

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Paul Clark
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	13 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

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 a caseload of 50 young people and each is allocated 24 nights accommodation per year, although the home reports a degree of flexibility with this and the 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

An outstanding level of care is provided by a well trained, well managed 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

Records of sanctions are now cross checked between the sanctions book, the children's confidential diary and the incident reporting sheet.

Staff guidance with regard to whistle blowing has been made explicit to them during training.

Fire drill evacuations are now carried out during the night.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Because the children accommodated at the home may change on a daily basis it is not possible for the cook to produce a rolling menu plan. However, the home keeps a record of individual children's dietary needs and their food choices and preferences and tries to meet individual preferences and needs. The record of meals provided indicated 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 and help them to indicate a choice of fresh fruit. Fridge and freezer temperatures are checked on a daily basis. All kitchen and food preparation areas are kept in a clean, hygienic and well ordered manner.

Children's assessments of need 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/guidelines for staff in the management of individual health needs are seen to be retained in the files of young people.

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 who also sign a form to allow the home to administer medication. The home reviews its medication policy annually.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

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. The home maintains a complaints record book. No complaints have been received within the past 12 months.

The home makes available to staff online access to the Local Safeguarding Children's Board and Child Protection Policy and Procedures. Staff receive annual training on child protection specific to disabled children. Staff have received training and guidance on the authorities 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. With close supervision, opportunities for bullying are seen to be negated as is absence without authority.

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 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. A record book of physical interventions applied is in place and this is monitored by senior staff.

Risk assessments are reviewed annually. The home's risk assessments file is seen to include 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 is carried out within fire authority 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.

Personnel forms are reported to be centrally held, although the home also retains copies of relevant documentation. The staff undertake Criminal Record Bureau checks every three years. Three references are taken on each applicant although these are not routinely 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.

Care staff link workers assume a key working responsibility for up to three children each. 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 brightly coloured activities booklet which provides information on the group and notes participation in community activities such as swimming, 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 in 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/siblings 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. 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.

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.

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

Diary sheets record meals taken by young people whilst at the home. 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 return and these are taken into account when planning activities and aspects of day to day living within the home.

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 staff members, and the young person's participation in various activities. It also contains useful information on personal care, sleeping, eating and drinking. It has been sympathetically developed and is seen as good practice. 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. 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.

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 with raised flower beds and 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.

The Canon's House Activity Transition (CHAT) group meet 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, 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 the CHAT 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. Food provision offers choice and variety from a range of international cuisines. The authority has policies on equal opportunities, racial awareness and disability awareness.

The home's Statement of Purpose was comprehensive and clearly written. This was last reviewed in November 2008. 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.

The staff group are well supported and managed. All staff complete an induction checklist and have to undergo a six monthly probationary period. Staff training includes all the core areas necessary to ensure the care and safety of young people. Staff receive monthly 1:1 supervision, there are monthly team meetings. All care staff are trained to NVQ Level 3 in Child Care and senior staff to Level 4. The Registered Manager and Assistant Manager have NVQ Level 4 Qualifications and both have the Registered Managers award.

All staff undergo an annual performance appraisal which identifies their training and development needs.

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. It does not contain all of the items included in Schedule 6 as required by Regulation 34.

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 review of the quality of care includes all items contained in Schedule 6.
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