

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	7 January 2010
Inspector	Karen Forster
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	19 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 local authority children's home is a purpose built, single-storey building that provides short break care for up to six children with disabilities. It is appropriately adapted to address the needs of children and young people with physical and learning disabilities. Single bedrooms are available for each child. The home is situated on the outskirts of a town development.

There were no young people staying at the home at the time of the visit, because unfortunately due to the severe weather conditions and heating problems the service had been forced to close. However, Ofsted had provided young people with survey forms in accessible formats prior to the visit. The completed surveys were used to inform this inspection.

Summary

This visit is an unannounced interim inspection, which focuses on staying safe and the actions and recommendations made at the last inspection. The outcome areas included in the inspection are; staying safe; making a positive contribution; achieving economic wellbeing and organisation. This is a good service where young people's strengths and needs are well recognised and addressed by a motivated staff group. Areas for development include the provision of a consistent suitable air temperature within the building, the appointment of a registered manager and the inclusion of stakeholder feedback in the home's quality assurance programme.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

The last inspection raised three actions, that have all been suitably addressed by the provider. The review programme for young people now meets the statutory frequency of twice yearly meetings. The external monitoring of quality in the home now meets the requirements of regulation 33, with elected members visiting the home each month and reporting on the quality of care provided within the service. The young people's records now include all relevant personal data, to inform the care provided within the home.

There were five recommendations raised at the last inspection, two of which have been addressed by the provider. The home's placement plans have been developed and now include measurable care targets and reflect the mobility aids used by individuals. Positive attempts have been made to provide a staff team which is made up of male and female staff. Male casual staff can be used on rota, to provide a male role model for young people.

Although some progress has been made towards the remaining three recommendations relating to; training for staff in behaviour management; the provision of a competence based induction programme and the review of gender specific colour coded files for young people. These recommendations have not been fully addressed, therefore they are reissued following this 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 good.

Child protection procedures are good, with young people's welfare a priority. Staff confirmed that they are aware of their responsibilities within the home's safeguarding procedures and have received appropriate training. There are clear personal care protocols in place for young people, that promote the privacy and safety of individuals. These arrangements keep young people safe during their stay in the home. The local authority's safeguarding manual is available within the home to complement the home's clearly written safeguarding procedures.

The home maintains a good procedure for the collection of compliments and complaints from service users. There is a pictorial communication tool used within one to one contact between young people and staff, which captures the compliments and concerns regarding the service from individuals. Where complaints are lodged with the service, the recording system indicates that the issue is suitably recorded by staff and followed up by senior staff within the service. This means that complaints from young people and stakeholders are given the appropriate level of attention.

The home's policy regarding physical intervention meets the standards, however not all staff have received instruction in the safe control of challenging behaviours. This was the subject for a recommendation at the last inspection. The preferred model of physical intervention includes de-escalation and only uses restraint as a last resort, which meets the standards and helps to keep young people safe. The recording of restraints meets the standards. There are written accounts containing all of the elements required by the standards, for the very few episodes of intervention within the home.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is not judged.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

There is a positive balance of assessment and care planning information contained within the young people's records. This enables staff to care for young people well and promote their acquisition of self help skills. This means that young people learn new skills during their stay within the home. Following the recommendation at the last inspection the service has developed new placement plans, which highlight each individual's strengths and clearly record their care targets. This means that the care programmes for young people are well known by staff, and progress is recognised and celebrated.

The frequency of young people's care reviews has been increased, following the action at the last inspection. This means that young people have regular opportunities to contribute towards their care reviews and the frequency of these review meetings meets the statutory frequency of twice a year.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is satisfactory.

The home provides good quality domestic style facilities which are highly consistent with the needs of the young people using the service. This means that building adaptations and specialist

equipment are provided to suit the needs of the resident group. However at the time of the inspection, there was no heating within the premises. Consequently, as the service is short stay in nature, the provider had closed the service. While this means there is no impact on young people, the standards are not fully met in this area.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The establishment's staffing levels are suitable for the numbers of young people and their care needs. The service benefits from the supervision of a well qualified and experienced leadership team, however there is no Registered Manager in place for the home.

The new unitary authority has revised many of the home's policies which provide clear procedural guides for staff and outline the authority's policy regarding such issues as; safeguarding; personal care; medication and moving and handling. Senior staff demonstrate a good awareness of the authority's policies within these areas. The gender balance of the staff team was the subject of a recommendation at the last inspection. The staff team is predominately made up of female staff, however the provider now has the use of male casual staff which can help redress the balance on some shifts.

There was a recommendation made at the last inspection to provide a competence based induction programme, such as the induction standards for care staff provided by the Children's Workforce Development Council. The home's induction programme is mainly policy based, therefore this recommendation has not been fully addressed.

The frequency and content of the external quality monitoring of care practice within the home, has been greatly developed to match the demands of the regulations. This area was the subject of an action at the last inspection. The quality of care is now monitored very regularly by elected members, on behalf of the providing authority. The resulting reports meet the requirements of the regulations. However, there are small gaps within the internal quality assurance programme, where the senior staff member's account of the quality of care practice does not include feedback from young people, their families or social workers. The full requirements of regulation 34 therefore, are not met by the home.

The service maintains two well indexed files, that contain all of the young people's records as required by schedule three of the children's home's regulations 2001. The young people's personal data is consistent across the placing social worker's admission documentation and internal care planning records. This is a positive development since the last inspection, where an action was raised in relation to this issue. This means that young people's current and historical personal information is accurate, available to carers within the home and used well to inform young people's care. The recommended review of the use of colour coded records, that identify the gender of the subject has not been completed by the home. Therefore this remains as a subject for a recommendation following this inspection.

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
24	ensure that the premises are adequately heated throughout (Regulation 31)	8 January 2010
33	ensure that the internal quality monitoring system meets the requirements of regulation 34, especially in relation to the consultation with stakeholders (Regulation 34)	1 March 2010
34	provide a manager for the home that is registered with Ofsted. (Regulation 7)	1 March 2010

Recommendations

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

- ensure that all staff are suitably trained in the positive management of challenging behaviour (NMS 22)
- provide a competence based induction programme for new staff, such as the induction units provided by the Children's Workforce Development Council (NMS 31)
- review the use of different colour coded files for the records relating to female and male service users. (NMS 35)