

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Mark Ryder
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Date of last inspection	10 February 2010
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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 home is a children's respite service registered to a local authority and located near the centre of town. It provides respite and overnight care for up to eight children and young people with learning and/or physical disabilities who are aged between five and 15 years of age.

There are eight single bedrooms with a lounge, play area, soft play area and dining room. There is a secure outdoor play area at the back of the property, a playground at the side with a range of equipment, and car parking is at the front. The home is close to local shops and leisure facilities. There is good access to public transport.

Three young people were present during this visit. One young person contributed to the inspection.

Summary

At this unannounced full inspection, all key standards were inspected. All outcome areas have been judged as good. The service continues to provide a provision that young people greatly benefit from. Assessment of need is clearly recorded, reviewed and acted upon. Staff are very well motivated and trained in caring for young people with complex needs. Young people are able to enjoy their stay, whether extended or short term, in an environment that is both safe and stimulating. One action and two recommendations have been made at this visit. None of which has any significant impact on the welfare of young people using this service.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

There was one recommendation made at the last inspection with regards to updating the Statement of Purpose. This has now been updated to reflect that young people and children now have extended stays. This means that parents, social workers and inspectors are fully informed of the remit of this service.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The health needs of young people are met through the availability of a well balanced diet, regular health checks and established safe administration of medication practice.

Diet needs of young people are carefully considered. Information regarding allergies, likes and dislikes are recorded and available to staff. Young people make choices over what they like to eat. Fresh produce is available providing a nutritious variety to the meals served. Young people commented positively on the meals. Menus include a range of culturally appropriate food for young people to try. All staff who handle food receive appropriate food hygiene training.

Health assessments of young people are up to date and provide a good level of information on each young person's health status. Young people attend health appointments such as visiting the General Practitioner (GP), dentist and opticians as required. For young people, that are accommodated, this is planned by staff in cooperation with parents. However, for most young

people using this service, parents take responsibility for their children to attend such appointments. Staff assist when requested to. Staff receive training in first aid.

Competent and trained staff administer medication. Procedures are safely followed and records of when medication is given out regularly monitored. Medication is stored, audited and disposed of following correct procedures. Signed parental consent for staff to administer minor first aid and non prescribed medication is kept on file. However, for one young person this written consent has yet to be completed. This means it is unclear if staff had the legal right to carry out such actions without the expressed consent with someone with parental responsibility.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Young people benefit from and are kept safe by a competent staff team, robust policies and procedures and regular monitoring of the health and safety of all who live, work and visit this home.

Staff respect the privacy and dignity of all young people living and using this respite service. There is sensitive practice when assisting young people with personal care. For example, ensuring that staff of the same gender provide personal care. Placement plans reflect this practice to ensure all staff are aware of the high degree of respect required for each young person.

Complaints are recorded and acted upon in a timely manner. The records include the outcome from each complaint. Young people and parents are aware of the complaints procedure. A guide, written in a style that young people can understand, includes how young people can make complaints. However, the complaints procedure within the home is outdated and did not refer to the present regulatory body or the contact details. This could be confusing for someone who wishes to make a complaint outside of the Local Authority.

Staff understand and have received training in responding to and recognising safeguarding concerns. Copies of the local authority's procedures as well as the Local Safeguarding Children Board's (LSCB) procedures are available for staff to follow. There are no identified concerns from the placing authority of any child protection incidents.

Staff monitor and supervise young people throughout their placement or stay at the home. This reduces the risk of bullying between young people. Careful matching of young people when they are booked to stay also reduces the potential for conflict. Staff report that young people generally get on well together. The large accommodation provides space for young people to enjoy their time at this home without being crowded by other residents. Individual risk assessments refer to how to respond to any bullying between young people.

The risk of young people leaving the accommodation without staff is very low. The level of vulnerability necessitates a high staffing ratio to young people thus reducing the likelihood of young people going missing. However, staff are aware of the missing from home protocol if such an event was to occur.

There is a positive, relaxed and caring atmosphere between young people and staff within this setting. Staff respond to young people in a positive way, encouraging young people to enjoy their time at the home whilst maintaining safe and appropriate boundaries. Sanctions and the use of physical intervention is minimal within this setting. Records provide a detailed account

of the nature of the incident, the actions taken and the outcome. Records are regularly signed by senior staff as part of the monitoring process. Staff receive appropriate training on diffusing potential physically challenging situations and the safe use of physical restraint if required.

Health and safety practice within this setting is considered good. Fire safety is managed well with regular checks on the fire alarms, emergency lighting and fire fighting equipment. Fire drills are carried out at least four times a year with young people and staff identified within the records. This ensures that all staff and young people have had the experience of a fire evacuation. Staff receive training on fire safety.

Maintenance checks on gas boilers and regular checks on portable appliances ensure the home is a safe place to visit, live and work in. Regular water temperature monitoring reduces the risk of scalding incidents. The home has suitable public and employee insurance liability.

The recruitment and selection of staff is managed well. Staff start working with young people only after Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) checks and references are carried out. Any gaps in employment history are explained in writing. Visitors are asked to sign in and out of the building. Staff check identification of visitors to further ensure that young people are safe when staying at this home.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people's educational and recreational needs are identified and met at this home. Young people are provided with individual support to maximise their placement or stay at this home. For example, young people benefit from a key working system in which staff ensure their needs are assessed and met. Detailed care planning includes supporting young people to achieve targets within their lives that will provide them with the necessary skills as adults. Staff liaise with schools and parents on a regular basis to promote a continuity of care for young people. Young people have statements of special educational needs that are reviewed annually. Personal education plans further specify the goals and targets for each young person to aspire to.

The setting provides a wide range of activities that young people participate in and enjoy. For example, young people can experience such activities as canoeing, roller skating, swimming as well as trips and outings. Young people express a positive view about the different activities they are able to do. All activities are suitably risk assessed.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Care plans provide a comprehensive overview of each young person's placement and respite provision which includes aspects of education, health and cultural needs. Plans are regularly reviewed and changed in light of further information. Parents contribute to such reviews. Keyworkers provide monthly summaries to social workers for young people who are accommodated at the home. A social worker wrote that they found this very helpful in updating them about the young person.

Contact with parents is an integral part of each young person's respite provision. Staff work closely with family members to help young people benefit from their time at the home. Parents are able to visit or telephone whenever they wish.

Staff work closely with young people, helping them to express themselves using a range of communication methods. For young people with limited speech staff observe and respond to young people's behaviour. Young people are consulted about what they would like to do during their time at the home. This could include, for example, outings, spending time in the sensory room or the soft play area.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Young people are encouraged to develop a level of independence which reflects the potential for each young person. For example, young people are helped to get dressed by themselves if appropriate.

The home is furnished and decorated to a good standard. Pictures around the home positively reinforce integration of disabled young people in society. Black and Asian images also reflect the cultural diversity of the home. Drawings by young people and photographs of staff further show the home as welcoming.

The building is large, thus enabling young people to have maximum personal space to play and move about in. Young people show their enjoyment of being in the home through their positive interactions with the care staff. Outside young people are able to use the new play equipment and other activities. This is a safe environment in which young people make the most of. A young person, assisted by a parent, wrote that by having respite 'I can be a lot more active with more space to play than at home'.

Maintenance of the building is up to date with no obvious repairs being required. Bedrooms are personalised and familiar to young people. Young people who live longer at the home have their own bedroom and do not have to share.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The management and organisation of this service promotes good quality childcare. The home's Statement of Purpose accurately reflects the functions and practice within this service. This document has recently been updated to include the provision of accommodated young people. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

Staff provide a relaxed and competent service to young people, ensuring their stay is safe and interesting. Staff receive regular training to assist with the complex needs of the young people. Most staff are now qualified to National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) level three or above. Both formal and informal support is provided for staff. Supervisions are held monthly and are recorded. Not all areas addressed during supervisions are, however, fully recorded. This means that records of such meetings are not a true representation of what was discussed and cannot be referenced in the future.

Staffing levels are high providing young people with a minimum of one to one support. Rotas are completed in advance and reflect the experience and competence of staff on duty at any one time.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Young people are able to make personal choices about what food they like to eat and activities they would like to participate in. Staff are trained and competent in using a range of communication methods to help engage with young people with learning disabilities. Care planning refers to young people's racial and cultural needs and how they can be met. The service operates a social model of disability, valuing and seeing the young person first rather than their diagnosis. Young people are encouraged to attend and fully participate in activities within the community.

Young people's records are kept securely and are accessible only to designated staff. The records refer to each young person's history and progress whilst they are living or staying at the home for respite. Monthly summaries sent to social workers provide details of the provision being offered. Parents are kept informed of what their children were doing during the time at the home, although not all parents felt that the level of information was consistent. The manager is aware of this disparity.

Monitoring of the home is consistent and robust. Regular checks of the records highlight any trends or patterns emerging. For example, the level of physical intervention within the home. Staff receive regular informal and formal supervision and annual appraisal which further promotes the ongoing monitoring process.

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
16	ensure that the complaints procedures include the name, address and telephone number of the current regulatory body. (Regulation 24.4)	6 August 2010

Recommendations

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

- obtain and retain on file, prior written permission from a person with parental responsibility for each child, for the administration of first aid and appropriate non-prescribed medication (NMS13.4)
- ensure that supervisions of staff working with children address and record personal issues which may impinge on the member of staff's ability to carry out their duties effectively. (NMS 28.4)