

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Jackie Graves
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	1 June 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

This children's home is registered to accommodate up to eight children. The home offers respite and long term care for children and young people with a learning disability, aged between 10 and 18 years of age.

The service is provided in a large house in a residential area. Accommodation is provided over three floors. The service does not provide care for children and young people who use wheelchairs.

There are good transport links and the home is close to a shopping area and small park.

Young people were present for part of the inspection.

Summary

This unannounced key inspection looked at all the key standards under all outcomes. It also assessed progress in meeting the action and recommendation made at the last interim inspection and the two actions made following a complaint investigation visit. These are around monitoring the service, staff training and records, plus recruitment checks.

Arrangements for health and medication are sound. Staff encourage young people to try different foods but mealtimes are not social occasions and records of food eaten show less variety than planned menus.

There is an effective system for preventing children from going missing taking into account their extreme vulnerability. The home provides physical safety and security through regular checks and testing of systems and equipment.

Education is supported and young people maintain their school attendance when staying at the home. A new computer has been provided to support learning and leisure activities. Individual needs are assessed and reviewed as children grow and change. Young people are able to keep in contact with people who are significant to them.

Training is provided but this has not included all staff to ensure they are competent in their work with young people and confident in knowing how to protect young people. Records do not reflect all who work in the home. Staff supervision is not sufficiently vigilant at times to ensure that young people's privacy and dignity is maintained.

The home has plans to develop the garden and refurbish the interior. A few areas of the home have an unpleasant odour and are insufficiently clean and maintained.

Three actions and one recommendation are made as a result of this visit. One action and one recommendation set at the last inspection are not fully met and has been restated in this report.

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

The responsible individual was asked to improve the quality of reports of monitoring visits. These now include observations of young people and interviews with staff to ensure the views of all involved in the home are represented.

The home was asked to ensure all staff are trained in child protection. Whilst the majority of staff have taken part in training, not all those working in the home have attended recent training, although this has been offered.

Management are now clear about how to implement the procedure to be followed in the event of any allegation of abuse or neglect. This will ensure that any staff suspended without prejudice are not employed at another home until all investigations are complete.

The home was asked to keep clear information about staff. Some of this information is in place but is not sufficiently comprehensive to include details of all staff who work in the home.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Young people's health needs are well met in the home. Individual health needs are clearly recorded on plans so that staff know how to meet them. They are familiar with the health needs of individuals and understand the emotional needs of young people and how this translates into behaviour patterns.

Appropriate arrangements are made to ensure medication is safely administered in the home and returned to families when a young person returns from their respite break. Careful records are kept to document how medicines have been administered, thus promoting the safety and welfare of young people.

Special diets are catered for and young people are encouraged to try foods they would not normally eat to give them new experiences. However, menus as served, do not reflect such a broad variety of different foods as do planned menus.

There is limited space in the dining room when the home is full. Due to this, staff cannot sit with young people as they eat, so mealtimes do not present as social occasions. Not all staff are consistently vigilant at meal times to ensure young people are eating appropriate foods and not interfering with other's meals.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Careful checks are made to ensure health and safety in the premises, such as electrical and gas safety. Fire safety is promoted through the regular testing of fire systems and alarms. Fire drills, involving young people, help to familiarise them with the procedure for evacuating and minimise any distress this may cause.

Young people benefit from having privacy in their own bedrooms and staff afford them as much privacy as possible when carrying out their personal care. The system of door security ensures young people may exit from their own room, but access from other young people is

denied, thus ensuring privacy. In communal areas, privacy may sometimes be compromised when some young people undress, unobserved by staff.

There is an accessible complaints policy which families are encouraged to use should they have any concerns about the service. The complaints policy is provided in an appropriate format, but due to young people's needs, most would require a family member to complain on their behalf.

Bullying is not an issue in the home due to the young people's needs, although one individual's behaviour may unintentionally impact on another's. Most staff have received training in managing challenging behaviour and use appropriate methods of working with young people. However, not all staff have taken up the training on offer and not all demonstrate vigilance in their supervision of young people's behaviour.

The home is aware of the extreme vulnerability of residents should they go missing and takes steps to safeguard them both on site and when visiting places of interest. There have been no reports of young people going missing. A clear system of risk assessment ensures staff try to minimize risk to young people and identify action they should take in the event of a young person going missing.

The home has taken steps to evidence a robust recruitment policy which includes checks with referees and the Criminal Records Bureau to ensure staff are suitable. However, basic information about staff does not include all who work there.

Ongoing training in child protection has been provided but not taken up by all staff. Most, but not all, staff know how to respond appropriately to a child protection concern to ensure young people are safeguarded. This has resulted in an inappropriate response to a child protection allegation since the last inspection.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The home supports young people's school placements to provide continuity for their daily routines whilst they stay in the home. Effective communication between the home and school ensures both establishments are clear about young people's current needs and well being.

Young people are given individualised support to change some behaviours or achieve independence skills, such as learning to clear their plate away after a meal, or learning toileting skills. A careful system of individual risk assessment supports residents to develop through taking controlled risks.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Young people's needs are assessed to make sure the home is the right place for them. Detailed care actions focus on what staff should do to meet their needs and are regularly reviewed in light of changing needs. Young people's views are considered, at reviews of their care, and taken into consideration regarding everyday matters in the home such as in planning activities and choosing soft furnishings.

Following a placement, which impacted greatly on the life of the home, the manager has adapted procedures for admitting young people. This will ensure greater clarity about the purpose of the young person's stay and how staff will communicate with their family and placing authority. Support is provided, to those young people moving on from the home, to help them understand the change.

Young people are able to maintain contact with significant people in their lives. Family and friends are welcome to visit although the home prefers some notice to facilitate this.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is satisfactory.

Young people benefit from having their own bedrooms, with sufficient furnishings, during their stay in MIG House. Residents staying long term may personalise their rooms with their choice of posters and pictures, whilst those staying for respite may create a homely appearance by bringing their own toys or soft furnishings with them.

Young people have access to a secure garden space for outdoor play and exercise. This area is being prepared for new equipment, which is to be supplied imminently to provide more opportunities for young people to play outside. There are also plans to alter and upgrade the indoor play facilities, to improve how the play space is used and provide further facilities for young people.

Some areas of the house are showing signs of wear and tear and not all areas are well decorated or maintained. However, the home reports plans to refurbish the interior of the home to improve the standard of accommodation in the near future.

In a few areas of the home there are offensive odours, although staff report that carpets are frequently cleaned to try to prevent this.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The home provides up to date written information for people wishing to know what to expect from the service. Information for young people is provided in a suitable format.

There are systems in place to check that the home is operating in line with its Statement of Purpose. There has been an improvement to the quality of reports of such monitoring visits, which now demonstrate that the views of staff and young people have been included where possible.

Staff vacancies are covered by some staff who are usually based in another home operated by the same provider. Such staff do not all have the appropriate training to ensure their competency for this work. There is a rolling programme of staff training, but records do not always accurately reflect who has taken part in this and not all staff take up the offer of training to develop suitable skills to appropriately support the young people.

The promotion of equality and diversity in the home is satisfactory, with cultural, religious and individual needs defined on care plans so that the majority of staff know how to meet these needs. However, not all staff are sensitive in showing respect for those with a different

culture/religion to their own. Young people benefit from being looked after by a staff who represent both genders and reflect their diverse backgrounds.

Each young person has a permanent and private record of their progress, including a clear chronology of their time in the home.

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
9	make suitable arrangements to ensure the home is conducted in a manner which respects the privacy and dignity of children accommodated and with due regard to their religious persuasion and disability (Regulation 11 (2) (a) (b))	19 April 2010
24	ensure all parts of the home are kept clean, reasonably decorated and maintained and free from offensive odours (Regulation 31 (2) (e) 3)	19 April 2010
27	maintain in the children's home the records specified in Schedule 4 and ensure they are kept up to date, in this case relating to staff records (Schedule 4 (2) Regulation 29 1,2)	19 April 2010
31	ensure that all persons employed in the home receive appropriate training and have the qualifications, skills and experience for the work they are to perform. (Regulation 26 (3) (b) 27 (4) (a) (2))	19 April 2010

Recommendations

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

- make sure meals are set up to be social occasions and that menus (as served) demonstrate provision of a varied diet. (NMS 10)
- make sure all staff are appropriately trained in child protection (NMS 17.8)