

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Julia Toller
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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 is a local authority children's home, providing care and accommodation for up to four young people of either gender, with learning or physical disabilities between the ages of six and 17 years. 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

The overall quality rating is good.

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

At this unannounced interim inspection, the focus was on how the service has addressed the actions and recommendations made at the last key inspection and the outcome area of staying safe. No young people were present during the inspection, but two staff spoke with the inspector. There is one minor shortfall regarding the trampoline in the back garden. This is a good service overall.

Young people benefit from positive relationships with staff, and 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, and they work well with other professionals to meet the complex and holistic needs of young people in areas such as emotional and physical well-being.

Improvements since the last inspection

Three recommendations were raised at the last inspection regarding Regulation 33 reports, staffing levels within the home and safety checks where young people need to have 'bed sides' in place.

Regulation 33 reports are now being forwarded to Ofsted regularly. This shows that the home is being monitored and the service is using this opportunity to improve the service they provide to young people.

Staff vacancies are now in the process of being advertised and filled. This will help young people to be cared for by a consistent team of care staff.

Where young people need to have 'bed sides' fitted for their safety at night times, this is detailed in their risk assessments. In addition to safety checks by the manufacturer, there are also regular safety checks carried out by a health and safety representative of the service. This helps to make sure that the safety and welfare of young people are promoted at all times.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is not judged.

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 behaviour management. This is reinforced by comprehensive placement plans that identify routines and care practices that are 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 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, the importance of routines and structures for some young people to help them feel safe and secure and reduce potential 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 do this as part of their induction programme and existing staff have this as a refresher. This ensures that staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities and 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 young people who cannot verbalise their feelings and emotions.

There is a record of complaints maintained at the home that shows the details of complaints, action taken to address the complaint and whether a successful outcome has been reached. 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 and staff training, thus minimising risks to young people and staff. While there are risk assessments in place regarding the outdoor play area, the new trampoline is currently presenting as a potential trip hazard. This is of particular concern when young people are playing independently in the garden; this situation is not fully addressed within risk assessments and does not therefore fully safeguard young people during play.

The recruitment and selection process for 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 not judged.

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
26	ensure that all parts of the home to which children have access are so far as reasonably practicable free from hazards to their safety, in particular, that the flooring surrounding the trampoline or the trampoline itself does not present a trip hazard. (Reg 23 (a))	31/03/2011