

Inspection report for Children's Home

Unique reference number	SC032439
Inspection date	08/02/2011
Inspector	Paul Clark
Type of inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	12/08/2010
--------------------------------	------------

© Crown copyright 2011

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

You can obtain copies of The Children Act 2004, Every Child Matters and The National Minimum Standards for Children's Services from: The Stationery Office (TSO) PO Box 29, St Crispins, Duke Street, Norwich, NR3 1GN. Tel: 0870 600 5522. Online ordering: www.tso.co.uk/bookshop

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 outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for the service.

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 children's home offers respite care for young people with a severe learning and physical disability and/or complex health needs, from the age of five up to their 18th birthday. Currently the home works with 55 young people and each is allocated a minimum of 24 nights accommodation per year, although the home reports a degree of flexibility with this, and the number of nights can be increased dependent on need. It does not provide an outreach support service.

The home has eight beds and comprises two separate living units. One unit is equipped to care for those young people who have physical disabilities, while the more able and active young people are cared for in the other unit.

The home is part of the disability fieldwork team, and families using the home may also receive a package of community support services.

Summary

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

This interim, unannounced inspection found that in terms of children being healthy, staying safe and organisation, the home continues to provide an outstanding service. The other outcome groups were not inspected on this occasion and these will be the focus of the next inspection. Of particular note is the high level of management and supervision of staff who are in turn, well qualified and trained.

Improvements since the last inspection

There were no actions or recommendations made at the previous inspection.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

The home continues to provide children with an excellent level of health care. Children's health needs are assessed by placing social workers and are included in the placement agreement which details the care, services and resources that will be made available by the home to meet a child's particular needs. More detailed care plans are constructed by the home in collaboration with young people and their families. Each child is allocated a link worker who is a member of the care staff team and who has a full knowledge of their individual needs and their personal information, as it is contained in the care plan. These plans are reviewed annually.

They are clearly written and provide a good reference point for the home in identifying the best way to address a child's health needs.

Children's food preferences and dietary requirements are recorded and are made known to the catering staff who tailor meals to meet individual needs. When it is necessary to provide liquidised food, the cook takes care to ensure it is presented in an appealing manner. Pictorial signs in the dining room are easily accessed by young people to help them indicate food choices and preferences. There is an abundance of fresh fruit and vegetables available and children are encouraged by staff and from pictorial displays to eat healthy foods. Food storage and preparation areas appear clean and well ordered. All staff are trained in food hygiene and infection control. These measures provide young people with healthy and nutritious meals and food preparation is conducted under hygienic conditions.

The administration and application of medication to children with complex needs can involve the application of invasive methods. Staff who administer medication are appropriately trained and this training is regularly updated. There are effective systems in place to receive, store and record medication received from parents and from school. Children's General Practitioners are asked to inform the home of any changes or variations to prescribed medication. The home reviews its medication policy annually. All care staff receive annual training in the management of an individual child's health needs. These needs are often quite complex. This specialised training is undertaken by a qualified nurse who is responsible for assessing staff proficiency in the various techniques to be applied. Additionally, the instructions and guidelines for staff in the management of children's individual health needs are contained in their case files. All of these rigorous measures are conducted to an exacting standard which ensures that children's ongoing health needs are subject to a high level of care.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

The home has a range of policies and procedures in place which are intended to ensure that children stay as safe as possible. These policies include safeguarding children, bullying, complaints, the application of sanctions, physical restraint and guidance for staff on action to be taken in the event of a child going missing. Staff are properly inducted, trained and supervised in the application of these policies and procedures. The home has recently constructed a training checklist for new staff which includes training in all of these key policies.

The home maintains a complaints record book. No complaints have been received by the home since the last inspection. The home's complaints policy is contained within its Statement of Purpose and in the information documentation about the home that is given to parents and other stakeholders. There is also a summarised version of the policy in symbol form which is contained within the young person's guide. The home also produces a brochure for young people called 'If you are not happy....' which advises young people how they can make a complaint. These information methods

help children to know how they can let it be known if they are unhappy about any aspect of their care. Children may also raise concerns with their link workers at their frequent meetings. The authority has also appointed an independent advocate who visits the home for three hours every week and who children may raise any concerns with. These numerous avenues offer children and families the opportunity to raise any concerns about the service and further ensure children's safety.

Staff have online access to the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures and they receive annual training specific to safeguarding children with a disability. Staff also receive training on the authority's whistle blowing policy. The home has an exceptionally high number of care staff on duty by day and by night to ensure the safety and well-being of the children placed. With the close supervision applied, opportunities for bullying are negated as is the likelihood that children will go missing.

The home has a written policy on the use of sanctions and a record is kept of any sanctions applied. This record is reviewed and monitored by senior staff. Sanctions are also recorded in a child's confidential diary. The home has an appropriate policy on dealing with challenging behaviour and staff receive training in this area. Staff also receive annual training in the application of physical restraint and a record is kept of any incident where physical restraint is applied. This record is monitored by senior staff. Behaviour management systems are rigorously monitored by senior managers to ensure that they are fair and non-abusive.

The home constructs and administers a number of risk assessments designed to reduce the likelihood of harm occurring to children living in the home. These include assessments of various situations and activities undertaken. Staff are required to sign and date the assessment to indicate that they have read it. The authority's health and safety officer conducts an annual visit to the home and produces a report about the safety aspects of the home with recommendations if necessary. These measures help to ensure that the living environment is safe for children and staff.

Fire procedures written in symbol form are in place in each child's bedroom advising them what to do in the event of a fire. The fire safety book records and dates when alarm checks are made, when fire evacuation drills have been carried out, when fire equipment checks have been carried out and when staff have attended fire safety training. These are all in keeping with fire authority recommendations and a fire officer visit has been carried out within the past year. Fire evacuation principles have been agreed with the fire authority and night staff agree a fire evacuation plan on a daily basis. The home has appointed a designated fire safety officer within the staff group who has the responsibility of ensuring that fire safety measures are correctly applied. Staff are fully conversant with fire evacuation procedures. Fire safety methods in the home are rigorous and designed to keep children safe.

All staff are trained in basic first aid and senior staff attend a four day training course on first aid. There are first aid boxes located in key areas around the home. A designated officer is responsible for ensuring that these are kept fully stocked. An online record is kept of accidents occurring which is monitored by the authority's

health and safety officer. All staff are offered the opportunity to be inoculated against the risk of Hepatitis B. All staff receive training in manual handling.

The home has two minibuses which are maintained by the council and which care staff have to undertake weekly safety checks on. Staff who drive the minibuses have to show evidence of the validity of their driving licences and must inform the authority if they have acquired penalty points.

Staff personnel files are centrally held, although the home also retains copies of the relevant vetting documentation. Staff undertake enhanced Criminal Records Bureau checks before appointment and these are followed up every three years. Three references are taken on each applicant, one of which must be their most recent employer and these are followed up verbally. A medical self-disclosure is made by applicants which is followed up by an occupational health officer enquiry when thought necessary.

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 outstanding.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. This is evidenced in a number of ways. Children are included in staff recruitment practice and there is extensive provision of specially adapted equipment and resources to support both the daily living and recreational play of children with a disability. Staff are trained to ensure that they have the specialist skills to support the personal care needs of individual children and there is a correct gender balance within the staff group. There are effective corporate policies on equal opportunities, racial awareness and disability awareness. Staff have received training within the past year in sexuality and young people with a disability, and equality and diversity. The provision of an equality and diversity manual for staff includes a wealth of information about different cultures

and ethnicities. This range of measures to promote equality and diversity help children with a disability to develop their self-esteem and sense of well-being.

The home's Statement of Purpose is comprehensive and clearly written. This was last reviewed in December 2010. The home has an array of information documents available for parents and professionals. The information documents for children and the children's guide have been written in user-friendly formats. The provision of clear information documents gives children and parents a knowledge and understanding of the purpose and function of the service.

The staff group are well supported and managed. All staff complete an induction programme which gives them the necessary information to undertake their role. Staff undergo a six-month probationary period to ensure that they are able to carry out their identified role. Staff receive training in all the core areas necessary to ensure the care and safety of the young people accommodated. Staff receive one-to-one supervision monthly and there are monthly team meetings. All care staff are trained to National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) at level 3 in Health and Social Care for Children and Young People and senior staff are trained to NVQ at level 4. The Registered Manager and the assistant manager both have the NVQ at level 4 and both have the Registered Managers Award. All staff undergo an annual performance appraisal which identifies their training and developmental needs. This high level of qualification and ongoing training ensure that children are cared for by skilled and competent staff.

The home notifies the regulatory body about all items required by the Schedules of the national minimum standards (NMS). The authority's fieldwork manager conducts Regulation 33 visits as required by the NMS and produces a report which details any necessary actions required. These visits are unannounced. The home constructs an annual business plan which reviews the quality of care and makes plans for the development of the service. The management and staff group undertake an annual team development day where areas for service development are identified. The home conducts a questionnaire survey of all stakeholders including young people, parents, placing social workers and key professionals as part of their quality assurance. Ongoing quality review demonstrates a commitment to service development and improvement.