

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Sarah Oldham
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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 service provides care for young people with a learning disability in two units, one providing long-term care for up to four young people with varying degrees of learning disabilities. The second unit provides shared care support for up to four young people with varying degrees of learning disabilities. Both units have lounge and dining facilities, with access to the outdoor areas.

The home is situated in a cul-de-sac position, within a residential area, close to a retail and residential town development. The service enjoys reasonable access to public transport, as well as health and leisure facilities.

There were four young people present in the home during the visit, and three from this group contributed to the inspection according to their needs.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

At this unannounced full key inspection, all key standards were inspected. Achieving economic well-being was also inspected.

Children are cared for by experienced and knowledgeable staff. Individual needs are appropriately assessed and placement plans have been developed and contain appropriate information to enable staff to support young people effectively. Young people's risk assessments are clearly written and these provide staff with good information, which enables them to respond to young people's needs sensitively.

Recent decoration to the home has improved the quality of the accommodation for young people. Further refurbishment plans are in the process of being made to further increase the facilities for the young people.

The home works in accordance with its Statement of Purpose and appropriate transition plans are in place for young people to ensure that they move onto appropriate care facilities within a timely manner.

Improvements since the last inspection

The last inspection raised seven actions and five recommendations. Six of the actions and all recommendations have been suitably addressed by the provider. Staff have received training in first aid; this ensures that there is always a suitably qualified first aider on duty. The electrical safety certificate is in place. Care reviews are undertaken in line with statutory frequencies. However, the reports are not always

received promptly from the reviews. Since the last inspection, the young people who were waiting to move onto more appropriate accommodation have done so and this ensures that the home complies with its Statement of Purpose and is wholly or mainly for young people. The home is free from offensive odours and suitable arrangements are in place for the disposal of general waste. All toilet units are in full working order. The outstanding action with regards the suitable air temperature has not been fully addressed. Additional fans have been purchased but the temperature within the building remains a problem, this is in particular to the shared care unit.

Copies of the local authority's adult protection procedures have been obtained and are kept within the home to provide a reference point for staff. The care planning documentation has been reviewed and information about the cultural needs of the young people is recorded and how those needs will be met during their time at the home. Consultation with young people has developed and regular young people's meetings are held. The staff from the home also consult with families and social workers to gain further views on the services provided and how these can be further developed to ensure that the needs of the young people are effectively met. During this inspection, a tour of the premises noted that there was a cleaning and redecoration programme in place and this ensures that the home is kept clean.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people are involved in the planning of menus which are on a four-weekly rotation and updated three times throughout the year. Recent consultation with young people, both through house meetings and individual questionnaires has enabled staff to have a good understanding of individual likes and dislikes. It has also enabled the promotion of healthy eating, and menus in place are reflective of this. Where appropriate, and in line with individual risk assessments, young people are encouraged and supported to plan, shop and prepare simple snacks and meals. This promotes and supports individual skills and development.

Individual health care plans are in place for young people. This ensures that staff have the appropriate knowledge to enable them to effectively support young people in meeting their health care needs. However, when a health care plan has been updated, this is not always clearly recorded on the original health care documentation. This could lead to some confusion for staff providing care and support, over minor changes in individual's health needs. Staff support young people to attend health care appointments and detailed records are maintained of any specialist involvement. Staff maintain good links with parents, placing authority social workers and health care professionals to ensure that young people's health care is consistently supported.

Medication policies and procedures are in place and provide clear guidance for staff in the storage, administration and recording of medication. Staff responsible for the administration of medication receive training to ensure they are competent to effectively manage medication recording and administration. Clear systems are in

place for checking medication balance sheets. This enables any errors in recording to be clearly tracked and also ensures that the management of medication is effective to promote the well-being of the young people. Most staff have first aid training and there is always a member of staff on duty that has up-to-date first aid training. This further promotes the welfare of the young people.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Young people's privacy is respected. Confidential information is stored securely and staff receive training with regard to confidentiality as part of the induction training. All young people have their own bedrooms; this allows them an area where they are able to spend time on their own if they wish to do so. Staff are aware of the importance of promoting the privacy of young people balanced with any individual risk assessments.

The home has a complaints policy and procedure in place. This ensures that any complaints are responded too in accordance with this policy. Since the previous inspection there had been no complaints made

Young people's welfare and safety is promoted effectively. Staff have a good understanding of child protection and safeguarding issues and have received an appropriate level of training to raise any concerns. Their practice helps to protect young people from harm. There have been no concerns in relation to young people being absent without authority or bullying and, should these instances occur, staff know the procedures to follow. All staff are aware of their responsibility to report significant events.

The home encourages young people's good behaviour. Plans are in place for individual young people regarding managing positive behaviour. These are known to staff and kept under review to ensure that they are appropriate for the individual. Staff have received training regarding physical intervention. This is only used when a young person is at risk of harm. The occasions when this has been used are minimal and clear records are in place to demonstrate that the agreed intervention has been undertaken. Sanctions for inappropriate behaviour are in place. Both sanctions and physical interventions are monitored by the manager to ensure that they are appropriate and recorded in detail. Wherever possible, the views of the young people are obtained to ensure that young people are aware of any sanctions made and the reason for them.

The premises are safely maintained ensuring young people and staff are not exposed to environmental risks in the home. Regular checks are carried out on the fire prevention system and evacuations take place frequently. All staff working in the home are safe to work with young people and are subject to a range of vetting processes. All visitors to the home sign in and out and do not have unsupervised access to young people.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people clearly value and benefit from the relationships they have with staff. These relationships create a positive atmosphere within the home and staff are supportive and responsive to the needs of the young people. Each child receives care in relation to their individual needs while ensuring that the group of children receives appropriate support. Staffing levels enable staff to support young people on a one-to-one basis therefore enabling individual support in relation to identified needs.

Staff encourage and support young people with their educational needs. Relationship between the schools and the staff team ensure that there are clear communication and this ensures consistent support for the young people. Copies of school achievement and reports are maintained on file. However, not all young people have a copy of their individual Statement of Educational Needs on their files. This is in relation to the young people who are resident at the home.

Young people have good opportunities to participate in a range of activities which are supported and encouraged by staff. Individual activity plans are developed with the young people to ensure that they have opportunity to access community facilities.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Young people's needs are comprehensively assessed and there are written placement plans in place which provide staff with up-to-date information. This enables staff to provide care in accordance with young people's individual needs. Young people's placements plans are regularly reviewed and updated when changes are considered necessary. Staff contribute to individual children's looked after children (LAC) reviews. However, there is sometimes a delay in the minutes of these reviews being received from placing social workers. The manager is aware of the importance of these reviews and requests for copies are made where there is a delay in receiving them. Placement plans and reviews are explained to the young people in accordance with their understanding and abilities.

Young people enjoy regular and planned contact with friends and family and these arrangements are sensitively supported and encouraged by staff. Young people have detailed contact plans which provide staff with up-to-date and relevant information which enables them to properly manage contact arrangements.

Young people are supported and encouraged to express their views both formally and informally about issues that affect their lives including practice within the home. Young people's views and opinions are taken seriously and enable staff to change practice within the home where appropriate.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is satisfactory.

The home is decorated and furnished to a satisfactory standard. Areas of the home have recently been redecorated to make it feel more welcoming and homely for the young people. However, future proposed development plans for the home have limited the full refurbishment. All young people have their own bedrooms, and those living at the home have been encouraged and supported to personalise their rooms. The bedrooms used for shared care are less personalised but are comfortable, clean and provide the necessary furnishings for young people during their stay. At the previous inspection, an action was raised in relation to the excessive heat in the shared care unit. To address this, additional fans have been purchased and although has partially addressed the heating issues, the shared care unit continues to be very warm and the additional fans do not ensure that the air temperature is maintained as a suitable level. This means that young people can become overheated during their time at the home.

Appropriate bathing, shower and toilet facilities are in place and bathrooms are maintained to a good standard. This ensures that young people have suitable facilities available to meet their personal care needs.

Staff support and encourage young people to practice independence skills. Individual support plans are in place for areas of self-care including continence, bathing and dressing. Young people are also encouraged to prepare simple meals, snacks and drinks in accordance with individual placement plans.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The home has a Statement of Purpose in place. This document contains information about the home, staff and the aims and objectives. The information in it enables interested parties, including placing authority social workers and parents, to have an understanding of the services that the home provides. There is also a children's guide available for the children and young people containing information about the home and what it is like to either live there or to receive a period of care there.

Young people are cared for by competent and capable staff and there is great value placed on good quality relationships between staff and young people. Staff receive regular and relevant training supporting them to provide appropriate care to the young people. Staff receive support from the management team both formally and informally, enabling them to perform their duties confidently and competently. Staffing levels within the home are good enabling individual 1:1 support to be provided to young people. The staff team have all been in post for some time and this promotes consistency for the young people.

The home is regularly monitored through monthly visits undertaken by independent

reviewing officers The reports that are produced as a result of these visits provide an overview of the care practices within the home. However, reports vary in levels of information. Therefore, this does not always enable the manager to have a clear understanding of any outstanding issues or concerns. Responses to these reports are undertaken by senior managers and not the Registered Manager. Therefore, the manager undertakes comprehensive audits of the service and regularly monitors the care, service and support provided to young people.

Young people have well-maintained case files which are kept securely. Case files contain information which is accessible, and provide staff with relevant information about the young person's needs and circumstances enabling them to provide appropriate care.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. All the home's recording systems take account of potential needs in relation to young people's diversity, such as, identity, race, culture, religion and disability. Staff receive training and guidance in equality and diversity. This enables them to have a good understanding on the importance and impact on young people. This ensures that the home provides an environment where the value of equality and diversity is understood, promoted and celebrated.

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
24	maintain a suitable air temperature within the shared care unit (Regulation 31 (2)(a))	30/11/2010

Recommendations

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

- ensure that health care plans are updated appropriately with regards specific health interventions and medication changes that are made (NMS 12.2)
- ensure that each child's file contains all relevant educational documentation, including any statement of special educational needs (NMS 14.1)
- ensure that the result of statutory reviews and reviews of placement plan are recorded on the child's file (NMS 3.4)

- ensure that there is clear action taken regarding the recommendations or issues of concerns raised in monthly monitoring reports (NMS 32.3)