

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	9 July 2009
Inspector	Jane Barton
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	23 July 2008
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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 breaks for young people with learning disabilities, physical disabilities or both. It provides short breaks for up to five young people at any time from five years to under 18 years of age. A total of 40 young people use the service. The home is situated in a busy residential area and is close to shops, parks, cinemas and public transport. Residential accommodation is provided on the ground floor. A variety of rooms are available for individual or group activities. This includes a dining room, lounge, playroom, and quiet room. There are five single bedrooms. There is an enclosed grassed garden area with a patio to one side of the house and an enclosed patio garden to the other side. The home has a minibuss with tail lift. During the visit there were three children present, all of whom participated in the inspection.

Summary

This was an unannounced full inspection. All key standards were inspected. This is a good home with outstanding features. A high staff ratio ensures children's welfare is protected and safeguarded. Staff are skilled and experienced and there are effective management processes in place. Children's individual, complex and diverse needs are appropriately assessed and provided for. Staff know the children well and treat them with sensitivity and respect. There are no actions or recommendations arising from this inspection.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous visit the registered person was asked to ensure that all physical interventions are accurately recorded. This has been carried out in full, and all incidents are monitored to inform any required changes to care plans or behaviour management strategy. The registered person was also asked to ensure that regular services of lifting equipment take place. This recommendation has also been carried out in full.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children benefit from careful assessment of their dietary needs and provision of healthy and nutritious meals. Staff are fully aware of individual requirements and preferences and children are supported to make appropriate choices from the menu. Cultural and religious needs are provided for as required. Children are encouraged to get involved with shopping, preparing food and cooking, with a focus on inclusion of all. Staff supervision and support enables children to enjoy the social aspects of mealtimes.

Children have their good health promoted and they live in a healthy environment. Children are staying at the home on a respite basis and staff liaise effectively with relevant medical professionals and parents to ensure health needs are effectively met. Parents responding to questionnaires reported that staff are well trained and helpful in respect of health issues. All staff receive first aid training. Staff know the young people well and encourage them to participate in physical activities which they enjoy and which promote a healthy lifestyle.

Young people's welfare is safeguarded by sound policies and procedures for administering medication. Medication is securely stored and records accurately reflect the medication administered.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Young people's privacy is respected and information is confidentially handled. Staff place a high value on promotion of respect and dignity and a high staff to child ratio ensures this is carried out. Young people's records are securely stored.

A clear complaints process is in place and accessible guidance has been prepared outlining the process. There have been no formal complaints received about the home during the last year. Where parents have raised issues of a minor nature these are recorded in a message book with outcomes noted. No safeguarding allegations, disclosures or referrals have been made in respect of any child while at the home. Staff receive appropriate training in child protection and have a thorough understanding of how to respond to child protection issues. No children have gone missing from the home during the last year.

Young people are protected from the behaviour from others by a high level of staff supervision and clear behaviour management strategies. When planning for respite breaks consideration is given to the mix of young people staying at the home and individual preferences and friendships are encouraged. Arrangements always ensure protection of vulnerable children. A staff member said 'one-to-one supervision ensures bullying does not happen'.

Children are supported to benefit from structured activities which help them develop socially acceptable behaviour. Comprehensive care plans clearly identify areas of behaviour which can be improved and staff employ a range of strategies to deflect children from negative behaviours. Staff feel confident that the guidance and training they receive enables them to avoid physical intervention as much as possible and where used this takes the form of diverting a child to a new activity or area. Staff work with parents and education staff to develop a consistent approach to support the child. A parent said 'we all have strategies in place and work through these together'. Physical interventions are closely monitored and used to inform care planning on an ongoing basis.

Children benefit from effective health and safety arrangements which are regularly monitored and reviewed. A robust process is in place to ensure staff are aware of specific risks inherent in individual or group needs. Regular fire and other safety checks are conducted by staff. Children are protected by safe recruitment practices.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people benefit from staff working proactively to meet their individual and often complex needs. Staff have a good understanding of the need for inclusion of all and work imaginatively to achieve this. Care plans identify cultural needs and highlight the preferred communication style of the child. Children are enabled to participate in a wide range of activities through encouragement of choice and independence as far as possible, for example age appropriate teenage social events.

The education of children is actively promoted. Staff attend school where this is appropriate to provide continuity of care. Regular liaison takes place with education professionals and parents through use of a written book or telephone contact. Children from the same school frequently spend time at the home together to facilitate friendships.

The home offers a wide range of activities and experiences which encourages development of social skills and personal interests.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children benefit from robust assessment of their holistic needs. Care plans are working documents which identify clear aims for the placement and are regularly monitored and updated to accurately reflect the current needs of the child. Key workers work closely with children to ascertain their wishes and feelings and to ensure their views are heard at planning meetings and reviews and are consequently reflected in decisions and recommendations.

Young people are enabled to maintain contact with their families during their respite care. A parent said 'there is good communication, we are always notified of outings and events'. Family members are welcome to visit the home and where they are able young people can use a phone provided by the home.

Children benefit from a comprehensive admissions process which includes liaison and consultation with family and all relevant professionals to ensure the process is focussed on the needs of the child and provides a supportive and nurturing experience for them. Staff work effectively to support young people through the transition to adulthood.

Young people are enabled to express their views and contribute to decisions about their care according to their ability. Staff use creative and imaginative tools to elicit views and feelings. Policies within the home promote a child centred ethos and this is carried out in practice by staff. As a result of consultation outings and activities are planned in response to specific preferences and interests. Young people have the opportunity to express their views individually to their key workers or during Regulation 33 visits.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Young people benefit from support to maximise their life chances and prepare for adulthood. Staff promote education and independence skills and work alongside parents to consolidate learning which can be applied at home also. A range of opportunities are available for young people to participate in activities within the local community such as shopping or eating in local cafes. Progress is regularly reviewed.

Children enjoy accommodation which is maintained and furnished to a good standard. Regular repair work is carried out on a rolling programme. The accommodation is spacious and appropriate for the needs of the children at the home. There are several communal spaces in the home and a sensory garden and patio area outside. Children can bring items such as soft furnishings and toys to personalise their bedrooms while staying at the home.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. Young people's complex needs arising from disability are met. Staff promote inclusion of all to achieve their potential and respect for diverse needs and abilities. Comprehensive arrangements are in place to ensure that children are given equal access to activities and opportunities. Staff know where to access information about different cultures and religions.

The Statement of Purpose has been updated to reflect the aims and objectives of the Local Children's Services and provides useful information about the facilities available. A guide for parents and young people has been produced in accessible format.

Staff at the home are well supported through individual supervision and regular staff meetings. The current manager is in an acting up position pending the post being advertised permanently. Leadership is proactive and staff expressed confidence in the management team. The staff group are experienced, competent and benefit from good training in all issues pertinent to the care of the children. The manager ensures that safety is paramount when managing staffing vacancies through appropriate use of agency workers and maintains a one-to-one ratio between children and adults predominantly. Staff benefit from opportunities for career development. There is adequate handover time to ensure effective communication between shifts.

Effective procedures are in place for monitoring the operation of the home. The manager has reviewed the service provided and drawn up a development plan to identify improvements. Young people have permanent records of their progress which are securely stored.

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 Children's 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.