Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	5 August 2009
Inspector	Thomas Webber
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	7 January 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 home provides care and accommodation for up to 10 children and young people, aged five to 18 years who have a learning disability and who may also have a physical disability. The home provides overnight short breaks.

The home is primarily divided into two units each catering for a different age group, although there is some flexibility within these to meet the needs of children and young people. One unit provides care for five to 12 year olds and the other provides care for 12 to 18 year olds. However, there are times where both groups mix for activities, meals or outings where appropriate.

The home is situated in an urban residential area and has its own transport facilities.

Summary

This unannounced interim inspection took place over one day. This forms part of the annual inspection programme to examine the standard of care and services provided to young people.

This home continues to provide a good standard of care to children and young people which ensures that good outcomes are achieved for them. This is supported by observations made and the documentary evidence seen.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

There were two requirements and three recommendations identified at the last inspection. The requirement relating to sufficient numbers of qualified staff has been complied with and the other relating to the heating of the home is under review.

The recommendations relating to medication and decoration of the home have been addressed. The third recommendation relating to the night and morning routines is under review.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The home promotes healthy eating for the children and young people and a varied and satisfactory menu is established. Individual sheets are also maintained which record food actually eaten by the children and young people. Pictures of the meals provided are on display in the dining rooms together with the Makaton symbols to assist those children and young people who require a visual aid. Fresh fruit is readily available.

Safe medication storage practices are maintained with all medication being kept secure in facilities in line with best practice. Suitable systems are established for the recording of medication administered.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Staff respect the children and young people's rights to privacy and dignity which are balanced with the need to offer them the protection and safety they require. Most children and young people require some form of care and support, including help to meet their physical needs. Children and young people's records are stored securely and staff ensure that their information is confidentially handled.

A clear complaints procedure is established, which is produced in suitable formats for adults, children and young people. This is discussed with them to ensure that they understand the procedure and copies are also provided to them. Children and young people's parents/carers are encouraged to raise any concerns they have about the children and young people's care. A comments box is also established to encourage feedback from parents/carers and professionals. Two complaints have been received since the last inspection which were promptly dealt with. One compliment of appreciation has also been received about the care and support provided by the staff.

Children and young people live in a safe environment where their welfare is promoted. Staff have a very good understanding of the needs of them and how to safeguard them. Suitable policies and procedures are in place in respect to child protection and staff have easy access to the Local Safeguarding Children's Board procedures. Staff have received training in this area of practice.

An anti-bullying policy is established and this is conveyed to the children and young people. Bullying is not seen as an area of concern. Staff remain vigilant and are aware of the children's and young people's needs, the effect of the combination of specific individuals and the need to monitor the behaviour between them. There is an anti-bullying resource pack which is used with individuals or on a group basis depending on the children's and young people's ability and understanding to work through the effects of their behaviour.

A clear system is in place for the reporting and recording of any event where children or young people go absent without consent. There have been no incidents of this since the last inspection.

Clear guidelines, protocols and strategies are established to manage any challenging behaviour of the children and young people. The home is pro-active in identifying triggers so that staff can take positive action to help children and young people to manage their behaviour more appropriately. A positive handling plan is also established for those who have specific challenging behaviours. Children and young people's negative behaviours are regularly monitored, recorded and dealt within an agreed way by staff. Staff receive physical intervention training which is used as a last resort unless it has been identified as the agreed strategy to deal with the specific behaviours of the children and young people. Other appropriate methods of managing behaviour are also used. Suitable records are maintained of all sanctions and physical interventions used. However, these are not always regularly monitored by management and the format used for sanctions does not fully comply with the relevant standard.

Robust health and safety policy and practice guidelines are in place to ensure that the staff, children and young people are appropriately safeguarded. Children and young people and staff regularly practise fire evacuation procedures and the various fire safety records are accurate and up to date.

Previous checks have confirmed that robust staff recruitment practices are established for the careful selection and vetting of all new staff to ensure the protection of children and young people. No new staff have commenced employment since the last inspection, therefore, this standard could not be assessed on this occasion.

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 good.

Children and young people receive respite care in a home that is maintained to a good standard, being clean, tidy and comfortable. Children and young people are provided with their own bedrooms and the home continues to provide sufficient communal space to meet the individual and collective needs of them. In addition the home provides sufficient bath and toilet facilities with aids and adaptations, including specialist-bathing facilities to meet the specific needs of the children and young people.

Consideration is being given to the relocation of the heating and water utilities to the home so that it can be self-regulated. However, no date has yet been agreed. A number of areas within the home have been redecorated since the last inspection to enhance the living environment for the children and young people.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children and young people are looked after by a staff team who are trained and competent to meet their needs. Staff are supported and encouraged to increase their knowledge and skill base through attendance at appropriate training courses. The home has exceeded the minimum ratio of 80% of residential child care staff and above having achieved the National Vocational Qualification at Level 3 in the Care of Children and Young People. However, the home has now extended the requirement for this qualification to include care assistants and waking night staff.

The home is committed to providing sufficient staff on duty to meet the individual and collective needs of the children and young people. This is achieved by normally providing between three and four members of staff on duty within each unit throughout the waking day. Two members of waking night staff are on duty with one member of staff sleeping in each night. Regular casual or existing staff are used to cover any staff shortfall. The organisation is currently reviewing the practice regarding the staffing arrangements for evening and morning routines. This is to improve the continuity and consistency that children and young people receive in line with best practice.

Children and young people live in an environment where positive and relaxed relationships exist between them and the staff. Staff are very committed to providing a high level of care and carry out their duties in an attentive and respectful manner.

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
24	ensure that all parts of the home used by the children and young people are consistently and adequately heated and sufficient quantities of hot water are provided. (Regulation 31(2)(a)&(4)(a)).	1 October 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 sanctions and physical intervention logs are always regularly monitored by management and the format used for sanctions fully complies with this standard (NMS 22)
- ensure that every effort is made so that staff working with children and young people in the evenings are also involved in their morning routine in order that they receive continuity and consistency of care. (NMS 30)