

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	25/02/2014
Inspector	Sharon Lloyd
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	27/11/2013
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This is a local authority children's home providing short breaks for up to four children with learning or physical disabilities. Most of the children staying for short breaks are not in the care of the local authority and their parents have the primary responsibility for their health care and education.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Good progress	The children's home has demonstrated continued improvement in quality of care and outcomes for children and young people and where appropriate has addressed all requirements and the large majority of recommendations that were raised at the previous inspection.
Satisfactory progress	The children's home has maintained quality of care and outcomes for children and young people and where appropriate has addressed all requirements and the majority of recommendations that were raised at the previous inspection.
Inadequate progress	The children's home has failed to address one or more requirements and/or has not met the majority of recommendations and/or the quality of care and outcomes for children and young people have declined since the last full inspection.

Progress

Since their previous inspection the service is judged to be making **good progress**.

At the last full inspection, the overall effectiveness of the children's home was judged to be good. The home has fully addressed the three requirements that were raised in relation to shortfalls in records. The improvements mean that the Statement of Purpose provides accurate information about how to contact HMCI. The complaints records are very well recorded and demonstrate thorough investigation and action taken to address any concerns raised. Details held about agency staff include their skills, experience and qualifications. This enables the Registered Manager to assess their competence to work at the home.

There has been significant progress in addressing the four recommendations for improvement. The home has worked with other agencies to make far-reaching improvements to the children's guide and the children's complaints form. The new documents are child-friendly and are suitable for children with communication difficulties, including some pre-verbal children. The Registered Manager has plans in place to improve them further to enable all children to access information about the home in a way that suits their individual communication needs. A copy of the

complaints document is on display in the dining room. This assists children to make their feelings known.

Working with education and advocacy services, the home has arranged training for staff in using alternative communication methods. This is work in progress. The Registered Manager plans to roll out this training out to staff over the forthcoming weeks. This will enable staff to further increase their skills in communicating with children who are hard to reach.

Staff have increased their knowledge and skills in supporting children and young people with epilepsy and delivering emergency medication. This ensures they know how to meet the particular needs of individual children. Very good medicine procedures ensure that children's health is well supported.

There has been limited progress in developing expertise to support children and young people's understanding of their emerging sexuality. The Registered Manager has had difficulty in sourcing training for staff in how to support children and young people to develop appropriate social and sexual relationships. However, the local authority training department is pursuing this.

Staff report that a recent fire drill has enabled night staff to practise the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire. However, this drill has not been recorded in the fire safety log. This means that it was not possible to verify that it took place.

A development plan outlines how the home intends to improve its service to children. There is evidence of good progress in meeting this. Improvements in record-keeping mean that children's individual records demonstrate more effectively how staff care for and support them. One member of staff is undertaking a qualification to enhance her skills and abilities. All other staff are suitably qualified and experienced.

Staff continue to provide a warm and welcoming environment for children. They interact well with children and are particularly attentive to their needs. Children present as happy and relaxed. They enjoy the facilities on offer and respond well to the routines of the home. One child said the home is 'good'. When asked his views on the home and staff, he gave the thumbs up.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- ensure that all staff and as many children and young people as possible are familiar with the emergency escape plan, have practised it and know what to do in the event of an emergency. In particular, ensure records of fire drills demonstrate this (NMS 10.9)
- support children and young people to develop positive and appropriate social and

sexual relationships. In particular, support young people to understand their emerging sexuality. (NMS 12.1)

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 to assess the effectiveness of the service and to consider how well it complies with the relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the progress made by the provider since the last full inspection, identifies any further strengths, any areas for improvement and makes judgements as outlined in the *Inspection of children's homes – framework for inspection*.