

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Paul Taylor
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	15 December 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 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. Care provision is the subject of detailed preparation and seen as an opportunity to develop each young person's experiences and abilities. The staff commitment and attitude ensures that the young people have their right to experience and enjoy being part of the community promoted and valued. 'I'm proud to work here' was a comment made by a member of staff. The manager and staff team work well together and evaluate their practice to ensure that high standards are maintained. Attention to detail is a significant factor in ensuring that high standards across all aspects of the service are maintained. Rigorous internal and external monitoring of the home underpins the high quality of service offered to the young people. One recommendation was 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

At the last inspection two recommendations were made. These were in relation to ensuring that details in incidents reports were also included in the book used to record physical interventions. Although this has been complied with to a large extent, there was one incident where the length of time a young person was held was not in place in the book; although the details were in the incident report. The length of time the physical intervention occurred was a matter of seconds and there was no risk to the young person. The recommendation remains relating to ensuring that the staff record the details correctly in the physical intervention log.

The second recommendation was relating to ensuring that specialist advice was in place when preparing an individual support plan. This advice is now in place and has been approved and endorsed by an occupational therapist.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

The staff know each young person's dietary needs and preferences. This includes having a detailed knowledge of whether the needs are based on cultural or medical issues. The young people are offered a varied and healthy diet which meets their identified and assessed needs. Young people are also offered the opportunity to prepare food commensurate with their abilities and are given good levels of encouragement and support from the staff in order to achieve this.

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. The complex health needs of the young people are met to an excellent standard by the use of multi-disciplinary input and advice for the staff team. Clear and detailed individual protocols are in place for the staff to follow with regards to the carrying out of personal support and intimate care as well as epilepsy. 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 of the young people both physically and emotionally is valued and promoted to an excellent standard.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Privacy and dignity are valued and respected by the staff team and sensitive information is stored securely. Clear individual protocols are in place with regards to the provision of personal care and intimate needs.

While the home has a complaints process in place for the benefit of the young people, the staff are aware that many of them do not have the cognitive ability to know what constitutes a formal complaint. Therefore, the staff have an intimate knowledge of how each young person communicates and how they show displeasure. Formal complaints, normally made by parents or carers, are recorded and a clear record shows how they have been addressed and resolved. The home also keeps a record of compliments received from parents and professionals. These far outweigh the complaints made to the service.

All members of staff receive child protection training and are up-to-date with child protection procedures. Additionally they have access to local safeguarding procedures. They are clear as to their obligations in the event that they have concerns about a young person's wellbeing. Detailed records are maintained on any child protection concerns and how they have been pursued and resolved. The home's approach with regards to ensuring that any child protection matters are addressed, is rigorous and involves close liaison with all agencies.

The levels of intense support offered to the young people ensures that behaviours which can impinge on members of the group can be addressed and resolved promptly. Whilst some of the young people may not understand the concept of bullying, the staff make it clear to them via whatever means that they communicate, that behaviour which can cause distress to another is not condoned.

The staff are very aware of the high levels of vulnerability which the young people have due to their learning difficulties and lack of understanding of risk. High levels of support, both in the community and in the home ensure that no young people have gone missing. There are clear procedures in place should this occur.

Detailed individual support plans which have been developed in co-ordination with parents and relevant professionals such as social workers and teachers, outline what behavioural support and reassurance each young person needs. The plans address each young person's particular issues and what strategies should be used to manage distress or anxieties.

All members of staff are trained in the method of physical intervention used in the home. Incidents where physical intervention is used are rare and incident reports are written together with records made in the dedicated book maintained for this purpose. Reports of each incident are detailed, but the time that a young person may have been held is not always included in the restraints book.

The individual support plans outline what sanctions may be acceptable for some young people. Some young people have learning difficulties which may make the use of sanctions inappropriate. Where sanctions have been agreed between the home, parents and social worker, this is recorded clearly. Sanctions imposed are recorded in the book set aside for this purpose and are regularly checked by the manager and external monitoring manager to ensure that they are relevant and as agreed in the support plans.

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 (PEEP). This is an individual plan which addresses their learning difficulties and need for assistance when they have to be evacuated in an emergency.

Detailed risk assessments are carried out and reviewed regularly with regards to the environment and activities in which the young people partake. The approach to risk management enables the young people to take part in activities such as swimming, going to the beach and trips to London, in a safe and supervised manner. The right of the young people to take part in exciting and interesting activities, despite their vulnerability due to learning difficulties, is promoted by the approach to risk assessment used in the home.

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.

The young people's safety and wellbeing is valued and promoted to an excellent level in the home.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Each young person's individual needs are planned for and met in a detailed and thorough manner. Families are encouraged to have an input into developing the support plans as are relevant professionals such as teachers and social workers as well as nurses and occupational therapists. The holistic approach ensures that all needs, whether physical or emotional, can be met to a very high standard.

All the young people attend either local schools or colleges. Key workers ensure close liaison with the young people's educational settings and will visit them on a termly basis. Additionally, the home will ensure that targets for each young person are shared between the school or college and the home. For example, recognising money and then being able to use it in a shop; progress is then recorded and shared.

The individual support offered to the young people, combined with a 'can do' attitude by the staff team, enables the young people to participate in a variety of interesting activities. The robust risk assessment process and knowledge of the young people ensures that they have

their right to enjoy a community presence, promoted and valued. Activities enjoyed by the young people include swimming, bowling, shopping, trips to the London Eye and trips to local festivals and events such as the circus. Each young person's preferences for activities in the home are also known and encouraged, for example, listening to music, playing on the computer and using the sensory room.

The support, combined with the staff attitude and commitment to enrich their experiences, ensures excellent outcomes for the young people.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Rigorous assessments are made on all relevant and available information regarding the physical, social, behavioural and emotional needs of each young person. Such assessments are incorporated into plans of care which highlight their individual needs. Parents and other relevant professionals views are gained in the preparing of each individual support plan. Care plans clearly guide staff in caring for the young people. The care plans are regularly reviewed, assessed and updated by both the key worker and manager. The quality of the plans enables the staff to provide an excellent standard of care with clear and detailed guidelines in place for them to follow.

The support plans inform the process and speed of a young person's introduction to the home. Visits are encouraged for the young people before they actually stay overnight and these visits often include the young person's family.

Reviews occur on a regular basis and include a progress report which includes photographs of examples of how each young person is supported at the home and which activities they have been involved in.

Key workers keep in regular contact with parents of the young people as well as others, such as health professionals, social workers and teaching staff. This enables care plans to be amended in line with the changing needs of young people as they occur.

Contact arrangements are known by the staff team. The staff team will facilitate contact for the young person, for example by assisting with telephone calls, with members of the young person's family during periods of respite care.

Each young person's method of communication is known to the staff. The different forms of communication used by the young people include sign language, vocalisation and augmented communication systems using pictures, symbols and objects of reference. The staff knowledge of each young person's communication and behaviour together with information from parents and professionals ensures that each young person's preferences are known about how they wish to be cared for in the home.

Staff interaction with the young people is sensitive and supportive, allowing them to make choices whilst ensuring that their safety and wellbeing is protected and promoted. The young people are seen to be relaxed in the company of the staff who care for them.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is outstanding.

The attention to detail in how young people are cared for ensures that they and their families' are prepared for transition to adult establishments as they become older. Placements are identified as soon as possible and the staff liaise with them to ensure that the necessary information is shared. They will also visit the next placement with the young person and their family. This approach assists in ensuring that a continuity of care can be maintained.

The home is well maintained, tidy and safe. Staff carry out regular checks on the environment and equipment to identify any maintenance or safety 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. The large garden is well maintained and has popular and well used equipment such as an adapted swing, trampoline and go kart. The quality of the facilities offered in the home are excellent.

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 to ensure that they are supported in caring for the young people. Team meetings occur on a regular basis and the minutes include discussions of each young person's needs and progress.

Training opportunities are regular and include subjects such as child protection, physical intervention, first aid and autism awareness. A rolling programme in the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) at level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People is offered to all members of staff. Over 80% of the staff team have achieved this qualification.

The staff team is very experienced and has a very low turn over. This has enabled them to achieve consistent approaches and care. These facts combined with high levels of motivation and ongoing training, have ensured that the young people are offered an excellent individualised service.

Monitoring of key records is carried out by the manager and senior members of staff. This quality assurance and auditing system ensures that records are maintained to a high standard. External managers also visit the home on a monthly basis to carry out monitoring visits. The reports written as a result of these are detailed and include areas which they consider need to be addressed or improved. The manager then writes a response to recommendations made as a result of these visits. The robust nature of the internal and external monitoring ensures that the wellbeing of young people is at the forefront of how the service operates.

The young people's files and care plans are very well organised and contain all the relevant and necessary information for the staff to be able to plan to meet their needs.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. The complex needs of the young people ensures that the staff have to plan to care for them in a detailed and individualised manner.

Difference is acknowledged, valued and enjoyed and the service values and promotes each young person's unique circumstances and background.

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
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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 the details in incident reports relating to physical restraint are also included in the restraint log. (NMS 22.9)