

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	9 November 2009
Inspector	Mary Timms
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	28 April 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 provides residential support for families who have children with a learning difficulty, some of who may also have a physical disability. There are six registered placements for children of either sex between five and 18 years of age. The service primarily provides planned short stay respite placements, however, is able to provide two emergency or assessment placements for longer periods of need.

The home has a range of individual and communal areas for children. Two lounge areas and a dining area are provided in the main house with further lounge and dining areas facilitated in linked accommodation. A sensory room is available. Children have individual bedrooms and bathrooms are equipped with adaptations to support the needs of children using the service. The home has several separate outside areas which are available to children, one of which is equipped with suitable outside play equipment.

Summary

This was an unannounced interim inspection, planned to review safeguarding arrangements and also the progress the provider has made with an action and recommendations set on the previous full inspection.

A range of improvements have been made since the previous inspection which raises the quality of service children receive in some areas. However, this inspection identifies that the quality of arrangements in the outcome area of staying safe and organisation are inadequate. Economic wellbeing has been reported on, the judgement remains as set on the full inspection due to the limited areas reviewed.

The overall quality rating is inadequate.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

The provider has taken action to meet the required action to ensure that an application is submitted to Ofsted for the position of Registered Manager. A Registered Manager is now in post and is responsible for the management of the home.

Staff training has improved since the previous inspection, however, the provider has not yet ensured that areas of core training have been completed by all staff. A further recommendation has been made.

The registered person has not fully actioned the recommendation to ensure that there is evidence held within the home of the recruitment process followed for individual staff. The Registered Manager has commenced an audit of records held at head office, with a view to collating the necessary records. Progress will be monitored on the next inspection.

Placement planning documents do not yet set out agreed targets and planning to support children's developing independence. The recommendation has been repeated within this report and progress will be reviewed on the next inspection.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is not judged.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is inadequate.

Safeguarding arrangements are in place to support children's care during respite visits to this home.

Staff undertake safeguarding children training. Safeguarding arrangements are monitored by external managers who visit the home on a monthly basis.

Records viewed on this interim visit support the findings of the key inspection and confirm that required checks are undertaken prior to staff commencing work in the home.

Staff undertake behaviour management training. Physical intervention is rarely used and is a last resort. No sanctions have been used to manage behaviour since the last inspection. Staff have developed ways of working with individual children based on their needs and consultation with parents. Behaviour management strategies include, separating the group, interacting one to one with children and regularly changing activities. Behaviour management plans are produced, however, some plans lack guidance to clarify how known behaviours will be managed. This raises the potential for an inconsistent approach to be taken.

The safety of the environment is monitored in some areas. Water safety arrangements are informed by assessment and guidance from an outside agency. The water temperature is monitored closely in bathrooms used by children. There are inconsistencies in the manner in which portable electrical appliances are tested, some have not been tested since 2007 which highlights that the provider's own policies and procedures are not always adhered to. Staff undertake fire safety training. A fire safety risk assessment was undertaken in March 2009 which guides care arrangements and also identifies some areas for improvement. The guided improvements have not been fully met and there has been a lack of management monitoring of the progress of actions to ensure that children are fully safeguarded.

Personal evacuation plans are produced by the service for individual children to inform their protection from fire, however, they lack adequate detail to fully inform evacuation procedures and ensure that children are fully safeguarded.

Families are made aware of service complaints policies and procedures. Children are provided with complaints guidance using symbols and appropriate language to support their understanding. No complaints have been received about the service since the last inspection. Low key issues of concern raised by parents or children are acted upon. However, they are not recorded and addressed through the home's complaints procedures. This restricts the manner in which the handling of such issues will be monitored by internal and external managers.

Children's right to privacy is respected. Placement plans set out details of personal care requirements, including guidance in relation to respecting areas of privacy and dignity. The Registered Manager confirms that she monitors practice and is, 'completely confident that the staff team are committed to respecting children's privacy'.

Children are protected by the security of premises, which prevents children from leaving the home without staff supervision. No occasions of children being found to be missing have occurred since the last inspection.

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 good.

Placement planning continues to lack guidance and targets in relation to children's developing independence. This means that needs may not be fully met.

Organisation

The organisation is inadequate.

Children are not always supported by staff who have undertaken all areas of core training, including infection control, refresher training in the area of behaviour management and equality and diversity. The staff team do not currently represent the need for 80% of the team to have completed the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People, as guided by national minimum standards.

There is poor management oversight of fire safety arrangements, highlighting that management monitoring fails to ensure that children are fully safeguarded.

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
26	take adequate precautions against the risk of fire. In particular this relates to the need taken action in response to improvements identified in the fire safety risk assessment undertaken by a fire safety agency in March 2009 (Regulation 32.1)	27 November 2009
26	take adequate precautions against the risk of fire. In particular this relates to the need taken action to ensure that personal evacuation plans are appropriately detailed to guide the safe evacuation of children. (Regulation 32.1)	27 November 2009

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure procedures do not restrict the issues which may be complained about. Maintain a written record of the person making a complaint, the date of the complaint, nature of the complaint, action taken and outcome of the complaint (NMS 16.3)
- ensure that there are clear written procedures and guidance for staff in relation to behaviour management. In particular this relates to the need to produce individual behaviour management plans setting out details of how known challenging behaviours will be managed (NMS 22.2)
- ensure that positive steps are taken to keep children, staff and visitors safe from risk from fire and other hazards. In particular this relates to the need to ensure portable electrical appliances are tested in line with the service policies and procedures (NMS 26.1)
- ensure that daily life in the home provides opportunities for all children, appropriate to the age and needs of the child, for the development of skills needed for future independence. In particular this relates to incorporating identified and agreed targets within placement planning (NMS 6.7)
- ensure that staff receive training and development opportunities that equip them with the skills required to meet the needs of the children and the purpose of the home. In particular this relates to the need to ensuring that all staff have undertaken appropriately recent training in behaviour management, infection control and equality and diversity and have completed NVQ Level 3. (NMS 31.1)