

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	30 January 2010
Inspector	Trevor Hall
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	12 August 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

This home is operated by a local authority as part of its residential provision for children with disabilities. The home is registered as a children's home for up to six young people at any one time and offers respite care only for children and young people with severe learning and/or physical disabilities. Young people of either gender, between the ages of five and 18 years can use this respite care facility. Periods of respite vary according to individually assessed needs and only apply for 43 weekends a year and for five weeks scattered through the school holidays. Currently there are over 20 children and young people using the service throughout the year.

The unit is on the ground floor of a two-storey, detached building which was purpose-built originally as a children's home. The respite service, is now contained within about two thirds of the ground floor area, with the other third used as a day nursery, the upstairs accommodation is currently used by an area social worker team attached to the Disability Services Team, however notice has been served on both of these facilities and soon the whole of the premises will be exclusively used by the respite care home.

The centre is situated within a short bus ride of local amenities and has a large, soft floored outside garden and a play area suitable for those who use a wheelchair. The rear of the centre has views over open land and is not overlooked. There are car parking facilities at the front and side.

Summary

The inspection was an unannounced interim inspection, the home's last key inspection, was undertaken on 12 August 2009, when no actions and five recommendations were raised. The home was judged at that point to be satisfactory. This inspection looked at all key standards in the area of staying safe and re-visited each standard where an action or recommendation had been raised at the key inspection. This inspection found a home that had appropriately addressed the issues previously raised, no new actions were raised, but one recommendation was repeated. Young people currently using the respite service offered by this home receive good support and stay in a home where their safety is well maintained. Now that the home has formalised its management arrangements and has re-established a regular system of external monitoring there are no longer any regulatory issues to artificially depress the judgement that is applicable. This is a good home that is well managed because young people benefit from staying in an environment that is centred on safely meeting their individual needs.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the home's last inspection, fire safety has improved as the home has introduced night time fire drills to familiarise both staff and young people, with the night time evacuation procedures. These procedures themselves have been updated and improved and are now known by all staff.

The management arrangements for the home have been formalised by the home's manager successfully completing her application to become registered manager. The external monitoring

of the home, by the owning authority, has improved with all monthly management visits having been conducted since the last inspection. These reports are appropriately detailed and give a very accurate description of the functioning of the home.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is not judged.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Young people are clearly benefiting from a service that has an a very good focus on safeguarding and protection matters. Operational policies, procedures and staff guidance are used effectively to promote everybody's safety and welfare. Young people benefit from living in a home where there are good arrangements in place to ensure staff are trained and well informed about effective safeguarding practices. Young people are fully protected because staff recognise and understand their role in child protection and they know what action to take if there are concerns.

Information held on behalf of all young people is correctly stored in lockable facilities. Staff are aware of their responsibilities to promote privacy and confidentiality, and their practice is consistent with the organisation's policies and procedures. The facilities and arrangements for showering and bathing ensure young people have their privacy respected.

Due to the level of staffing, supervision of the young people and their disabilities, bullying behaviour is not an issue within the home. The young people do not run away, they do not have the ability to be out alone. Therefore, staff take steps to ensure they are protected in line with written policy and procedures to ensure their safety.

The welfare of young people is promoted by a robust complaints policy. There is an effective system in place to record any concerns made by parents, social workers or advocates making complaints on behalf of the young people. Staff are equipped and trained to fulfil their role and responsibilities regarding protection and safeguarding. The procedures in the home fully comply with the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures.

Behaviour management policies are robust and strategies have as their prime objective the creation of a safe, supportive environment, which considers the age, understanding and ability of the young people. Staff encourage appropriate behaviour and appear very comfortable with their role and it is clear they understand the young people they care for. All staff are trained to manage inappropriate behaviour and physical intervention is used only to prevent young people harming themselves or others.

There is positive and effective interaction between staff and the young people. Staff are comfortable with their role and records identify they clearly understand the need for boundaries while maintaining a high quality relationship between themselves and young people.

Young people live in a home that provides for their physical safety and security. Close supervision of young people is an important and a prominent feature in the way staff manage perceived risks and the young people's vulnerability. A strong focus is also given to management of their health and safety. There are appropriate risk assessments for all aspects of the safety of the premises and grounds, including serious incident planning.

The records kept in the home show that robust procedures are in place to protect young people from fire. All the fire prevention systems are tested regularly. Staff and young people undertake fire drills in excess of requirements, including drills at night. The home has recently updated its night evacuation procedures and has a record that demonstrates that all staff are aware of the fire procedures. Relevant certificates show that regular servicing and maintenance is completed on all equipment. A certificate of public and employer liability insurance is displayed as required.

All visitors to the home are monitored and required to sign in the log book. These procedures ensure all young people living here are protected from potential risks.

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 good.

Young people, parents, carers and staff have access to a Statement of Purpose and young people's guide, which outlines the principles, practice and the services that they can expect from the home, efforts are in hand to try to make both of these documents more accessible to the young people.

Since the home's last inspection the home's manager has successfully completed the formal process of becoming the home's registered manager. Young people continue to be supported by a caring team of staff who are well supported by their manager, however, the number of staff that have acquired the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) at level 3 in caring for children and young people remains below the 80% requirement of the national minimum standards. This continued shortfall in the home achieving the expected 80% of staff having completed their NVQ at level 3 in childcare is due more to changes in personnel rather than by any lack of commitment to, or provision of, adequate training. The home's registered manager was able, however, to demonstrate that all staff currently deployed to the home, other than those currently undertaking their probationary employment are enrolled on suitable training courses.

All staff now receive supervision from a senior member of staff each month, which supports them to undertake their roles and increase their knowledge and competence. New members of staff receive fortnightly supervision and are supported through an induction programme. Regular team meetings are held, which ensure that the staff team understand priorities for working with young people, and a consistent approach is delivered.

There is a clear staffing structure with clear lines of accountability in the home. The home's registered manager is appropriately qualified, skilled, experienced and provides effective leadership to the staff team and young people. She is actively involved in the day-to-day operation of the home and has clear expectations that the staff team will achieve the best

possible outcomes for all young people in their care. Young people are provided with very good levels of supervision and support because staff manage their time effectively and are deployed in a way that meets their needs. There is a clear staffing structure with clear lines of accountability in the home. There are appropriate deputising arrangements in place in the absence of the home's manager and there is a formal on call system, if additional support is needed. The use of agency, temporary or casual staff, is kept to a minimum to enable young people to become familiar with their carers. The staff group try to cover most absences themselves, rather than deploying unfamiliar staff.

Staff are well supported and receive a wide range of training, which enables them to provide a good level of care to all young people placed at the home. The training needs of the staff are identified and monitored through supervision and annual appraisal.

The home's registered manager has developed a clear process to monitor the quality of care being provided by the home. Monthly monitoring visits are undertaken by a senior manager within the authority accompanied by an elected member. These reports are available to staff. The reports that were available indicated that these visits are robust and thorough giving an accurate picture of the functioning of the home.

The individual records for the young people in the home are very comprehensive, their needs, development and progress are recorded to reflect their individuality. They contain a range of information about young people's history and progress, which matches the requirements set out in Schedule 3 of the Children's Homes Regulations 2001.

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 as soon as possible that 80% of care staff have completed the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People (NMS.29.5).