

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Chris Fuller
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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

The unit is a ten-bedded residential short break service for children with a range of disabilities, including learning disabilities, physical disabilities, autism and complex health needs. Children usually attend three or four nights per month and currently 54 children receive a service. Funding is from the local authority and the health authority and nurses are always on duty. The site is in an urban area close to local amenities and facilities and has been open nearly three years.

The property is designed in two separate flats, which are very well resourced to meet the needs of the client-group. Bedrooms are individual and have a good amount of space for lifting equipment; some rooms have overhead tracking for hoists. All bedrooms have en-suite wet rooms, which include a shower, toilet, wash basin and grab rails.

One garden play area contains a tarmac track for quad bikes and a sensory garden. The second garden has outdoor play equipment for young people who enjoy more physical activities. Two mini-buses are available for trips.

Children who were on site during the afternoon and evening of the visit contributed to this inspection.

Summary

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

The unannounced interim inspection visit of the home was made to monitor the key national minimum standards in the outcome area of staying safe and some of those in organisation. The provider has addressed two actions and only one of the three recommendations, in respect of relatively minor safety issues and an administrative shortfall in recruitment, identified at the previous inspection.

The inspection found this has been an extremely difficult period for management and staff who struggle to maintain the high standards of care and ensure the safety and welfare of children and young people. Staff practice remains exemplary in the provision of high levels of individual support for children and young people. They continue to benefit from an excellent range of facilities and services within the home. There are no actions, however, four new recommendations are set in addition to the two previous recommendations as a result of this inspection. The issues respectively relate to, appropriate disposal of Criminal Records Bureau checks, training for staff, ensuring there are adequate levels of management and staffing, monitoring of restraints and fire safety records and consultation with the local Fire Authority.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous inspection there were two actions and three recommendation made in respect of recording of fire drills, recruitment records, procedures following evacuation of the premises, consultation with the local fire authority and monitoring of records of restraints. Progress has been made with records being kept of staff in attendance at fire drills. This means, managements are able to monitor those that have not yet participated. The Registered Manager confirmed the arrangements that are in place following evacuation to secure the safety and welfare of young people. Management have secured the required information for the recruitment records of the member of staff, these confirm their suitability to work with children and young people. However, no action has been taken in respect of consultation with the local Fire Authority and monitoring of records of restraints and these recommendations are still to be addressed.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is not judged.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff practice demonstrates well that in respect of a child or young person's religion, belief, sexual orientation, race, gender, disability or culture their privacy and confidentiality is supported well. Any decision to support the above includes evidence that a child or young person's views are given importance. Staff make every effort to consult with young people and provide opportunities for them to make choices about their personal care. Young people are constantly enabled to enjoy good levels of privacy and confidentiality staff always strive to keep to these. Staff conscientiously implement comprehensive policies and procedures which promote privacy and confidentiality exceptionally well.

Young people are enabled to raise any issues or concerns through a broad range of effective formal and informal communication systems. The complaint procedure is produced in formats which suit the needs of the young people, their carers and other people very well. Staff are very open to responding to the concerns and complaints of young people and others. Staff receive training about the complaint policy and procedure and demonstrate a clear understanding of the procedures. There have been no complaints received in the last inspection period.

The home has detailed, clear and well implemented policies and procedures for all safeguarding practices in respect of child protection, countering bullying, absence of a child without authority and notification of significant events. The staff team has strong links with the local safeguarding board. Training about safeguarding occurs for staff, preparing them to have a good understanding of safeguarding and how and

when they have a duty to refer a child protection concern. Management give high priority to safe caring practice with particular attention being given to staffing levels, planning for matching respite groups of young people, health care needs and maintenance of a safe environment. Risk assessments are completed and updated regularly to address any shortfalls. Management and staff take appropriate action to address any concerns and network appropriately with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of young people.

Staff proactively risk assess the potential for any bullying so that strategies can be put in place to prevent oppressive or aggressive language or behaviour. Staff deal particularly well with challenging issues such as, insults relating to disability, race, culture, gender and sexual orientation. They are proactive and always flag up any persistently annoying behaviour, awareness of size and presence of young people and the impact on the group. Staff are highly skilled and discreetly observe interactions between young people to provide appropriate support and guidance to facilitate and enhance positive social interactions. Young people are able to enjoy different social experiences in the home and in the community, these are well supported by the staff.

Staff produce individual risk assessments and plans for what to do should each child or young person go missing. These are usually reviewed after a young person has been missing. Detailed records about the event are kept. Staff have established good links with the police and there is a detailed protocol for liaising with the police when young people go missing. Staff always go out to look for young people who are missing. They collect the young person when they are found and give a warm welcome when they return. All relevant persons are notified and consulted to ensure that the potential for a reoccurrence is reduced and lessons are learnt from the incident. Generally, notifications are sent to all the people and appropriate authorities as required. Senior management have a good oversight of the process and knowledge of any incidents.

The home has a broad range of positive individualised behaviour management plans and strategies in place and reviews these with the young people to ensure they remain purposeful and meaningful. There is a lead trainer in managing challenging behaviour who provides training and guidance for staff so that good practice is standardised and staff are well supported within the home. Young people enjoy high levels of individual care and attention from staff who are attentive and caring in the support they provide. There are very few instances of restraint. However, there are a range of different documents for the recording of restraints, physical interventions and incident reports. This is potentially confusing and does not fully meet the required standards. The premises, facilities and resources are well utilised to maximise opportunities for young people to enjoy a different range of experiences in a safe and secure environment. There is some electronic surveillance equipment in place so that staff can discreetly monitor young people's whereabouts and reduce unnecessary intrusion on their personal space or free time.

Young people are generally well supervised and supported to keep themselves safe through implementation of a range of health and safety strategies. However, there

are some minor aspects of fire safety that have not been fully addressed such as, consultation with the local Fire Authority regarding bolts on a fire exit door and monitoring of the fire drill and fire safety records. The Registered Manager has completed a risk assessment of the former and is confident this does not restrict exit from the building or impact upon the safety of the young people.

The home has an established and effective system for the vetting and supervision of visitors. The management have improved the recruitment records held, however, there were copies of Criminal Records Bureau checks on file that have not been disposed of in accordance with guidance. The management has established a comprehensive system for the recruitment of suitable staff to work with young people.

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.

Staff attend training to achieve and maintain competency in their care practice. There is evidence of training in staff files with certificates held and the chronology of training events attended. However, in discussion with management and staff and inspection of records it was clear that there are some differences for nursing and care staff in the training, knowledge and understanding of the national minimum standards and their implementation. For example, there are different processes and practice in the recording of events such as accidents, injuries, physical interventions and incidents of violence and aggression. While these matters have a minimal impact upon young people there is the potential for confusion and error.

The young people benefit from the individual care provided by a good mix of staff in respect of ethnicity, gender, age, skills and experience. There is generally an adequate number of staff on each shift to provide care for young people. However,

there has been a prolonged period of different management and staff absence and temporary redeployment to another residential home. This over a period of time has at times reduced the capacity and stability normally available to provide adequate staffing levels to fulfil planned activities and/or maintain levels of care and frequency of respite normally enjoyed by young people and their families. The management and staff remain very committed to providing consistent personalised care in a safe, secure and stimulating environment for young people.

The home is generally monitored in all aspects of service delivery and action is taken to maintain quality of care within the home. However, quality assurance and monitoring of the service is limited at the present time following a reduction in the time available for management duties due to a variety of external demands and internal changes as stated above. Management have not fully addressed the recommendations from the previous inspection. Practice records such as, fire safety, accidents and physical interventions/restraints are not monitored and signed by management. To compound this although Regulation 33 visits are being completed these do not appear to consistently identify issues to be addressed but sometimes sign that records have been looked at. This does not provide clear guidance for staff of action to be taken or standards of care to be met and maintained.

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):

- ensure a record of the use of restraint on a child by an adult is kept in a separate dedicated bound and numbered book and includes all of the information required (NMS 22.9)
- ensure the local Fire Authority has been consulted about fire precaution measures and is consulted about alterations to the premises, with regard to bolts on an external door (NMS 26.8)
- ensure the recruitment process includes an effective system to decide on appointment, or refusal of appointment, or other concerns about suitability that are declared or discovered through the recruitment process such as, disposal of Criminal Records Bureau checks (NMS 27.2)
- ensure the home is staffed at all times of the day and night, at or above the minimum level specified under the national minimum standards (NMS 30.1)
- ensure that all staff including nursing staff receive training and development opportunities that equip them with the skills required to meet the needs of the young people and the purpose of the home including the national minimum standards (NMS 31.1)
- ensure the registered person of the home monitors and signs the home's records at least once a month to identify any patterns or issues requiring action and that they take action to improve or adjust provisions where necessary such as,

records of restraints and fire drills. (NMS 33.1)