

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	4 March 2010
Inspector	Julia Toller
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	10 November 2009
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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 is a local authority children's home, providing care and accommodation to four young people of either gender, with learning or physical disabilities. The home is close to the local town centre and transport links. This is a single storey building that is well equipped to meet the needs of the young people who use the service.

There is a large lounge, separate dining area, kitchen and single bedrooms with suitable aids and adaptations to meet the individual needs of young people. There is an outdoor area that is fully secure providing a safe environment for young people to play.

Summary

At this unannounced interim inspection, all key standards were not inspected, the inspection focussed on how the service has addressed the actions and recommendations made at the last key inspection and the outcome area of staying safe was assessed. This is a good service overall.

Young people benefit from positive relationships with staff, they are afforded a range of facilities and opportunities to encourage and support a healthy lifestyle, to develop their life skills and to reach good outcomes from education.

Staff benefit from a good level of training and support, they work well with other professionals to meet the complex and holistic needs of young people in areas such as emotional and physical wellbeing.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Three actions were made at the last inspection, regarding the administration of medications, physical restraints and complaints. Two recommendations were also made about the medication policy and staff supervision.

The medication policy now holds information relevant to the administration of medication in a covert fashion. Individual care plans detail risk assessments linked to this process and steps to be followed by staff in the process to safeguard young people. This is also supported by written permission from GP's.

Physical restraints are minimal, but where these do take place, records demonstrate the method of restraint used and relevant information in line with national minimum standards. This shows the steps that staff take to safeguard young people.

Complaints are fully recorded detailing the nature of the complaint alongside the steps taken to resolve the complaint. This shows that staff listen to young people their families and others to improve the service they offer.

Staff receive regular individual supervision that helps to ensure that they are appropriately trained to meet the needs of young people and that young people receive a consistent standard of care.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The home seeks parental consent for the administration of medications. All medicines are stored in a suitable locked cabinet with records completed as medication is administered to young people, this assists in safeguarding young people.

Due to the health care needs and behaviours of some young people, medications are at times administered in a covert fashion. Records demonstrate that this is a multi disciplinary decision and the steps that staff take to ensure young people are fully safeguarded in the process. This is addressed in the medication policy, and outlines the practical steps that staff are taking to safeguard young people in this process.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

There are written behaviour management policies and procedures for young people, these place great emphasis on providing young people with continuity and structure in relation to their behaviours. This is reinforced by comprehensive placement plans that identify routines and care practices required to minimise distress to young people and therefore inappropriate behaviours.

Risk assessments are in place regarding young people's individual care needs and behaviours. This ensures that risks to young people are minimised by detailing practical guidance for staff to follow when involved in specific situations, for example, when carrying out personal care tasks. These plans are regularly reviewed and updated as and when necessary. Great care has been taken to use these to achieve positive outcomes for young people, for example, how staff should speak to young people to reduce their distress.

All staff have attended training in physical restraint; records are maintained appropriately and monitored as part of quality assurance systems at the home. Great emphasis is placed on staff acknowledging possible triggers to young people's behaviours. For example, where known fears are recorded, risk assessments clearly state the effects that these fears can have on an individual and ways to minimise distress.

There are clear written policies and procedures in place regarding bullying; these promote the welfare of children placed at the home. Staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities should bullying take place and they are able to give clear accounts of how this would be handled, if any issue arose.

All staff have attended safeguarding training; new staff as part of their induction programme and as a refresher for existing staff. This ensures that staff promote the safety and welfare of young people in line with local safeguarding procedures. Staff understand the behaviours of young people and how this knowledge can be used to safeguard them when they can not verbalise their feelings and emotions.

Complaints are fully recorded at the home, records demonstrate an accurate description of the steps taken to address and conclude complaints. Staff also use their knowledge of young people's behaviours to record when individuals are showing distress and whether this may be their way of showing that they are upset or unhappy about something.

The safety of young people and staff at the home has been promoted through the regular testing of fire safety equipment. However, staff do not receive regular fire safety training, this does not fully minimise risks to young people.

The recruitment and selection of staff is thorough and robust. This promotes the safety and welfare of young people cared for at 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 good.

The manager shows effective leadership and commitment to good child care, supporting staff well on a daily basis. In addition staff receive regular professional supervision, although there are some shortfalls in staff receiving this on a regular monthly basis. Staff develop their knowledge and skills through training relevant to the needs of the young people living at the home.

Since the last inspection, Ofsted has received an application for the position of registered manager that is being processed.

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 that staff receive regular fire safety training. (NMS 26.1)