

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Sharon Lloyd / Caroline Jones
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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 local authority children's home is a purpose-built, single storey building that provides short break care for up to six children and young people with disabilities. The home is situated on the outskirts of a town. It is appropriately adapted to address the needs of those with physical and learning disabilities. It has a very large, enclosed garden. Communal rooms include two lounges, a dining room, sensory room and ball pool. Single bedrooms are available for every child and young person. The home is staffed according to the needs of the children and young people present. The home provides waking night staff.

Summary

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

The inspection was made unannounced and focused upon the improvements made since the last inspection and the outcome area staying safe. It included observations of interaction between staff and children but no interviews were held with the three young people who were present during the inspection. The home has appointed a new manager. Otherwise, it has made little headway in addressing the shortfalls identified at the last key inspection and many of these are repeated. It continues to provide children and young people with a satisfactory service. Record keeping is a key area for development.

Improvements since the last inspection

Three actions were raised following the last inspection and two have been partially addressed. A permanent manager was appointed to the home in January 2011 and has submitted an application for registration to Ofsted. The appointment of a permanent manager is a key step towards developing and improving the service. Parental permission for the use of electronic monitoring has been sought and is now available in respect of most, but not all children. The home is recommended to continue to seek this information from those parents who have not yet responded. An action to maintain all the required information on children's confidential files has not been met. This means that staff do not have all the information they need to provide children with high quality, individualised care. This requirement for action is repeated.

Seven recommendations for good practice were made. The home has made little progress in meeting them. One was in relation to being healthy and has not been addressed. The home does not keep a record of breakfast and lunch menus. It cannot demonstrate that it provides children with nutritious and well balanced meals. An action to address this is raised.

Two recommendations were made relating to organisation. One was to set out the home's staffing policy in the home's Statement of Purpose and to include in it the information listed in Schedule 1 of the Children's Homes Regulations. This has not been addressed so the home is not providing parents and others with sufficient, up to date and accurate information about the way it operates. A requirement for action is raised. The second was to improve recording so that it accurately reflects the level of care provided. The level of recording has not improved so this recommendation is repeated.

A recommendation to consider installing curtains or screens around baths and showers to maximise privacy and dignity was made in relation to staying safe. The home continues to consider the best way to address this. The recommendation is repeated.

The home was recommended to make sure that children who are able to leave the premises safely without staff, are not prevented from doing so by the security measures in place. The home cannot demonstrate that it has addressed this and cannot show through risk assessment that this is considered for young people approaching independence. This recommendation is repeated.

A recommendation to ensure personal education plans, copies of statements of special educational needs and other records relating to education are held on children's confidential files has not been addressed and is repeated because staff do not have the information they need to promote children's education. In response to a recommendation to provide physically disabled children with the same opportunities for outdoor play as able-bodied children, the home has purchased a specialist swing but there has been a delay in installing it so children do not yet have access to this play equipment. This recommendation is therefore repeated.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

This outcome area was judged good at the key inspection that took place in September 2010. One aspect of health promotion was included in this inspection.

Medicines, including restricted drugs, are stored appropriately and securely in a locked metal cabinet. This protects children and young people from accessing medicines other than those prescribed. Staff follow very good routines in the receipt, administration and disposal of medicines. However, on occasion, mistakes are made and a young person is sent home without prescribed medication. This compromises their health.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff follow good procedures that promote children and young people's privacy and dignity and provide them with opportunities to have time alone. When assisting with personal care, staff take measures to promote and safeguard children and young people's dignity. A choice of bathrooms is available to meet the individual needs of those with a range of disabilities. Whilst staff are vigilant about ensuring that children and young people enjoy as much privacy as possible when using the bathroom, the lack of shower screens means that their privacy remains compromised.

Complaints literature is available in the home and is provided to parents and social workers when a placement is agreed. Information about complaints for children and young people is out of date and is only available in written form. This means that many of the children and young people who use the service are unable to access it as they use alternative methods of communication. Complaints made by parents since the last inspection have been dealt with but are not recorded in the home's log. They relate not to the care provided but to a proposed reduction in the service to individual children and young people.

Since the last inspection, the home has received a number of letters from parents complimenting the service. It is clear that this is a highly valued children's home and that children, parents and social workers are happy with the care it provides.

Staff know and follow good routines that safeguard children and young people who are at risk of abuse. They record and report any suspicious bruises or marks and ensure that any allegations, suspicions or disclosures of abuse are referred to social workers and the local authority designated officer for safeguarding. This promotes the safety and welfare of children and young people who use the service.

Staff know how to recognise bullying but report there is no bullying in the home. Children and young people are matched carefully. Careful planning and close supervision ensures that vulnerable children and young people are protected from assault by those young people whose behaviour includes assaulting others.

A number of safety measures are in place to prevent children and young people from going missing. These include a keypad lock on exit doors and risk assessments relating to the supervision of vulnerable young people in the community. The use of the keypad locks prevents vulnerable children and young people from leaving the home unaccompanied when to do so would place them in danger. However, risk assessments relating to this practice are not in place for every individual and this means that the practice is not reviewed in relation to those young people approaching adulthood who may be ready to go out alone. One child has been missing since the last inspection. This is an extremely rare occurrence at the home. Staff responded appropriately and the child's safety was quickly restored. The home is reviewing the incident so that it improves its practice and prevent any such

occurrence from happening again.

Behaviour management plans are drawn up from information provided by parents. They guide staff in developing strategies to work with each child and young person. Restraints and sanctions are rarely used. There is a high number of assaults on staff and plans are in place to provide staff with further training in behaviour management focusing on how to prevent or reduce the impact of assaults by children and young people.

The home is reasonably well maintained and clean. Staff follow good routines to ensure that bedrooms are thoroughly cleaned after each child so that cross contamination is limited. Regular health and safety checks are carried out in relation to the home's premises, installations and appliances. However, the records of these are not very well kept so that it is not easy to tell when checks are due and as a result some safety checks, (including the electrical installation check) are out of date. The dining room floor is in need of repair, as is the kitchen worktop. The manager has plans to address both. The front door does not always lock securely and this means the home is not safe from intruders.

Staff monitor and supervise visitors so that children and young people are kept safe from potential abusers. Suitability checks are carried out on staff before they start work at the home including checks by the Criminal Records Bureau at the enhanced level. This means that as far as possible, the home ensures that children and young people are looked after by suitable carers. A shortfall in the recording system means that records relating to staff do not demonstrate that all staff are suitably experienced to work in 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 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
26	ensure that the home is secure from unauthorised access (Regulation 31 (2))	31/01/2011
26	ensure that the home is kept in good structural repair by attending to the repairs needed to the dining room floor and the kitchen worktop (Regulation 31 (2))	18/04/2011
27	maintain and keep up to date staff records in accordance with the requirements of Schedule 4 (Regulation 29 (1))	18/02/2011
13	ensure that staff follow the arrangements for the safe handling and disposal of medicines (Regulation 21 (1))	31/01/2011
35	ensure children's files are kept in accordance with Schedule 3 and that all visits to the child are recorded demonstrating any treatment they receive from specialist health workers (Regulation 28(1))	18/02/2011
10	maintain a record of menus served (Regulation 29 (1))	31/01/2011
1	ensure that the written Statement of Purpose includes information relating to the matters listed in Schedule 1. (Regulation 4 (1))	18/02/2011

Recommendations

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

- consider installing curtains or screens around baths and showers to maximise privacy and dignity (NMS 25.5)
- ensure that the complaints procedure is accessible to disabled children and young people in a suitable form (NMS 16.3)
- ensure that safety checks are carried out in line with guidance and in particular that the electrical installation is checked every three years (NMS 26.4)

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- ensure personal education plans, copies of statements of special educational needs and other records relating to education are held on children's confidential files (NMS 14.2)
 - provide physically disabled children with the same opportunities for outdoor play as able-bodied children, for example, through the provision of specialist swings (NMS 15.2)
 - ensure that you have the parent's consent to the use of electronic monitoring and that it is agreed in the placement plan (NMS 2)
 - make sure that children who are able to leave the premises safely without staff, are not prevented from doing so by the security measures in place (NMS 23.9)
 - improve recording so that it accurately reflects the level of care provided. (NMS 35)