

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC040491
Inspection date	18 August 2010
Inspector	Chris Passmore
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	17 March 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

The home provides short-term respite care for children and young people with a learning disability or combined learning and physical disability. The home operates for five nights each week spanning Wednesday through to Monday morning. Packages of respite care vary in length and frequency. Most children stay for one night at a time but others stay for weekends. Where possible children stay in the room they are familiar with and with children of similar needs and interests. The building is single storey, providing level access. Enclosed play areas are provided outdoors where children receive support to access a range of play equipment.

Summary

This was a short-notice random inspection. All the standards for staying safe were looked at as well as some from other groups. This home continues to provide an outstanding standard of care to young people using the service. There is strong, effective, leadership and management. Staff are committed to providing professional standards of care across a range of abilities and disabilities. They support young people to enjoy their respite stays, develop individual skills and to have new experiences extremely well.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

There were three recommendations made at the last inspection. Two related to recording and support procedures and the third to the maintenance of the building. The Registered Manager has responded to these recommendations by including additional personal care details in young people's plans and by delegating responsibility for some staff support sessions. The maintenance of the building is a responsibility on the service provider and work has started on certain aspects of upgrading work. Other decorative work has been requested but is subject to funding and scheduling. There are no areas of the building that are unsafe or inappropriate for young people's care.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is not judged.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

The staff respect young people's privacy and dignity. Young people and staff have devised a set of rules for the home together. These include staff knocking on bedroom doors and young people not going into each others bedrooms.

There have been no recent complaints at the home. Families and visitors can easily access information about how to complain. Accessible information about how to complain for young people has been devised using signs and symbols. A key worker system is in place which enables young people to express their views to staff.

The team works positively to protect young people and to promote their welfare. Staff receive training updates in child protection. Some members of staff are trained further through specific

modules related to the protection of young people with learning disabilities. There are systems in place and maintained to monitor young people and record incidents that present as having a potential for more serious outcomes. These are referred to as 'near misses' and reflect incidents of safeguarding in the widest context.

Staff reinforce and promote mutually respectful relations between themselves and young people in order to promote positive relationships and prevent bullying. Careful consideration is given to the group dynamic at the point of admission. A counter-bullying policy is in place. Good staffing ratios and low numbers mean that staff can detect any potential situations early and intervene to prevent them from developing. The team work with young people to develop positive group relations.

There have been no absences without authority from the home. Young people are well supervised which serves to prevent this from occurring. Nevertheless a written procedure is in place for staff to follow should they need to.

Behaviour management is addressed individually and there are examples of good strategies having been implemented to maintain positive outcomes for young people. Staff have received training in physical interventions but there is little use of these techniques. Similarly there is minimal use of sanctions at the home. Positive modelling, diverting and developing communication are encouraged as ways to help young people learn socially acceptable behaviour.

A set of generic risk assessments is in place including risk assessments of the building and specialist equipment, such as hoists. Fire prevention, detection and fire fighting equipment are all maintained by professional contractors. There are good arrangements in place to familiarise young people with action to take in the event of a fire and these are practised regularly.

Staff appointments are subject to the service provider's safe recruitment practice and confirmation of successful vetting checks is received by the home before staff commence their duties. Other arrangements for the identification of visitors and controlled access to the building are appropriate and consistently operated.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people using this service attend a variety of schools or education centres in the area during term time. Staff from the home have established good relationships with these centres and support young people during their reviews. In term time young people usually arrive from, and leave the home to go to, their education.

This inspection, however, occurred during the school holidays and the emphasis during this time was on making the most of the opportunities for fun and enjoyment that respite care gave. A range of activities are enjoyed by young people and these are largely determined by their own choice. Staff have access to a wide variety of natural and commercial leisure opportunities and make full use of these. Young people's opinion and wishes are sought in an appropriate manner in order to maximise their enjoyment of the respite stays.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is not judged.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is not judged.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The leadership and management of this service is very strong and sets clear goals for staff. The approach to management is one of enabling and encouraging individual personal and professional development within the staff team. The team reflect on their care of individual young people as well as the standards of the overall service.

Staffing levels are appropriate to particular needs. Agency staff are sometimes used but, as far as possible, the home uses the same agency workers so that young people have a consistent team. There are ongoing training and development opportunities for staff, monitored through the supervision process. New staff undergo an induction process and are regularly supported through supervision during their early employment period.

Monitoring of the home's delivery of care and the standards achieved is good. This involves regular internal as well as external monitoring visits.

There is a process of continuous consideration of the needs of young people and they are consulted regularly and appropriately using various communication methods. The young people seen using this service were clearly relaxed in the environment of the home, had a good relationship with staff and worked together with staff to achieve positive outcomes for their period of care.

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

There are no recommendations.