

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	24 June 2009
Inspector	Stephen Trainor
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	28 November 2008
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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

The accommodation is a short break children's home respite service for children and young people with a disability. The home is operated by a local authority social services. The home cares for up to four young people, both genders, from five years old up to 17 years old. The house is single storey, detached and adapted to support residents with a disability. Occupational Health are consulted when changes to the building or specialist equipment is required.

The home is situated fairly close to a large town centre. It has sufficient space and rooms, where the young people can pursue their leisure interests and hobbies. There is an enclosed garden at the rear of the home. A cinema and parks, as well as sports and athletics facilities are a short walk or journey away. The home has a specially adapted vehicle and is close to bus routes, that connect it with the local community and the national rail link. Shops and supermarkets are accessible within the surrounding community.

Summary

This inspection was unannounced and comments on the two outcome areas Staying Safe and Organisation. Recommendations made during the last inspection were evaluated.

This is a good children's home in every respect. Staff are properly recruited and they receive good training. Management support is well coordinated and staff have the skills and knowledge to care for the children and young people when they spend short breaks at the home. The accommodation is managed safely, is suitably adapted and has good resources. Staff practice embraces equality and diversity principles throughout the range of services being provided. There is good consultation with professionals supporting placements and excellent partnership working arrangements with parents.

Quality assurance systems demonstrate that the management team are reflecting on practice to continually develop the service in line with new initiatives. The Registered Manager is managing a valuable service that allows young people to experience short breaks away from their parents or carers.

This report highlights some recommendations to support practice developments. These mainly relate to plans for service development. A proposed residential redesign for children's and young people's disability services is an ongoing matter under consideration. There are proposals to temporarily move accommodation to allow some electrical installation repairs to be undertaken. The premises identified is not yet registered as a children home. It is important that health and safety advice is responded to in full.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Recommendations made at the last inspection have been suitably addressed. The Registered manager has gained a relevant management qualification and all staff have received training on safeguarding children and young people. Staff have developed additional skills and expertise for the roles they provide.

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.

The management team have established good operational systems. The arrangements for complaints, safeguarding children, bullying and behaviour management are handled well. Staff receive good training.

Risk assessments are produced, to highlight concerns and vulnerability of the young people at the home. Agreed behaviour management and preferred handling strategies are produced. Staff practice incorporates parental wishes on how their children need to be cared for. Due to the nature of some of the young people's needs, intimate care tasks are required and these are done in an appropriate and respectful manner. Guidance on intimate personal care for young people with disabilities, includes administering medication and bathing routines. The young people's privacy is respected within routines operated and information is handled safely and securely, in line with the policy.

Reporting systems and actions taken in response to any significant incidents have been appropriate. The Ofsted protocol for reporting significant incidents is known and followed. There is good internal scrutiny of records and practice enabling a prompt response to anything identified. The management team listen to the children and their families to keep them safe on all occasions. Accurate records are maintained showing the home is managed well, providing suitable physical safety and security for each resident.

The residents remain safe and there are no concerns relating to bullying or safeguarding children. The peer group dynamic is managed well to ensure children with compatible needs are present at the same time. The mix of children is constantly reviewed. Risk assessments support decision making and there is suitable consultation with parents if visiting arrangements need to be changed. Staff are friendly and approachable.

Staff have received suitable safeguarding training in order that they can respond appropriately to allegations or suspicions of abuse. Policy and procedural guidance is established. This is consistent with local safeguarding team protocols. Child friendly safeguarding and complaints information is provided.

The home is managed well, providing suitable physical safety and security for the young people resident. A coordinated response is evident to health and safety. Servicing schedules and certificates, as well as maintenance reports relating to fire precautions, electrical and gas installations and appliance testing are held. The home is scheduled to be re-wired in September 2009. Ongoing consultation is taking place with Fire and Rescue Services and health and safety representatives on accommodation safety and fire evacuation procedures. The Registered Manager is addressing recommendations and actions set. General maintenance and improvements are being coordinated. No hazards were observed to young people's safety. Occupational health have had input in ensuring that the home remains fit for purpose. The suitability of accommodation layout and resources is reviewed when new referrals are made. A system has been set up to receive communications from the Central Alerting System for concerns associated with medical devices.

No new staff have been recruited between inspections meaning that no further checks were carried out on the quality of the vetting and recruitment procedures. Suitable evidence including enhanced Criminal Records Bureau checks, references, applications forms and records of the interview have been viewed previously. Suitable vetting of visitors to the home is undertaken with identity checks being carried out before access is permitted.

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.

Effective quality assurance systems are used by the home's management team. Management continually reflect on and develop services in line with new initiatives. Health and safety matters affecting the accommodation are managed efficiently through effective ongoing consultation. There is consistent use of self evaluation and improvements identified are managed in a timely way. Practice is responsive to young peoples needs. Careful management of placements provide good experiences during short breaks at the home. Checks are in place to monitor the home's operation. Reports are maintained in-house and are made available to those permitted to read them. The home's management team have produced a written development plan outlining how the home's operation will be maintained. Service history shows operation and management of the home remains to a good standard.

The home continues to be managed efficiently. The Registered Manager is experienced and fully qualified. Good support is provided by a competent staff team. The records at this home show a clarity of purpose in how staff were being managed. Staff receive good support through supervision. The competencies and skills staff have continue to grow through access to training and appraisal. Practice meets with the requirements of children's homes NMS and associated regulations. The staff team have skills to support the needs of the young people and they remain well motivated. Many hold National Vocational Training Qualifications in care and management. These are recognised qualifications to work and manage children in a residential setting.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. This home provides short breaks for a diverse section of the community. Many of the young people have profound disabilities, including communication difficulties. There is evidence that supports a good commitment to improving equality and diversity in practice, through transparent communication with parents and carers. The quality and detail of plans, ensures that personalised services are provided, that are clearly capable of meeting individuals needs. The culture and ethos of the home is continually evolving through access to training. Further equality and diversity training is planned.

Deployment of staff is good. The staffing structure has experienced few changes between inspections. Each shift has a nominated team or shift leader. Rotas demonstrate that staffing

levels are being maintained. Staff are clear about their roles, balancing their work so that the individual and collective needs of the young people are met whilst ensuring that the necessary administrative tasks are undertaken. Staff have relevant written guidance, policies and procedures to support their practice. The home's statement of purpose provides good information in accordance with regulations. Aims and objectives as well as the philosophy of care are outlined. Records are easy to access within the office. Staff use the guidance to ensure a consistent response to meeting residents presenting needs.

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 Childrens 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 all premises health and safety considerations outlined within recent reports are responded to (NMS 26.2, 26.3, 26.8)
- ensure Ofsted receive an application to register any other premises being considered if the home is to be temporarily closed for electrical repair work (NMS 33.5)
- advise Ofsted when the review and residential redesign of children with a disability services is to be completed. (NMS 28.1)