

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Mary Timms
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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 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 home provides residential support for families who have children with a learning difficulty, some of whom 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 also 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. Children have individual bedrooms. Bathrooms are equipped with adaptations to support the needs of the children using the service. The home has two separate outside areas where suitable play equipment is provided.

Summary

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

This was an unannounced interim inspection. The visit was planned to review the progress the provider has made with the two required actions and two recommendation set on the previous full inspection. The visit also reviews care arrangements against the staying safe outcome area. The findings from this interim inspection are underpinned by the evidence from the full inspection undertaken in June 2010. The overall service judgement is unchanged on this interim inspection and will be reviewed on the next full inspection.

While there are areas of effective safeguarding systems in operation, shortfalls are also identified which highlight that children are potentially vulnerable in some areas.

Improvements since the last inspection

The registered person has not fully responded to the issues arising on the previous inspection. A required action was set on the previous inspection in relation to the need to ensure that all staff have undertaken training identified by the service as 'mandatory' including refresher training at appropriate intervals. While updated training has been facilitated in the area of behaviour management there continues to be gaps in arrangements. Some permanent members of staff have either not attended initial or refresher training in mandatory areas, including fire safety, infection control and food hygiene. This raises the potential that staff may not have the skills and knowledge that they require in order to meet children's needs.

The service has improved the arrangements for enabling staff to undertake National

Vocational Qualification training. There are now two in-house assessors which has enabled further staff to commence this course. A recommendation was set that there should be improved management monitoring of staff training records. This has not yet been actioned. Individual training records are not always current and do not contain a personal development plan.

While there have been no further complaints received about the service the Registered Manager confirms that in future, a full record will always be kept which will set out the details of the complaint and the response made to the concerns.

Further required actions and recommendations have been set within this report. The progress the provider makes will be monitored by Ofsted.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is not judged.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for by experienced members of staff. They are protected by safe staff recruitment procedures, however, on occasions records fail to evidence the established explanation for identified gaps in employment history. While the service has a mandatory training programme for staff, which includes several courses relating to the protection of children, these courses have not been attended by all staff.

Children and families are provided with information which guides them how to raise a concern or complaint. A leaflet for children is also on display in the home using simple language and symbols. Staff recognise that some children may not be able to make a verbal complaint and are confident that they 'know children well and would notice quickly if something was wrong'. Staff understand the importance of respecting children's privacy and know how to prioritise this when providing personal care.

Children are not fully protected in relation to the safety of the environment. Records fail to confirm that all areas identified for action in the latest fire safety risk assessment have been addressed. Fire alarms are not always tested on a weekly basis as directed by service procedures. The home has a delegated 'fire warden' however, additional training for this position has not been facilitated. It is also noted that these issues had not been identified within management monitoring checks.

Children are protected by the operation of keypad locks on entrance and exit doors. As a result vulnerable children are unable to leave the home unsupervised. Behaviour management plans and risk assessments set out the agreed levels of supervision for

each child. Physical intervention has not been used since the last inspection. There is a limited use of sanctions which are in-line with planned behaviour management strategies. However, records do not always fully clarify the events and the level of detail required by national minimum standards and children's homes regulations. Staffing levels are appropriate and enable staff to respond quickly to support and protect children when necessary. Staff are aware that the behaviour of some children may cause distress to others. The groups of children staying together for a short break are thoughtfully planned to reduce any potential upset.

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 not judged.

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/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Std.	Action	Due date
31	ensure that all staff receive appropriate training. In particular this relates to the need to provide both initial and required refresher training in the areas the service has identified as	25/02/2011

	mandatory (Regulation 27.4)	
26	ensure that there is adequate precautions taken against the risk of fire. In particular this relates to the need to ensure that a weekly test of the fire alarm system is undertaken (Regulation 32.1a)	25/02/2011
26	ensure that there is adequate precautions taken against the risk of fire. In particular this relates to the need to complete the relevant paperwork to confirm that all actions set by the fire safety agency who undertook the last fire safety risk assessment have been completed. (Regulation 32.1)	25/02/2011

Recommendations

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

- ensure that there is a written record of all training for all staff maintained in the home (NMS 31.4)
- ensure that all staff have a personal development plan (NMS 31.4)
- ensure that risk assessments are carried out, recorded in writing and are regularly reviewed. In particular this relates to the need to complete a risk assessment for lone working in the area known as the portacabin and also for the use of the unheated soft room to ensure that the room temperature is appropriate (NMS 26.4)
- ensure that a record is maintained in relation to the use of sanctions which includes all areas set out in national minimum standards (NMS 22.9)
- ensure that there is a written record of the recruitment process followed in respect of all staff. In particular this relates to the need to keep a satisfactory written explanation of any gaps in their employment history (NMS 27.1)
- take positive steps to keep children, staff and visitors safe from risk from fire. In particular this relates to the need to provide the delegated 'fire warden' with appropriate training after consultation with the local fire safety authority. (NMS 26.1)