

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	10 August 2009
Inspector	Nicola McEvinney
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	3 December 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

This home is situated close to the city centre, built in 2005 for the City Council, Social Services Department. It is a purpose-built unit designed to accommodate up to six young people with physical and/or sensory impairment on a shared care arrangement, with some young people staying week days and others spending weekends at the home.

The home stands in its own grounds with a garden to the side and rear where there is a range of outside play equipment that has been fixed onto a soft play surface. The home has decking to the front overlooking a local public park. There is parking for staff and visitors and external closed circuit security cameras in operation.

The home has a main office and second office for staff to work in and to have handover sessions and staff meetings. This office also securely stores young people's files.

There are two lounges, one with a television and one with a music system and books for the young people; this lounge is used as a quiet room and has patio doors leading to the decked patio area. There is a central play area equipped with a number of appropriate activities and effective lighting for the young people. Leading off from this area is a sensory room and a soft playroom.

There are six bedrooms, each having a sink and vanity unit and lockable storage space. Some bedrooms have carpets but there are also bedrooms with a washable floor covering.

There is one waking night staff on duty with a sleep-in staff member. However, dependent upon the needs of the young people there may be two waking night staff.

Summary

The purpose of the unannounced key inspection was to check that the core national minimum standards and the recommendations made at the last inspection have been met.

There are some very good aspects to this home. This is a well established staff team who have gone through a turbulent period but have regained their stability and offer a good service to families in and around the city. Parents speak highly of the service offered, saying 'staff go above and beyond the call of duty, it is a very nurturing staff team who support the whole family'. Also, 'It is like an extended family, I am always made to feel welcome'.

Young people are taken on a number of activities and have good experiences, parents say the staff take their children to places they would feel difficult taking them to, for example, restaurants.

The Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) is being developed which has enhanced the communication abilities of the young people.

This is a well maintained home creating a homely and child friendly environment for the young people.

Although the young people are taken out, this is dependent upon staffing, as one of the team has to collect and return the transport to other parts of the city and can be time consuming. Having their own transport would enable ad hoc outings to occur on a regular basis.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

The Statement of Purpose has been reviewed and contains all the required information.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Healthy nutritious meals are provided for the young people, although a number of young people have a very limited diet. However, staff continue to encourage these individuals to try new foods, with some success. Care plans contain details of how young people eat and what utensils they use to ensure mealtimes are relaxed as possible. Staff record the intake for some young people and encourage individuals to eat healthier options. Staff seek advice and guidance from the dietician on nutrition.

As this is a shared care facility parents maintain the responsibility of overseeing their child's health needs. However, staff attend, with parents, Health Needs Assessments and other medical appointments ensuring all relevant information is available as necessary. Parents spoke highly of staff support in ensuring appropriate health referrals and assessments are progressed.

Care plans are devised under the Every Child Matters outcomes and young people's health needs are clearly identified and strategies are in place to show how these needs are met whilst young people stay at the home. Individual epilepsy protocols are in place for all young people who have seizures, ensuring that appropriate action is taken and all staff are trained in the administration of Buccal Midazolam.

Medication records are in good order, these are closely monitored to ensure young people are administered medication according to their prescription. The majority of staff hold a First Aid qualification ensuring that the young people are looked after by competent people.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

All staff are aware of the need to respect young people's dignity by ensuring personal care is undertaken discreetly. All confidential information is kept securely.

One complaint was recorded in the complaints log. This was dealt with sensitively ensuring that any conflict was diverted. Parents were unanimous in saying that if they had any concerns they were confident that staff would deal with them. However, they did say that they had no complaints about the service and felt that the staff were supportive to them and their families.

There are no child protection concerns. Established staff have attended child protection training and new staff are booked on this course. Staff are aware of their responsibility in ensuring that they are vigilant in protecting young people from harm.

The majority of young people do not display any bullying behaviour, however, occasionally some individuals may target more vulnerable young people. For example, by taking their toys or giving the odd push. Staff are vigilant in addressing this by redirecting the perpetrator ensuring all the young people are kept safe and happy.

The Registered Manager has revised the Missing Persons policy to give clear guidance to staff to ensure they know what action to take in the event of a young person getting lost whilst they are away from the home. When they go out, staff carry a description of what the young people are wearing and a photograph, to ensure prompt action is taken if necessary.

Staff are very clear that the home does not restrain the young people. They show clear understanding that young people would not benefit from this intervention even in a time of crisis. Parents spoke highly of how staff manage their children on these occasions, and commend their practice. Each young person has an Individual Crisis Management Plan identifying young people's triggers with strategies in place to manage the individual to ensure that there is a consistent approach to managing behaviour.

Risk assessments are undertaken on each young person to ensure risks are identified and minimised. Detailed risk assessments are also undertaken on any activities or outings the young people participate in. Fire records are in good order with drills held regularly including at night. This ensures that all staff know what action to take in the event of a fire. All appropriate certificates are up-to-date covering gas installations, water and all portable electrical items are (PAT) tested. Windows have restrictors on to prevent young people from climbing out.

There are robust recruitment systems in place ensuring that only suitable people are employed in the home.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The home accesses a number of services to help meet the needs of the young people. An individual from the Community Learning Disabilities team and an individual from the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) attend staff consultation meetings to support and advise the staff on managing young people's behaviour. These consultation meetings form part of the regular staff meetings where each young person is discussed and strategies in managing are agreed. This ensures a consistent approach to the care of the individual.

There are good links with the psychologist from the CAMHS team and staff will liaise with this team on behalf of parents to progress referrals for assessment in a time of crisis. Parents were particularly grateful to the staff in helping in this way saying that the staff not only look after their child but the whole family, 'they are very nurturing'. The Looked After Children Nurse is doing sex education with the young people.

Staff have progressed the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) that the majority of the young people use in school, ensuring consistency. Each young person has their own small file they can carry about containing a number of symbols. This enables them to communicate their wants and needs to staff. Care plans also set out individual targets for each person to help them develop skills.

Parents maintain responsibility for overseeing the education of their children. However, Personal Education Plans are in place as appropriate and all the young people have a Statement of Educational Need. Staff attend all educational meetings with parents.

Staff organise lots of activities for the young people. During the summer holidays they are visiting Blackpool, an aquarium activity, a safari park and a maze. They have already been to a railway museum and an open farm where young people can have contact with farm animals. The home is situated adjacent to a park and this week an activity fair is being held which the young people will be attending. Parents commend the activities staff organise for the young people, particularly going to local restaurants. However, the home is dependent upon staffing to allow for the collection and return of transport from other parts of the city. Young people could be offered more opportunities to go out if the home had their own mode of transport.

Within the home and grounds there is a range of activities for the young people to participate in. The home has a sensory room a large well-equipped play room with a full screen television. Outside there is play equipment and areas where young people can sit.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All the young people have a detailed care plan setting out their specific needs and how these needs are to be met. These plans also contain the young person's daily routine to ensure a consistent approach to their care. A pen-picture of each young person is also produced describing the normal presentation of the individual.

The home's care plans are regularly reviewed and amended. Statutory child care reviews are held as appropriate with staff in attendance who take contemporaneous notes to ensure decisions taken are promptly implemented.

As this is a shared care facility, young people have regular contact with their families.

Young people are admitted to the home in a planned and structured manner. If young people require any medical intervention all staff are trained in this intervention prior to admission, ensuring that all health needs are well met.

The majority of young people have very limited communication skills. However, through the development of the PECS system this is improving. Staff respond positively to the wishes and feelings of the young people. For example, if an individual wishes to dress themselves, extra time is given to enable this to happen. Parents commend the communication staff have with them, in times of crisis staff have daily contact with families. If there are any incidents, for example, a child having a seizure, parents are promptly informed.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

These young people will always require support, however, through the target system, young people develop some skills.

This is a new purpose built building designed to meet the needs of the young people with disabilities. All areas of the home are clean and maintained to a high standard. It is well equipped and furnished creating a child friendly, homely environment.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The Statement of Purpose has been reviewed and contains all the information required.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good.

This is a well qualified staff team with all staff having National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) at level 3, or equivalent, or are undertaking this qualification. Staff have good access to training and the Registered Manager sources relevant training applicable to the care of the young people staying at the home. The majority of staff have attended the mandatory training with regular refreshers. This ensures that the young people are looked after by competent people.

There are adequate numbers of staff to meet the needs of the young people. Vacancies have been covered by temporary acting up posts or the employment of temporary staff. Staff sickness is covered from the substantive staff team. This ensures that there is a consistent staff team looking after the young people.

There is a new Registered Manager in post who has worked at the home for a number of years. There are good systems in place to manage the homes systems and records. She is exercising effective leadership, empowering the staff team to be innovative, creating a home striving to improve the service it offers to families.

Children's records contain all the relevant information.

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
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Recommendations

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

- consider having appropriate transport to enable young people to readily participate in activities outside the home (NMS 15.1).