

Inspection report for Children's Home

Unique reference number	SC066565
Inspection date	21/02/2011
Inspector	Russell Shackford
Type of inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	10/06/2010
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You can obtain copies of The Children Act 2004, Every Child Matters and The National Minimum Standards for Children's Services from: The Stationery Office (TSO) PO Box 29, St Crispins, Duke Street, Norwich, NR3 1GN. Tel: 0870 600 5522. Online ordering: www.tso.co.uk/bookshop

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 children's home is registered to provide care, accommodation and education for up to 26 boys and girls from eight years up to 17 years old. The home offers a specialised service to children and young people with autism.

The home has a range of accommodation. There are three flats with four bedrooms and two flats with six bedrooms. There are also two one-bedroom, independent flats for young people who can enjoy a more independent lifestyle.

Each flat has a lounge and spacious kitchen diner. Some bedrooms are en-suite.

The home benefits from a wide range of leisure and education facilities on site. These include a school, home cinema, bistro, games room, sports hall, gym, hydrotherapy pool, five-a-side football pitch, horticultural facilities, a craft room, sensory room, library and information technology suite.

There is also a playing field, gardens and parking area.

Summary

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

This was an unannounced interim inspection to check on key standards and related regulations under the Every Child Matters outcome group of staying safe. The judgement for the outcome area of staying safe following this inspection is satisfactory because of the poor practice around restricting children and young people's liberty. Therefore, the overall judgement for the service is changed to satisfactory.

Children and young people's privacy is respected and complaints are well handled. Good policies and practice promote and protect their welfare.

Behaviour management policies are good. However, the children and young people's liberty is restricted because on at least three occasions since the last inspection staff have locked the doors to keep children and young people in the home. The reason for this is stated in the restraint records as not having enough staff. This practice is an excessive and unreasonable method of control. The service must keep children and young people safe without restricting their liberty.

Staff demonstrate a good awareness of the risks to the children and young people during their known and likely activities. Written risk assessments provide clear detail of the action required to minimise the identified risks and comprehensively promote

young people's safety.

All staff are trained in appropriate safety subjects including fire safety, complaints, child protection and physical restraint. Good policies and procedures help to protect children and young people's physical safety in the event of a fire at the home. Robust staff recruitment policies and checks ensure that people are suitable to work with children and young people at the home.

Improvements since the last inspection

The registered person was asked to make suitable arrangements for the recording, handling, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of any medicines received into the children's home. Significant improvements to the medication policy and procedures together with additional staff training and an improved monitoring system help to ensure that children and young people's welfare is safeguarded by the home's policies and procedures for administering medicines.

It was recommended that a minimum ratio of 80% of all care staff complete a level 3 National Vocational Qualification in Caring for Children and Young People or an appropriate equivalent. The staff are registered on an appropriate course and they are given time and support to complete the course. However, the target of 80% remains unmet.

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 demonstrate good understanding of facilitating privacy for the children and young people. This is done sensitively and safely. Staff confirm that they are able to speak and make telephone calls in private and details about children and young people's care are recorded and stored appropriately, to maintain appropriate levels of confidentiality. Children and young people have access to a private telephone. Visiting families and friends can have the use of a visitor's suite which can also be used for overnight stays. Therefore privacy is well respected in all aspects.

All staff have received training on complaints to ensure that they know what to do if a person complains about the service. There is information in the children and young people's guide about how to complain. Staff enable children and young people to complain through support or advocacy. There is an independent advocacy service available to the children and young people. Staff say that the advocate visits regularly and interacts well with the children and young people. The complaints procedure is supported by a clear and thorough recording system. Therefore,

complaints are well handled.

The managers and staff have all received child protection training. The provider has a good safeguarding procedure for staff to follow in the event of any allegation or suspicion of abuse. Staff demonstrate good knowledge and understanding of the safeguarding procedures to promote and protect the children and young people's safety. Therefore, the welfare of children and young people is promoted; they are protected from abuse, bullying and unauthorised absence and an appropriate response is made to any allegation or suspicion of abuse. All significant events at the home have been notified to the relevant authorities including Ofsted.

The sanctions policy is good, promoting the use of praise, encouragement and de-escalation of behaviours. The policy reflects the age, understanding and individual needs of the children and young people concerned. Physical restraint is occasionally used to manage behaviour where no other alternative exists. Staff are trained in the provider's policy and practices. Physical restraint records contain the required details. However, the children and young people's liberty is restricted because on at least three occasions since the last inspection staff have locked the doors to keep children and young people in the home because of insufficient staff being available. This practice is an excessive and unreasonable method of control and an action has been raised to cease this practice immediately. The manager said that he would address the matter with urgency.

Positive steps are taken to keep children and young people safe. Written risk assessments are recorded to enable staff to know what action to take to minimise the risk to each child or young person during their known and likely activities. The risk assessments are regularly reviewed for implementation and effectiveness.

All staff, children and young people have been involved in regular fire drills. All staff working at the home have received up-to-date fire safety training to enable them to minimise the risks to children and young people in the event of a fire at the home. The fire safety check records are up to date and accurate. Therefore, children and young people's physical safety from fire in the home is adequately protected.

All staff have been appropriately recruited and they have undergone suitable Criminal Records Bureau checks to ensure that they are suitable to work with children and 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 not judged.

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/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Std.	Action	Due date
22	ensure that no measure of control or restraint is excessive or unreasonable (Regulation 17)	21/02/2011
30	ensure that there is at all times, having regard to the size of the children's home, the Statement of Purpose, and the number and needs of the children accommodated there, and the need to safeguard and promote the health and welfare of the children accommodated in the home, a sufficient number of suitably qualified, competent and experienced persons working at the home. (Regulation 25)	21/02/2011

Recommendations

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

- ensure a minimum ratio of 80% of all care staff complete a National Vocational Qualification in Caring for Children and Young People at level 3. (NMS 29).

