

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC060034
Inspection date	15 October 2009
Inspector	Lindsey Blickem
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	17 March 2009
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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 is owned by BREAK, a registered charity. BREAK own a number of other children's homes across the county.

The home provides respite care and short breaks for young people who have a learning disability or a social and communication disability within the autistic spectrum. Young people may also have associated physical disabilities. The home is a purpose-built, six bedroom bungalow situated in a small town about 15 miles from a large city. There are public transport links into the city. Young people continue to attend their schools during their stay.

Each young person has a single bedroom, four of which have en-suite facilities. There are two bathrooms, one equipped with a 'Parker' bath. Communal accommodation comprises of a dining room, lounge, sensory room and games/play room. There is a staff office and kitchen. There is an enclosed garden with a range of play equipment and car parking is to the front of the house. Four young people were present during the inspection.

Summary

This was an announced key inspection. All key national minimum standards were inspected. The progress made since the previous inspection in March 2009 was also monitored.

The overall rating is good. Being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, positive contribution, achieving economic well-being and organisation are all rated good.

Young people receive good support with their health needs and the system for administering medication is efficient, safe and monitored well. Good progress has been made to ensure that young people have greater access to the complaints procedure and information about the homes anti bullying policy although these are not yet fully accessible. The manager ensures that safeguarding concerns are robustly and thoroughly investigated and behaviour management is safely and appropriately managed. Placement plans are comprehensive although not regularly reviewed. Young people enjoy a good standard of accommodation which is clean, tidy and well maintained. There are a variety of activities available to young people and they receive good support with attending education. Staff are well supported and receive good training opportunities. The children's guide contains good information about the home although its format is not always accessible to young people

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

The manager was asked to ensure that staff receive regular supervision and appraisals, to improve the supervision of young people, to ensure schedule 5 notifications are made without delay and make improvements to fire safety. Improvements have been made in all these areas ensuring that staff receive good professional support and young people are kept safe.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people's health needs are well met. Menus are varied, well balanced and nutritious. The home has a five week rolling menu which includes a choice of meals each day and accounts for specific dietary needs. Young people are able to communicate their choice of food through the use of pictures which are well presented in the menu.

Young people's health needs are clearly detailed within the health care plan which forms part of their placement plan. Details in relation to each young person's disability and how it impacts on their health and development are included in the plan as well as how these needs will be managed by staff. The plan also includes how personal care is managed and how staff promote independence. Issues relating to eating and mealtimes are also appropriately detailed to ensure young people are safely and sensitively managed in relation to known risks associated with eating.

The system for administering medication is efficient and comprehensive. Medication is carefully monitored and recorded when a young person is admitted and discharged for each respite stay. Medication which is administered to a young person during their stay is also carefully and efficiently recorded by staff. Controlled medication is recorded in a dedicated bound log which tallies with individual medication record sheets. All staff receive medication training and despite a recent error, which was quickly and robustly dealt with by the manager, the system is generally safe and efficient.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Young people's privacy is appropriately protected. Placement plans contain details of how personal care is managed and is managed sensitively and in private. All young people have their own bedrooms, four of which have en suite facilities affording additional privacy.

The complaints procedure is accessible to parents and professionals and to a limited degree accessible to young people. The literature accompanying the complaints procedure is being developed to allow greater access to young people including pictures and symbols. Good progress has been made to ensuring that young people have better access to the procedure although it has not yet been fully developed. There are a number of posters located around the home with details of how to raise a concern in the form of pictures and symbols. Complaints are well managed by the manager and records show that responses are appropriate and proportionate.

All staff receive training in safeguarding and there is a clear system in place for managing safeguarding concerns. The manager ensures that safeguarding concerns are appropriately referred to the local authority designated officer and that there is consultation with the responsible individual about such matters. The manager ensures that all safeguarding concerns are thoroughly investigated and that appropriate action is taken.

The system for communicating with young people about bullying is being developed in a similar way to how the complaints system is being developed. On an individual, day to day, basis staff communicate with young people clearly and effectively and discussions include dealing with relationships issues within the home. Incident reports highlight where there have been relationship problems and how staff have managed them. Young people are carefully matched with others who receive respite at the same time to ensure that the group as whole is as

compatible as it can be. Overall relationships are managed sensitively and risks associated with bullying behaviour are minimised.

There have been no recent incidents of young people missing from home and there is a clear procedure in place if such an event occurs. The threshold for calling the police and accessing additional support is appropriate given the vulnerabilities associated with the young people. The building is secure and the supervision and monitoring of young people is good ensuring that their whereabouts is known at all times.

The majority of staff have received training in physical restraint and de escalation techniques. Staff who are not trained in physical restraint do not get involved where restraint is necessary. Incidents are well managed and physical restraint is only used when a young person is at risk of harm or of harming others. Incidents are well documented and provide a clear picture of events leading to a restraint, the type of restraint used and the outcome. Young people are given the opportunity to discuss any incident including the opportunity to access medical attention if they feel they need it.

Sanctions are well managed and consequences of negative behaviour is appropriate to behaviours displayed by young people. The type of sanctions administered include the loss of privileges such as access to certain toys or spending a limited time separated from the group. Basic information about events leading to a sanction being administered are recorded in the sanctions log. Overall behaviour is managed safely and appropriately.

Young people are protected from the risk of fire through regular testing of fire alarms, emergency lighting and through regular fire drills. All staff have received a briefing in the home's fire procedures and there are comprehensive fire risk assessments in place which have been recently updated.

Vetting and recruitment of staff is appropriately robust and all required information in relation to staff employed within the home is contained within their personnel file. All relevant checks are completed prior to staff starting work.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people receive a high level of attention from staff on a day to day basis and relationships are positive and affectionate. Staff make great efforts to ensure young people are positively occupied and that they are communicated with effectively and in a way that makes them feel comfortable. Each young person has a nominated keyworker who is responsible for ensuring their placement plan is kept up to date and also to ensure that there is effective communication between the home, family and school.

Young people receive good support with getting ready for school. The daily routines ensure all personal care needs are managed efficiently and sensitively. Staff are assisted with ensuring personal care tasks are well managed by good information contained within the health care plan. Respite care packages are managed efficiently ensuring that there is always transport to and from school. Each young person has a home/school communication book which enables staff to support them with any homework. Staff also ensure that any identified areas for learning which are identified in placement plans are appropriately handled during their stay.

Young people have access to a variety of activities within the home including toys, games and indoor and outdoor play areas. Toys and games available are appropriate to the developmental needs of young people and the outside play areas are spacious and include climbing frames, bicycles, go karts and a path which doubles as a race track. During weekends and holidays day trips are available to young people ensuring they receive good recreational opportunities and that they enjoy their stay.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Placement plans contain all relevant details in relation to health, education and contact. Plans identify significant issues in relation to a young person's needs and how staff manage them. Risks associated with each issue are also identified and information in relation to how staff manage particular issue also ensures identified risks are minimised. Plans cover all relevant aspects of a young person's needs ensuring that they are safely cared for during their stay. Plans are reasonably up to date and staff are responsible for ensuring that a written report is completed about the progress made by young people which contributes to looked after reviews. There are, however, few formal systems in place for reviewing placement plans.

Contact arrangements for young people and their families are appropriately highlighted within placement plans. Given the nature of the home young people may have little contact with their families during their stay. Plans also make clear what arrangements are in place to ensure that they and families are in regular contact to ensure continuity of care.

There are clear systems in place for how referrals and admissions are managed. Systems ensure that parents are fully informed about what services and facilities are available within the home and the manager is given all information about a young person to consider if the referral is appropriate. Young people have the opportunity to visit the home with their family and overnight stays are only achieved once the young person feels comfortable. Young people on the waiting list also receive the opportunity to receive day care in the home which enables them to become familiar with the home prior to them receiving overnight respite. Admissions are therefore sensitively and efficiently managed.

Staff have made good progress with ensuring young people are consulted with on a day to day basis. Residents meetings are held almost every day and symbols and pictures are used to facilitate these meetings. Staff are also developing a new system for consultation using symbols and pictures. At present staff are assessing each young person to see what is their preferred communication, once these assessments are complete staff are then able to ensure that appropriate tools are in place for ensuring young people are effectively consulted. Good commitment is being demonstrated by staff to ensuring effective and meaningful consultation is in place.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Young people are encouraged to become more independent through staff supporting them to take responsibility for their own personal care. Young people are also encouraged to observe appropriate behaviour whilst living with others including table manners and sharing. Young people are not routinely required to perform chores around the home although they may assist if they choose to or if prompted by staff.

Young people enjoy living in a good standard of accommodation. The home is spacious, clean, tidy and well maintained. Bedrooms are attractively decorated and are furnished with a bed, a wardrobe and a chest of drawers. Four of the six bedrooms have an en suite bathroom leaving the remaining two bedrooms with almost exclusive access to the two communal bathrooms. All bathrooms are well maintained and well decorated. The kitchen is large, well maintained with good storage and cooking facilities. The dining room is spacious and well furnished. The two lounge areas are also spacious and contain play equipment and furniture to relax in. The garden is large and has a climbing frame, race track and grass areas. The environment is homely and comfortable.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The statement of purpose has recently been reviewed and updated and contains a comprehensive guide to the services and facilities within the home. All required areas are covered including health, education, bullying and safeguarding. The children's guide is also clearly written and is a simplified version of the statement of purpose. However it is not accessible to all children receiving respite given that not all children would be able to read it in its current format.

All staff receive formal supervision usually every month. Some progress has been made towards ensuring all staff have received an appraisal. Training opportunities are generally good and the majority of staff have completed the mandatory training programme which includes training in de escalation and physical restraint, medication, first aid, child protection, food hygiene and moving and handling. Staff are able to access further training once they have completed the mandatory training and the manager is able to access courses relevant to her role. Overall staff receive good professional support which enables them to care for young people appropriately.

The atmosphere within the home is very relaxed and positive, staff are motivated, competent and very attentive to young people. The routines within the home are predictable and enable the young people to feel settled and safe.

Visits on behalf of the responsible individual occur monthly and a written report of each visit is produced within good time. The visiting and reporting process is thorough and include reviewing incidents, sanctions, restraints, premises and staffing issues. The critical and objective reporting encourages a good review and evaluation of practice.

Case files are securely kept within the staff office and contain a reasonable amount of information in relation to the progress made by young people receiving respite. All required information in relation to schedule 3 is available.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Young people receive individualised care and their specific needs are well met. The culture of the home reflects the backgrounds of young people and the service is well designed to meet the needs of young people with a range of abilities.

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
3	undertake regular reviews of each child's placement plan (Regulation 12) (2)	27 November 2009
1	ensure the children's guide is produced in a form appropriate to the age, understanding and communication needs of the children accommodated in the home (Regulation 4) (4).	27 November 2009

Recommendations

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

- ensure the home's complaints procedure is accessible to disabled children in a suitable form (NMS 16.3)
- ensure that all staff have their performance individually and formally appraised annually (NMS 28.7).