

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	12 February 2010
Inspector	Paul Clark
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	21 October 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

Canon's House offers respite care for young people with a severe learning and physical disability and/or complex health needs, from the age of eight up to their 18th birthday. Currently Canon's House works with 50 young people and each is allocated 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 The Lodge and The House units. The Lodge 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 House unit.

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

Summary

This key unannounced inspection found that an outstanding level of care is provided by a well-trained, well-managed and dedicated staff group. The resources, activities and facilities available in the home have been designed by the service to provide disabled young people with the highest level of care and life experience. The support given to the families of disabled young people is of a high standard.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

One recommendation was made at the previous inspection which was to ensure that the review of the quality of care includes all items contained in Schedule 6 of the Children's Homes Regulations 2001. This has been achieved.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

The home keeps a record of individual children's dietary needs and their food preferences, and tries to meet these as far as possible. The record of meals provided indicates that there is a balanced and nutritional approach to food provision. When it is necessary to provide liquidised food, the cook takes care to present these food items separately and to provide them in an appealing manner. Pictorial signs in the dining room are easily accessed by young people to help them to indicate a choice of food. Food storage and preparation areas appear clean and well ordered. An environmental health officer inspected the hygiene and safety of the kitchen area in March 2009 and found this to be of a very good standard.

Assessments of children's needs are clearly written and contained in their care plans. These include details of their ongoing health needs. These are drawn up by the placing social worker in collaboration with families and appropriately trained external professionals to ensure that all necessary care equipment is in place and staff are aware of these needs. Parental permission is sought for the use of specific equipment outside of the needs assessment, for example, the sensory rooms and the trampoline. All care staff receive annual training in the management of

complex health needs. This is undertaken by a qualified nurse who is responsible for assessing staff proficiency of technique. Appropriate instructions and guidelines for staff in the management of individual health needs are retained in the files of young people.

Staff who administer medication are appropriately trained and this training is regularly updated. There are effective systems to receive, store and record medication received from parents and from school. General Practitioners are asked to inform the home of any changes or variations to prescribed medication. The home reviews its medication policy annually.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

The provision of a range of key policies including policies on child protection, complaints, bullying, the application of sanctions and physical restraints, and guidance on the actions to be taken by staff in the event of a child going missing, help the home to keep children safe. Staff are acquainted with these policies through induction, supervision and ongoing training.

The home maintains a complaints record book. No complaints have been received within the past 12 months. The home has a written complaints policy contained within its Statement of Purpose, its parents/professionals information brochure and a summarised version of the policy is contained in symbol form 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 where they can make a complaint about their care. This is written in a well known pictorial communication system format. Information documents advise the reader that complaints may be made directly to Ofsted.

Staff have online access to the Local Safeguarding Children Board policy and procedures. Staff receive annual training on child protection specific to disabled children. Staff have received training and guidance on the authority's whistle blowing policy. The staff respect a young person's wish for privacy and confidentiality when entering bedrooms as is consistent with good parenting and the need to protect the young person. The home has a sufficient number of care staff on duty by day and by night to ensure the safety and well-being of the young people placed. Incidents of bullying and of a child going missing without authority are minimised by the high levels of supervision provided by the staff group.

The home has a written policy on applying sanctions and a record is kept of sanctions applied. This is reviewed and monitored by senior staff. A record of sanctions applied is also kept in the children's confidential diary and an incident reporting sheet is completed and sent to higher management. The home has an appropriate policy on dealing with challenging behaviour and staff are effectively trained in this regard. There is a record book of physical interventions applied which is monitored by senior staff.

Risk assessments are reviewed annually. The home's risk assessments file includes assessments of various situations and activities. Staff are required to sign and date the assessment to indicate that they have read it.

Fire procedures written in symbol form are in every child's bedroom. The fire safety record book shows evidence that alarm checks, evacuation drills, equipment checks and fire safety training are carried out within fire authority recommended frequencies. Fire evacuation principles

have been agreed with the fire authority and night staff agree the fire evacuation plan on a daily basis.

All staff are trained in basic first aid and senior staff receive a four day training course. There are first aid boxes in all key areas of the home. An online record is kept of accidents occurring which is monitored by the health and safety officer at County Hall. All staff are offered the opportunity to be inoculated against Hepatitis B. All staff are trained in manual handling.

Staff personnel files are centrally held, although the home also retains copies of relevant vetting documentation. The staff undertake Criminal Records Bureau checks every three years. Three references are taken on each applicant and these are followed up by a verbal check. A medical self-disclosure is made by applicants and followed up by an occupational health professional when necessary.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children's individual care needs are well detailed in their care plans which are appropriately reviewed. These include the identification of their favourite hobbies, interests and leisure preferences. Children attend their schools during the day. Staff link workers assume a key working responsibility for up to three children each and have a particular knowledge of their individual care details. They make an annual visit to the young person's home and make regular contact with their school through telephone contact, by home/school diary and by attendance at the school review. This is good practice and ensures a continuity of care.

The home has a routine schedule of activities including arts and crafts, cookery, music and personal development on workday nights. It also has an activity group which meets for one weekend each month, with care staff assuming responsibility for the weekend activities of seven young people. There is a activities booklet which provides information on the group and notes participation in community activities such as swimming or the cinema which are intended to develop a young person's social skills and development. The home has a minibus and a people carrier that may be used for trips and activities. Vehicle safety checks and driver proficiency are subject to routine checks. The home has a caravan on the coast which it uses during the summer.

The home is extremely family and community focused. This is achieved through the inclusion of families during Christmas and Easter festivities within the home and community fetes. The home has a number of internal quality assurance initiatives which are intended to consult the young people and their families about their living experiences within the home and to look at ways that this experience can be improved and developed.

The home has access to the council's children's rights officer and an independent advocate who visits the home on a weekly basis. Full details of how these officers may be contacted is contained within the home's information documents and is also displayed within the home.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Individually developed care plans are constructed by the home prior to a young person's admission to the home. These provide guidance and information on a young person's assessed

needs and personal care requirements. These plans are developed in consultation with parents and professionals involved with the young person and these are subject to review within appropriate frequency.

Young people's case files are comprehensive, up to date and clearly written. They contain appropriate risk assessments of various situations where a young person may be at risk and staff have to sign that they have read and understood these assessments. Parents sign their agreement for young people's engagement in various activities and the home's written protocols, including the protocol on the use of physical restraint.

Diary sheets record daily events occurring at the home and the behaviours and dispositions of individual children. Staffing shifts 'hand over' specific information about individual children. Education plans detail specific literacy, numeracy, social and behavioural targets. The files are audited annually by the Registered Manager.

The home link workers consult young people about their view of the quality of care by the use of a questionnaire and these are taken into account when planning activities, food choices and aspects of day-to-day living within the home. A senior care worker conducts a quality assessment of the standard of care provided based on consultation with the young people and other interested stakeholders. The home ensures that children are welcomed home each day by members of staff when they arrive home from school. Staff were observed treating children with dignity and respect.

The home constructs a life time booklet which details the stay of a young person at the home. This is given to them when they leave the home. It includes photographs of the home and of staff members, and of the young person's participation in various activities. It also contains useful information on personal care, sleeping, eating and drinking.

Preparation for the arrival of a new young person is undertaken by the appointed link worker who assumes responsibility for contacting the family and for arranging visits which allow a gradual but managed introduction to the home.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is outstanding.

The home is comfortably furnished and brightly decorated without institutional style or appearance. Young people's artwork is displayed on the walls of communal areas, providing a homely feel. The home is wheelchair accessible, and although it has a first storey, there is both a lift and stair lift to this level. The home has eight bright and comfortably furnished bedrooms with at least six young people staying each night. The bedrooms are of a suitable size and are light and airy. Two of the sleeping areas are designed to provide 'safe beds' for the security of children who may cause injury to themselves. They are never used to restrain young people.

Parents make financial contributions which stand as young people's pocket money and which they can use to participate in outside activities, for example, trips to leisure centres and swimming pools. The home keeps an appropriate record of cash held and cash transactions. Parents provide their children's personal requisites and toiletries although the home keeps stocks of these should children run out. Parents without the financial means to provide these contributions are supported by the home. Children attend all activities and receive the same amount of pocket money regardless of parental contribution. Parents provide their children

with enough clothing for their stay. The home has an internal laundry with appropriate facilities for the hygienic washing of clothing when necessary.

The majority of bedrooms have carpeted floors; where this is not the case this is seen to be determined by particular and individual need. There are an appropriate number of bathrooms, with one bathroom having an overhead hoist for use by physically disabled young people.

The home has a ball pool room and a sensory room which includes a vibrating water bed. The home has a large garden with trampoline and play areas with a cushioned surface, there is a paddock and a well-designed sensory garden which is wheelchair accessible and has raised flower beds and a pergola with a countryside view. The garden is well lit allowing it to be used during the evening. There are gates to some of the downstairs rooms and kitchen areas. These are to prevent accidental injury. Keypads to external doors prevent unsupervised exit or entry to the building.

An activity transitions group meets for one weekend each month. This group is designed to help older young people nearing the end of their care to prepare for independent living. This includes domestic household care such as washing and cleaning, using public transport, and managing their finances. When a young person leaves the home the link worker is expected to be fully involved in this transition. The work of this group is evaluated annually.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. This is evidenced by the provision of adapted equipment for physically disabled young people and the provision of play and relaxation sensory rooms for disabled people. All staff are trained to a high level in the care of disabled people and for specific aspects of particular disabilities. Food provision offers choice and variety from a range of international cuisines. The authority has policies on equal opportunities, racial awareness and disability awareness which staff are well acquainted with.

The home's Statement of Purpose is comprehensive and clearly written. This was last reviewed in December 2009. The home has an array of information documents available for parents and professionals. The information documents and children's guide have been written in user-friendly formats, thus enabling young people to form a better awareness of their living environment.

The staff group are well supported and well managed. All staff complete an induction checklist and have to undergo a six month probationary period. Staff training includes all the core areas necessary to ensure the care and safety of young people. Staff receive monthly one-to-one supervision and there are monthly team meetings. All care staff are trained to National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) at level 3 in Child Care and senior staff to level 4. The Registered Manager and assistant manager have NVQ at level 4 and both have the Registered Managers Award. All staff undergo an annual performance appraisal which identifies their training and development needs.

The home notifies the regulatory body about all items required by the schedules of the national minimum standards. The home's area service manager conducts Regulation 33 inspection visits as required by the national minimum standards. These visits are unannounced and generate an inspection report. The home constructs an annual business plan which reviews the quality of care and makes plans for the development of the service.

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

There are no recommendations.