the necessary contracts are in place. Some outstanding work recommended by the local fire authority is being appropriately managed.

Visitors are well vetted and robust recruitment measures are undertaken for the safe recruitment of staff. Staff files are held by the local authority's personnel department; in addition, the written evidence to support the recruitment process is now being retained by the manager. This enables her to manage and monitor the recruitment of new staff.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is not judged.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is not judged.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is not judged.

Organisation

The organisation is not judged.

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 Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

Standard	Action	Due date
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Recommendations

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

- ensure all behaviour management records are signed to confirm they are reviewed as part of the visit to fulfil Regulation 33. (NMS 32)