

Inspection report for Children's Home

Unique reference number	SC044224
Inspection date	04/02/2011
Inspector	Michelle Moss
Type of inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	07/09/2010
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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

This care home offers care and accommodation for young people who have learning disabilities, who are aged from seven to 17 years old. The home is registered to care for young people of both genders, however, at the time of this inspection males occupied all four places. The home is a detached property standing in its own grounds. There is an enclosed rear garden where the young people can play safely and the premises are suitably adapted to support their needs.

The home is situated approximately two miles from the town centre and there are bus routes that connect it with the local community and the rail link to the city. The home also has its own vehicle. The home has space and rooms where the young people can pursue their leisure interests and hobbies. Shops and supermarkets are accessible within the surrounding community.

The organisation responsible also operates an independent 52-week school. It is co-educational and caters for pupils and students from the age of seven to 19 years old.

Summary

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

The purpose of this unannounced interim inspection was to follow up three actions and seven recommendations made at the last key inspection. In addition, a specific focus was made on reassessing all outcomes under staying safe and looking at standards 30, 31, 33 and 34 under organisation.

The home has made good progress in meeting the majority of previous shortfalls and as a consequence the health and welfare of young people has been enhanced. The care staff continue to ensure young people receive good support and care which is tailored to their individual needs. The care staff are good at integrating augmented communication to help empower young people to make decisions. Nevertheless, although work has commenced to assess countering bullying, these assessments are not yet available to staff. Also, the care staff have still not been provided with training on countering bullying.

In light that not all outcomes have been reassessed during this inspection, no change has been made in the home's overall judgement.

Improvements since the last inspection

Medication administration records are now accurate and safeguard the welfare of young people. For example, the records provide a clear audit trail to validate

medication is being given to young people in accordance with the prescribing doctor's instructions. Young people's welfare is also further enhanced with the improvements made in keeping well-stocked first aid boxes.

A record is now made to demonstrate what young people are eating. This is checked by the Registered Manager to assess if young people are receiving a varied and wholesome diet. The placement plan is now more comprehensive. For example, there is better information recorded about young people's identity. This includes information about young people's religion, their culture and the celebration of their heritage. Also, details regarding contact arrangements are better recorded and show the extent of their family's role in a young person's life. There has been an improvement made to the design of the care plan, which is now more child-centred. For example, text is supported by symbols and pictures. This change is helping young people to gain increased levels of participation in planning their care.

The care staff are still not gaining access to risk assessments that assess the risk of potential bullying relating to behaviour. This includes identifying the potential times, places and circumstances where the risks of bullying can be greatest. Also, the care staff have still not received awareness training in countering bullying. This continued shortfall restricts the home's levels of protection in which young people are significantly safeguarded from all forms of potential bullying. More positively, the care staff are now monitoring hot water temperatures. This has extended to the home regularly checking hot water outlets used by young people. This close monitoring means any risk of potential scalding is limited.

The depth of evaluation undertaken by the Registered Manager to monitor the home has been an area of significant improvement. The Registered Manager no longer relies on a checklist approach, but instead provides an informative report that demonstrates all documents and records listed under Schedule 6 of the Children's Homes Regulations are regularly inspected. There is good evidence of how performance is being monitored and how the Registered Manager is identifying patterns or issues and then taking action. This improved approach towards self-assessment means young people are having their care more rigorously monitored and continuously adapted. The care staff are also benefiting from an increased number of supervisions in which their performance is also subjected to re-assessment.

Young people are starting to have increased opportunities to be cared for by a staff team who are better qualified. This has been made possible with the organisation's increased enrolment of staff on the required awards.

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.

Young people have diverse needs and abilities to which the care staff are sensitive. The staff are skilful and effective in providing the right balance of supervision, privacy and child protection, in accordance with details set out under care plans and behavioural assessments. There is a clear commitment to safeguarding young people through care practice and ongoing child protection training for all staff. There is an appreciation in the management of behaviour of the serious implications bullying can have on young people's welfare. Nevertheless, there remains a shortfall in enhancing this area further through implementing risk assessments and providing staff with training in countering bullying.

Young people are supported to develop socially acceptable behaviour. This is based on individual management strategies that include de-escalation, re-direction and the use of visual prompts to help young people to self-manage their own behaviour. Physical intervention is very much seen as a last resort and only applied when there is an immediate risk of harm. All staff receive ongoing training to equip them with the skills to keep young people safe when physical intervention is required. Also, the required documents to record their actions are well established and subjected to close monitoring by the organisation's behaviour support team.

The staff use their knowledge and communication skills to respond appropriately to any potential concerns raised by young people, either through symbols or by noticeable changes in behaviour. This level of surveillance helps young people to utilise the home's complaints procedure. The staff team understand their responsibilities to safeguard and promote the welfare of young people in areas of risks associated with becoming missing from care. There is recognition of the importance to maintain vigilance and knowing the extent of vulnerability young people display as a result of their autism.

The home aims to provide a safe and caring environment for young people. In order to achieve this, the home carries out regular health and safety audits, including fire, water, gas and electrical safety checks. Recruitment of staff is seen as a key safeguarding issue. This extends to ensuring that all appropriate checks are completed prior to staff being appointed. The induction, training and supervision of staff is equally well developed to further enhance safeguarding within 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 satisfactory.

Regular staff meetings and supervision take place and are seen as a key element of maintaining quality of care and safeguarding young people. This includes practices being evaluated in line with young people's needs. There are increased opportunities for care staff to receive qualifications to help them fulfil their roles. This is improving the percentage of staff within the home that hold recognised qualifications in working with children and young people. A good range of internal and accredited courses are made available to staff, including first aid, care and control and safeguarding. These courses help care staff to gather the required knowledge to keep young people healthy and safe. Nevertheless, training staff in countering bullying is currently absent.

The management team monitor and sign appropriate records as part of their internal quality assurance. To complement the internal monitoring conducted by the Registered Manager, the home also receives regular regulation 33 visits to provide an additional quality assurance mechanism. These two mechanisms help the manager to drive forward improvements in the quality of care for young people.

What must be done to secure future improvement?

Recommendations

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

- make sure staff are offered training in awareness of counter bullying. Carry out a risk assessment of the times, places and circumstances in which the risk of bullying is greatest. Carry out risk assessments for young people over any potential risk of bullying. (NMS 18.2,5 and 26.2)