

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	17 June 2009
Inspector	Paul Taylor
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	22 December 2008
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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 provides respite care for up to five young people with learning or physical disabilities. It is a spacious, detached house with a large garden, a sensory room and a lounge and kitchen/dining area on the ground floor. Each young person has their own room with overhead hoists. The home also has a lift for ease of access to the first floor. There are two large bathrooms which are equipped to meet the needs of physically disabled young people.

Summary

At this unannounced inspection all the key standards were assessed. The home provides an excellent standard of care to the young people who have complex needs. The staff team work very hard to ensure that care and support are delivered in a detailed and sensitive manner. The staff team are very well managed and systems operated in the home ensure that monitoring assesses the standard of care on a regular basis. There was one recommendation made as a result of this inspection.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

No actions or recommendations were made at the last inspection and the standard of care continues to be outstanding.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

The young people are offered a healthy and varied diet. All the young people's particular preferences and dietary needs, whether based on health reasons or cultural reasons, are known and met. Young people are given choices of menus and are encouraged to help prepare meals and to do chores, such as clearing away and washing up, commensurate with their understanding and abilities.

All staff receive training in food handling in order to ensure that high standards of hygiene and food safety are maintained.

The complex health needs of the young people are very well met. Appointments with health professionals are arranged and specialist input is gained to ensure that the young people's emotional and physical health is promoted. Ongoing liaison with health professionals is achieved by key working staff. All young people have written consent from their parent or guardian with regards to the administration of medication or first aid.

The home has a rigorous system for ensuring that the administration of medication is closely monitored and regularly audited by the manager.

The health and dietary needs of the young people are promoted to an excellent level by the staff in the home.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

The home has suitable policies and procedures in place relating to confidentiality. All confidential information is kept securely stored. There are very clear and detailed guidelines for the staff to follow with regards to the provision of personal care for each young person. The guidelines are contained in each young person's individual support plan. Each young person's individual support plan is endorsed by their parent or guardian.

The home has a robust complaints procedure in place. Young people are made aware of how to complain in written and pictorial formats which are displayed on the walls of the home and in the young person's handbook. The members of staff are aware that due to their learning difficulties, some of the young people may not have the cognitive ability to understand what a formal complaint is. However, the staff are aware of how each young person communicates and how they may display their displeasure in their own individual way. Formal complaints are usually made by parents and the home keeps a detailed log of how these have been addressed, the time it took to resolve the complaint and the action taken to rectify the complaint if it has been upheld.

All members of staff receive training in child protection and are aware of what to do and who to speak to if they have concerns about a young person's welfare. Additionally they have access to local safeguarding procedures and the organisation's child protection policy. Detailed records are maintained on any child protection concerns and how they have been pursued and resolved.

The staff are aware that whilst some of the young people may not understand the concept of bullying, there is a need to supervise the dynamics of the group in case behaviour is displayed which may cause alarm or distress to others. The high ratio of staff to young people underpinned by detailed care plans, ensures that issues can be resolved promptly.

There is a clear protocol in place for the staff to follow in the event that a young person goes missing from the home. The learning difficulties of the young people means that they are extremely vulnerable if left unsupervised in the community. The staff supervision of the young people is therefore close and staffing ratios are high. No young people have gone missing from the home.

The complex behavioural needs of the young people living at the home are responded to in an individual, well planned and sensitive manner. All young people have completed behaviour support plans individual to their particular issues which are tailored to address their personal anxieties, fears and frustrations. Staff respond appropriately to challenging and aggressive behaviour in a calm and measured fashion, clearly understanding the behaviour of the young people in their care.

Most of the young people do not have the cognitive ability to understand the use of sanctions. However, where sanctions are imposed, they are clearly recorded and endorsed by the manager. The use of restraint is rare in the home. If it is used, a record is kept of the incident and this is also checked by the manager to ensure that the use of physical intervention was appropriate. All members of staff are trained in the method of restraint used in the home.

Risk assessments are made with regards to the premises and activities in which the young people partake. The majority of these are regularly reviewed and updated.

Regular checks of the premises and safety equipment, such as fire alarms and hoists, are carried out. External professionals also underpin these checks with their own checks and tests. Fire drills also occur on a regular basis. Each young person has a personal emergency evacuation plan. This is an individual plan which addresses their learning difficulties and need for assistance when they have to be evacuated in an emergency.

The organisation has a thorough recruitment process which ensures that any prospective member of staff does not start work until all necessary checks have been completed.

It is clear that the commitment of the staff team, supported by the systems operated in the home, ensure that the safety and wellbeing of the young people is promoted and valued to a very high standard.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Individual support to the young people is carefully and sensitively planned. Each young person's needs are known and each young person's individual support plan specifies in detail what support they need. External specialist input is accessed by the staff team where needed. This includes ensuring that families receive support, such as interpreters, so that the approach of the home is seen as inclusive. Each young person's cultural and religious beliefs are known by the staff team and seen as an opportunity to enjoy and celebrate differences between individuals.

All the young people attend local special schools or colleges. The staff ensure close liaison with educational placements in order to share goals, achievements and progress of the young people. All the young people have personal education plans. Records are kept of individual's achievements, annual reviews and statements of educational need.

The young people have the opportunity to take part in a range of activities both in and out of the home. Preferences for activities are ascertained from their parents and guardians. The staff also observe what the young people enjoy when partaking in activities in the home or when going out with members of staff. Activities include trips to the cinema, parks, swimming, cycling and trampolining.

The staff know each young person's method of communication and work very hard to ensure that the young people are able to communicate their feelings through their chosen different methods.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Care plans are detailed and thorough. They provide detailed guidance on how each young person is to be supported. The plans also include what goals are in place in order to help them develop life skills and as much independence as can be achieved, bearing in mind their profound learning disabilities.

The staff team are aware how each young person prefers to communicate. Different forms of augmented communication are used. For example, by the use of objects of reference, smell,

sign language as well as having excellent knowledge of how each young person may use behaviour as a form of communication.

Reviews occur on a regular basis. The home is innovative in ensuring that young people's experiences of living in the home are shown at reviews by using a DVD made of them during a respite visit. This gives all members of the review, including the young person's parents, an opportunity to see what life is like for each young person at the home. Additionally a regular newsletter ensures that all interested parties are kept up to date with outings, activities and events occurring in the home.

Contact arrangements with families and friends are clearly recorded in the young people's care plans. Any restrictions on contact are known. Visitors are welcome although, as the home provides respite care, the young people are able to be with their families whilst not using the service.

The home endeavours to ensure that each young person is introduced to the home at a speed that they can cope with. The staff are very sensitive to the need for careful planning of admissions, particularly when bearing in mind each young person's learning difficulty and abilities to comprehend change.

The staff work very hard to ensure that the views, opinions and feelings of the young people, no matter how they are communicated, are valued and seen as a vital part of running the home. The staff team are very aware that the young people have complex communication needs and the manner in which they communicate is entirely individual. Outstanding support is provided by staff, whilst ensuring the children are empowered to make their own choices on as many aspects of their lives as possible.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

The staff team advocate for the young people during the transition process to adult care. Records are maintained of the planning of this process and it is clear that the staff work very hard to ensure good outcomes, sensitive planning and high levels of support to both the young people and their families. They work hard to ensure that the transition process is sensitively planned and commensurate with each young person's ability to cope with the change.

The home is well maintained, tidy and safe. Staff carry out regular checks on the environment to identify any maintenance issues. The home is comfortable, bright, cheerful and child-friendly. Any necessary aids for the children, such as hoists are in place. The furniture is comfortable and the house has a homely feel. Bedrooms are personalised when children arrive at the home for respite care. Decoration around the home is colourful and displays reflect different cultures and beliefs.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The home's Statement of Purpose is up to date and accurately reflects what the home intends to achieve. There is a children's handbook, which explains using pictures and symbols, what it is like to live in the home.

All members of staff receive regular supervision and appraisals. Additionally there are regular team meetings to discuss the running of the home and the young people's behaviour and progress. Policies and procedures, which are regularly reviewed by the manager and senior members of staff in the organisation, are readily available.

Team meetings are held on a regular basis. They are clearly minuted and include detailed discussions on the young people, their needs, progress and any incidents of note.

The training offered to the staff team is varied and regular. Over 80% of the staff team have achieved a National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People. There is a thorough induction plan which ensures that new members of staff are prepared for working in the home.

The staff team is very experienced and settled and this enables consistency to be achieved and a very high standard of care to be given. Shifts are planned with detail in order to outline what the staff need to do to support the young people and to enable them to succeed in their goals.

Practice is monitored by an external manager who carries out regular visits to assess the standard of care provided. Reports written as a result of these visits are thorough and indicate which areas of the home need improvement. The manager in turn also regularly checks all the areas outlined in Schedule 6, such as restraint and sanctions, medication, accidents and admissions and discharges. The overall monitoring of records carried is of a very good standard.

The home seeks the views of parents via questionnaires. The response to these has indicated a high level of satisfaction with the standard of care given to the young people.

The young people's care plans are very well organised, regularly reviewed and updated and are subject to thorough checks by the key workers, supervisory staff and manager. All information is securely stored.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. Each young person's individual needs are known and met by the staff team. The staff team value and promote differences between any person's background, whether they be a young person, parent or a member of staff. The acknowledgement of differing needs for this complex group of young people ensures that the staff provide care based on individuality. Diversity is seen as an opportunity to learn from each other and to be enjoyed and celebrated.

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 that all risk assessments are updated and endorsed. (NMS 26)