

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Gaynor Moorey
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Date of last inspection	20 January 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

This home is registered for a maximum of 6 young people between the ages of 5 and under 18 years. It is owned by a city council and provides short-term placements for young people with learning difficulties and physical disabilities.

The home is a large, detached house that has been adapted over the years to provide ground floor accommodation for young people with complex needs. The home has a range of specialist equipment, including hoists and assisted baths. The first floor is used for offices and the staff bathroom.

Summary

This unannounced key inspection took place on a weekday. The purpose of the inspection was to undertake a full review encompassing all the key national minimum standards.

The manager and the staff team continue to provide an good standard of care. Staff strive to ensure the safety of the children through the implementation of comprehensive and clear guidance, policies and procedures. Reports in relation to physical intervention need to be more detailed and monitored by the manager. The home provides the children with emotional and physical support and encourages the children with their education and interests. The home ensures that specific and comprehensive information is in place to enable statutory reviews to take place. Children are given opportunities to express their opinions and make choices about their lives. The home does not have a children's guide in place to inform young people about the services at the home. The home is maintained to an good level, providing a homely environment for the children to live in. The staff are supported by the manager and systems that include supervision and training. However, formal supervision meetings are not taking place at the required intervals.

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

The home received two recommendations at the last inspection. One was to ensure that the children's files contain the necessary information as detailed in Schedule 3 of the Children homes Regulations 2001. The second was to ensure that the staff undertake appropriate child protection training in regards to the specific needs of the children in the home. Both recommendations have now been met. The children's files contain the relevant information required. A training record is not in place. However, there is confirmation that staff have undertaken child protection training in regard to children with disabilities.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Staff work hard to encourage children to eat a healthy diet which meets their individual dietary needs. Each mealtime has a set meal but due to dietary needs several versions are prepared to suit individual need. Clear understanding by staff was observed when preparing food for specific needs. Staff are given training to run a safe and clean kitchen in order to produce meals for the children. The home strives to meet all cultural needs when looking at dietary preferences.

The health and welfare of children is carefully considered and actively promoted. Health information is contained within the placement plans. Staff consider the children's health and welfare and ensure that relevant guidance and support needs are highlighted when creating care plans. Sexual health and information related social and welfare issues are taught in school and age appropriate information is readily available in the home. The children's health is seen as important and staff are trained and informed to meet their special needs.

Staff manage the children's health needs in a comprehensive manner with systems in place to safeguard their needs. All staff receive first aid and specific health care procedure training to ensure the children's need are met correctly. All prescribed medication and non prescribed medicines are kept securely and records are accurate with a robust stock taking system. Only trained senior staff are able to administer medication. Medical consents are available for emergency treatment, first aid and the administration of medication.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff ensure that children's confidentiality and privacy is respected and safeguarded by knocking on bedroom doors. Confidential information relating to each child is kept in an appropriate locked facility. All information is contained in the staff office. Staff receive guidance on the confidentiality of information. Children in need of assistance to carry out personal care are treated with dignity and respect.

Policies and procedures are in place to safeguard and promote the children's welfare. Complaints are dealt with effectively and appropriately and staff enable children to make complaints. Children's complaints are taken seriously and investigated in an appropriate manner. There has been one complaint since the last inspection. This complaint has been dealt with appropriately with a positive outcome. However, it has not been written into the complaints log. Staff communicate through one-to-one sessions to seek the children's views and concerns.

Staff receive child protection training in their induction programme and also in subsequent refresher courses during their employment. The home has a clear policy when dealing with child protection which includes up-to-date safeguarding guidance. No child protect incidents have been recorded since the last inspection.

The home operates a policy of zero tolerance towards bullying and the children are made aware of the guidance on admission. Children's behaviour is identified and risk assessed within their behaviour management plans. Bullying is not identified as a problem at the home.

There is a policy and procedure for reporting children who are absent without authority. Records of absence without authority show that there have not been any incidents. Staff are provided with clear guidance to address such situations with robust risk assessments in place to highlight any concerns the children may pose to themselves or others.

Records examined indicated that serious incidents are reported as required by regulation. The manager confirmed that serious incidents are investigated and they also involve other agencies. No significant incidents have been reported since the last inspection.

Staff strive in supporting positive behaviours and intervention with children. The children also share relationships with staff, which enables them to discuss issues and life within the home.

Opportunities are also given in one-to-one sessions with key workers who understand the children's communication needs. All sanctions are recorded in a dedicated book, sanctions have been given since the last inspection and are in line with the homes policy.

All staff receive training in the use of physical restraint. The home has a policy which offers guidance to staff in behaviour management and restraint. The children have risk assessments in place these are contained within their behaviour management plans. Restraint and physical intervention is used in the home. The restraint log book is no longer used and incidents are recorded in a file on violent incident sheets. The information held there does not hold the full information required in Regulation 17.4 of the children's homes regulations 2001. Some of the incident sheets also have not been signed by the person authorised to do so. Staff support the children with their behaviour through appropriate professional relationships. Children and staff could be unsafe if documentation is not up to date in regard to serious incidents.

Areas of potential risk for the young people are assessed and the children are safeguarded where possible from harm. The home has comprehensive documentation related to risk assessing activities, fire risk and the environment. Records demonstrate that the home's fire alarm system is tested regularly and evacuation exercises carried out. Some equipment had out-of-date checks as shown in the fire folder. Checks were seen from outside agencies and from the home's monitoring systems. The home operates a system to monitor visitors. The home carries the appropriate amount of insurance. The home has systems in place that in the majority ensure children are safe when staying at the home.

Records of new staff employed since the last inspection indicate that staff are subject to a comprehensive recruitment process. The records show that all the necessary and required checks are completed prior to staff working with children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children receive individual support, guidance and care. Placement plans are in place, listing comprehensively the needs of the children. The children observed appeared to be at ease in the company of all the staff on duty. Social interaction was both spontaneous and warm. Staff are very supportive and sensitive to any needs or situation the children experience. Staff spoken with, indicated that efforts are made to ensure that young peoples religious and cultural needs are met mainly through dietary preferences. All the placement plans are linked to the risk assessments which include any activities undertaken by the young people.

Staff actively support children in their education. Each child has records on file of their progress at school. The home has facilities and equipment to support children's education such as computers, books, games and play items. Staff spoken with confirmed that there is regular liaison with the children's schools.

Staff facilitate access to activities and clubs within the community. Individual and group activities are specifically geared towards each child's own choice and currently include visit to local farm centres, the beach, restaurants and the cinema. The home has lots of its own facilities and child focussed play areas including a sensory room. Each activity is risk assessed to minimise the risk factor for each child. Staff organise a wide range of trips and activities which are enjoyed as a group. The home has its own transport to support social and recreational activities.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's needs are satisfactorily assessed prior to placement. Documentation is kept on file which includes information on each child. Children have placement and care plans that identify their health, physical, social, educational cultural and leisure needs. Key workers review the progress of each child and identify changes to meet individual needs. Key working staff and the manager produce thorough reports for reviews where appropriate. Placing authorities operate a reviewing process to chart the progress of the children.

A written admission procedure aims to help children settle in. The home does not have a children's information pack. Every effort is made by staff to ensure that arrivals and departures are planned. Staff confirm that preparation for leaving starts well in advance of an agreed date. The home would only ever offer emergency placements to children all ready known to the service.

Children receiving a respite service live at home with their parents and carers. Any contact issues are

arranged outside of the service. Written notes on telephone calls while staying at the home could be seen on file. Internet access to a social network site was arranged for specific young people. This enables them to remain in contact with their friends while staying at the home.

Staff consult children on a daily basis and empower them, as far as it is possible, to consider their circumstances, behaviours, relationships and interactions. The home has implemented a user involvement group which is going to look at designing a children's guide. Parents are provided with information through contact when bringing children in or through telephone calls. The home has also been involved in a corporate parenting video where parents discuss their feelings and thoughts of services throughout the local authority homes. Staff strive to create an inclusive, reflective and participatory environment that encourages consultation. This appears to be effectively balanced by realistic boundaries.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Due to the purpose of the home, direct work is not undertaken with pathway plans. However, as mentioned throughout the report, staff do begin to teach the children independence skills in preparation for getting older.

A tour of the building indicated the home's location, design and size are in keeping with its purpose. The home has a large and child centred garden which is safe for the children to play in. The home utilises the local community for activities. Records demonstrated that the home is subject to regular health and safety risk assessments and had certification relating to gas, electrical and fire equipment.

The accommodation is clean and tidy. It provides each child with both communal areas for group living and individualised private areas, such as their bedrooms, where they can spend time alone. The home was observed to have a large communal area that includes the lounge, the dining area and play area. There are adequate bathroom and toilet facilities. Bathrooms

are equipped with specialist facilities to meet the needs of the children. Sleeping in staff have their own room and bathroom.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. Staff ensure through practice and guidance that the rights of the children are met and they do not face racism or discrimination. The children have their needs met by individualised care planning and review processes.

The management of the home is satisfactory. Children benefit from having a core team which has been in place for several years. The Statement of Purpose provides adequate information about the home's services. However, a children's guide is not in place.

The young people benefit from a staff team that is made up of both genders and has a cultural mix together with a balance of youth and maturity. The staff are provided with training including child protection, behaviour management, health and safety, and fire safety. Additional qualifications and training are specifically geared towards those children using the home. A training record of the courses undertaken by the staff is not in place. All staff are trained in National Vocational Qualifications. Currently, staff are not receiving the required levels of supervision.

External monitoring of the home's systems and practices occurs on a monthly basis with reports being kept in hard copy and sent into Ofsted. The manager does monitor the records. However, some of this documentation has not signed by appropriate staff, it does not contain the correct details and not recorded in the appropriate log books.

Systems are in place to monitor the daily lives of the children living in the home. Children's files are maintained and organised and kept securely in the staff office.

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	maintain a record of all complaints made by children and young people in the home and actions taken(Regulation 24.5)	6 August 2010
1	ensure there is an appropriate children's guide in place (Regulation 4.3)	27 August 2010
22	maintain an accurate and up-to-date record of measures of control used (Regulation 17.4)	30 July 2010
28	ensure that all staff receive the appropriate numbers of supervision meetings. (Regulation 27.4(a))	30 July 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 incident forms are signed by a person authorised by the registered person to make the record (NMS 22.9)
- ensure that all records of testing for fire equipment and fire risk assessments are kept up to date (NMS 26.8)
- ensure a written record of training for all staff is maintained in the home (NMS 31.4)
- ensure that all records are monitored by an appropriate person at the home and kept up to date. (NMS 33.1)