

Inspection report for Children's Home

Unique reference number	SC039676
Inspection date	17/03/2011
Inspector	Paul Scott
Type of inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	15/11/2010
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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 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

The home is operated by a county council children and families service. It offers short-term respite care breaks for children who have severe learning or physical disabilities and significant communication difficulties. A maximum of 10 children can be accommodated at any one time. Their ages range from five years old up to 17 years old.

The home is purpose built. It is a single storey building on a site adjacent to a school for children with special educational needs. The home has been adapted to meet the needs of children with physical disabilities and provides specialist equipment to help meet the needs of children accommodated.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

This visit was an interim inspection and was unannounced. The main focus of the inspection was on how well the home promotes and safeguards young people's welfare. It also looked at the progress the home has made with the recommendation made at the last inspection relating to Regulation 33 visits.

This service is good at meeting the diversity of needs demonstrated by the group of young people receiving short-break care. Clear policies and individualised risk assessments ensure staff know how to promote and protect young people's welfare. Staff demonstrate a good awareness of the risks to young people and work hard to ensure they are kept safe from harm. However, there is no system for recording when a young person goes missing from home which means suitable records are not kept. Young people are treated with dignity and respect. Complaints are well handled. Behaviour management is good. Young people's welfare is enhanced by very good relationships with staff who view them in a positive light. Young people's physical safety is well protected. However, the electrical installation check is overdue. Staff recruitment checks are thorough and visitors to the home are appropriately supervised to ensure young people are kept safe from harm.

Improvements since the last inspection

Following the last inspection the provider was asked to make arrangements for Regulation 33 visits to take place at weekends or evenings to maximise the opportunity to consult with young people. Although the provider's representative visits the service every month and examines the records and speaks to staff, there is still no evidence that visits are being arranged at times when young people are at home. Therefore an action has been raised.

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.

Staff ensure young people feel valued and that their privacy and dignity are respected at all times. Staff know the young people very well and practice in a way that is sensitive to the diverse needs of the young people using the service. For example, staff ensure young people are supervised appropriately to keep them safe but remain respectful of their need for time alone. Confidential information is held securely in the office.

Information on how to complain is available to young people and their families. This information is available in several formats, for example, symbols and different languages. Staff are very good at recognising when young people are unhappy and addressing their concerns. Therefore, complaints are well managed.

Young people live in a safe environment and are very well protected. Clear policies, access to regular training and comprehensive risk assessments result in staff who are knowledgeable about promoting the welfare and safety of young people. Staff are very aware of young people's vulnerability and the risks they may face and are committed to ensuring they are kept safe from unnecessary risk of harm. The manager and staff work hard to ensure excellent links are maintained with parents and other professionals. This collaborative approach to protecting young people from harm is a notable strength.

Staff are vigilant and provide young people with a suitable level of supervision to ensure young people are free from bullying. Unauthorised absence has never been a problem for the home. Clear written guidance and detailed risk assessments mean that staff know how to respond in the event of a young person going missing from home. However, there is no system in place for recording unauthorised absence.

Staff have developed positive and nurturing relationships with young people. Behaviour management plans contain excellent, individualised details for staff to follow when managing young people's behaviour. The manager and staff regularly discuss and review these plans, that are consistently put into practice. Young people are praised and rewarded for good behaviour. Sanctions are rarely used and inappropriate behaviour is usually dealt with by way of verbal reminders. All staff are trained in a behaviour management technique to ensure that as much as possible, incidents are managed without the need for physical intervention.

Young people's physical safety is well protected. Comprehensive risk assessments

mean that staff know what to do in the event of a fire. All staff and young people have been involved in fire drills. Fire safety check records are up to date. Fire and electrical equipment are checked at appropriate intervals. However, the electrical installation check has not been completed and is overdue.

All staff have been appropriately recruited and undergone suitable Criminal Records Bureau checks to ensure they are suitable to work with young people. Visitors to the home are suitably checked and supervised to protect young people.

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
33	ensure that the person carrying out the Regulation 33 visits to monitor the standard of care provided finds out the views of young people about how well they are being looked after.	01/04/2011

	(Regulation 33(4)(a))	
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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 there is a system in place to record any incidents of absconding (NMS 19.6)
- ensure that the electrical installations are checked by a qualified technician. (NMS 26.4)