

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Debbie Foster
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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 provides a responsive residential respite care service for young people with severe learning disabilities, some of whom have complex and challenging behaviours. A shared care service is also available. In an emergency, they provide short-term residential care to young people whose families require support. Young people continue to attend school for education during their stay.

The home provides individual bedrooms for young people. Facilities in the home also include two lounges, a dining room, ball pool, sensory room and computer room. There is a large outside and garden area. Parking facilities are available.

Summary

This was an unannounced key inspection focusing upon 25 key national minimum standards (NMS) under the Every Child Matters outcomes for children and young people.

The two recommendations made at the last inspection in February 2010 have been reviewed to see if they have been implemented.

Young people took part in this inspection.

The health of young people is given importance in the home. There are robust procedures which are implemented by the staff to ensure young people receive their medication safely. Staff demonstrate well their responsibilities to protect children from harm and they promote the children's welfare well. The young people receive individual support from the staff, and professionals when they need it, to assist them to make good progress in their lives. The care plans for young people set out the day-to-day needs of the young people and how these are going to be met. The staff show a wealth of knowledge and are aware of the individual needs and support young people require. This is achieved by excellent communication systems and training for staff within the home.

The deficiencies identified are in evidencing fully within the daily recordings for each young person the achievements of the care plans aims which have been set for the individual. There has not been regular formal consultation with young people. The action plans within the pathway plan do not always detail services and resources in place to meet the needs for young people when they leave the service.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, the registered person was asked to take action in relation to aspects within staying safe, enjoying and achieving.

The education targets of young people have been incorporated into their care plans where appropriate. Staff ensure these are being implemented to assist in supporting young people to achieve and make progress in the identified areas. There are clear written behaviour strategies

for each young person; these assist staff in supporting the young person positively and consistently with their behaviour.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The home provides well balanced and nutritious meals to young people. Their preferences, likes and dislikes are incorporated into the menu. At the breakfast time meal young people make their own choices from a number of options available. The menu is currently under review, young people have been consulted about what they would like on the new menu. Comments have been made that the reviewing of the menu has been on going for some time. On some occasions the meal options are repetitive. A young person said they enjoyed their meals.

The responsibility for the overall health care needs of the children remains with the parents, as the children only spend a few nights each month at the home. However, the health needs of young people are identified, services accessed and provided when required to ensure that their health is well promoted and maintained.

Staff apply thorough practices and record precisely the medication administered to young people. Robust monitoring and auditing occur in this area. Staff are trained in first aid and on how to administer medication safely. This ensures the medication of over twenty children using the service is correct and safely administered.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The young people's privacy is respected and staff demonstrate a clear understanding of confidentiality. The young people have their own bedrooms where they can choose to spend time alone if they so wish. Staff support young people with their personal care needs sensitively and in private. Young people are spoken to with respect. This is demonstrated by the way young people are asked what they would like to do, what they want to eat and within general conversation.

The staff are aware of the complaints procedure and some young people know how to make a complaint. There is a clear policy and procedure on how to make a complaint. No complaints have been made since the last inspection. When complaints are made the records show that prompt action is taken and the full outcome for the complaint is recorded in line with the regulation. Therefore, concerns and complaints made are taken seriously.

Staff demonstrate well their responsibilities to protect children from harm and they promote the children's welfare well. All staff have undertaken safeguarding training and they demonstrate an understanding of the procedures. The procedures are detailed and available for staff to refer to and use.

Young people are protected from bullying through the home's policies, procedures and the practice of the staff. There is a child friendly anti-bullying policy that has been developed by the children. High staffing levels allow staff to closely supervise young people which, ensures any bullying incidents are diverted or stopped immediately. Discussions take place with young people on unacceptable behaviour and positive behaviour is encouraged and well promoted.

The safety of young people is of high importance. There are clear policies and procedures to follow if children are absent without authority. Staff are aware of the appropriate measures to take and the records to maintain in the event of a young person being absent without authority.

Managing behaviour positively is a high priority in the home and it is promoted and encouraged consistently by the staff team. The staff endeavour to encourage socially acceptable behaviour through a range of measures. Staff's approach to caring for young people is to have clear boundaries and positively reinforce good behaviour.

Staff receive training in the use of behaviour management techniques and receive annual refresher training in this area. Good relationships exist between staff and young people. Records indicate that there have been few incidents requiring a sanction to be given to young people. The sanctions made are agreed with parents and appropriate to the child's understanding and the behaviour presented. There have been no incidents where young people have needed to be restrained for their own safety or to protect the safety of others. The reviewing and updating of individual behaviour management plans for young people have assisted staff in supporting young people more positively and consistently with their individual needs and behaviour.

Young people's safety is enhanced through the practices and support from staff. The home provides good physical safety and security. For example, regular monitoring of health and safety areas within the home takes place to ensure appropriate measures are in place to keep young people safe. Detailed risk assessments are in place for young people. These cover the relevant areas and the support safety measures to be implemented with young people to keep them safe. These continue to be reviewed and updated regularly.

The fire records indicate that weekly checks on the system and appropriate fire instruction and training have taken place. Fire drills have been conducted on a regular basis and involve the young people and staff. Although the majority of staff have received fire instruction in the last six months, one staff member is not recorded as receiving fire instruction during this period.

Staff recruitment files have not been checked on this inspection as they are held at human resources. The last key inspection found that rigorous checks are undertaken to ensure staff are suitable to work with children. The recruitment files will be checked again before the next inspection.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The young people receive individual support from the staff, and professionals when they need it, to assist them to make progress in their lives. Staff demonstrate a good understanding of children's individual needs, being aware of each young person's learning disability and other conditions. They have strong links with health care and education professionals. Staff support young people well, giving them individual attention with personal care and assisting them to make their own choices with what they would like for breakfast and activities before going to school.

All young people attend school and this assists in them attaining their educational potential. The good communication links staff have with each child's school and their active participation in attending school reviews indicates that the young people's education is very important. Each young person has a personal education plan (PEP) that identifies their needs. Education targets

are incorporated into the young person's care plan. This reinforces and supports education and social skills for young people. Therefore, showing education is actively promoted within the home.

There is a wide selection of toys, games and outdoor play equipment for young people to use. Each young person has the opportunity to choose what they would like to do during their visit. For example, jigsaws, computer games, watching videos, playing in the garden, arts and crafts, going out in the mini bus. A young person said they enjoy visiting the home, they particularly like having beauty sessions.

Young people are encouraged and supported well by staff to pursue activities. This develops their confidence, builds on their self esteem and enjoyment of their stay at the home. The home has a mini bus which the young people use to access activities in the community. Staff said they wish to develop further trips out in the community but sometimes this is restricted due to not always having a driver available.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The arrangements for care planning overall are good. The plans set out the day-to-day needs of the young people and how these are going to be met. Young people's needs are assessed in detail by the staff and supporting professionals. The plans also include information on behaviour management and risk assessments.

There is clear evidence of regular monitoring and reviewing the care planning process. Care plans have been reviewed to ensure they are current and are being implemented to support the young person moving positively forward in their life.

The staff are aware of the individual care young people receive and their care plan aims. This shows a good knowledge. However, the daily recordings do not always detail if the care plan aims have been undertaken or indicate if the young people are receiving support to achieve all the set aims.

Statutory care reviews take place and young people are actively involved. Parents also attend their child's review and their views are sought on the future planning of their lives. Statutory review minutes are on the case files. This shows young people's progress is being monitored and built upon.

There is frequent contact between parents and staff. Staff use communication books and contact parents prior and post each visit. This assists in staff having up to date information on how the child has been since their last visit to the home. This shows excellent communication links between parents and the home.

Young people are involved in a number of decision-making areas. They are provided with opportunities to make positive contributions to their own lives. There are positive relationships, good communication and interaction between young people and the staff. They are involved in making decisions about the food they eat, activities and plans for their future. A young person said they like the staff and enjoy coming to stay at the home. However, there are no young people's meetings recorded as taking place since January.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Staff encourage and support young people to develop the independent living skills which they will need in adulthood. For example; attending to their own personal care; socialising with others appropriately, making drinks and snacks.

Pathway plans are in place for young people sixteen years of age and over. These are person centred and give a wealth of information about the young person, their life, what is important to them now and in the future.

The plans give some information on the plans for the future, the services and support provisionally identified for a young person when they are to move on from the current respite service they are receiving at nineteen. However, the action plan within the pathway plan checked during this inspection lacks detail. It did not indicate the complete services identified and in place for a young person who would be moving on in the next few months. There are no contingency plans identified in line with the national minimum standards. The pathways plan is completed by the social worker and or transition worker, working with the young person, parents and the key staff member from the home.

The accommodation is decorated and furnished to a good standard, providing a positive environment for the young people to live in. It is spacious with a number of communal rooms for the young people to use, including a computer, ball pool and sensory room. There are good outside facilities for play and recreation. The home is clean and tidy. There are efficient and effective repair and maintenance programmes in place.

Bedrooms are well equipped with a good range of furniture. A young person said they like their bedroom. Since the last inspection the lounge has been decorated and had some new furniture. A new bath has been installed. However, the corridor carpet is showing signs of wear and tear. The dining room although functional and furnished to a good standard lacks personalisation. The vinyl floor covering in one bedroom is lifting from the floor surface in places. The manager said these areas have already been identified to be addressed.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

There is a comprehensive Statement of Purpose describing the services offered. The children's guide is child friendly and appropriate for the children and young people who attend the service.

Before admission the staff provide information about the home to young people and their parents so that they know what to expect when they come to stay there.

Young people's welfare is safeguarded by a competent, diverse, well motivated staff team with a range of experience. These skills are well matched to the young people that use the service. The Registered Manager meets the qualification standards. The staff team have achieved a National Vocational Qualification at Level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People target. Staff have access to a good selection of training in other current childcare practices to ensure they are competent to meet the needs of the young people.

Staff said they continue to work well as a team and this benefits young people and assists in providing a good standard of care. Good support systems have been built upon by the manager and senior team which, assists well in promoting young people's welfare. Staff are receiving formal supervision at regular intervals. There are frequent staff meetings and shift handovers.

There are good staffing levels to support young people. The manager, three staff residential care workers provide support and care for five young people.

The staff have a good knowledge of the young people's needs and are working with them to ensure the right support and care is being provided. Young people receive an individual service which is tailored to meet their personal needs. This is evidenced in the knowledge staff have of each young persons needs, learning disability, the strategies and aims of their care when visiting the service.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. This is evidenced through practice, supporting policies, procedures and the individual placement plans.

Arrangements for the external monitoring of the home are in place. The visits are carried out regularly by the contracts person and wide ranging reports are produced. Further monitoring is undertaken by the service manager, manager and the senior staff team, which contributes to a thorough monitoring system. There are other periodic monitoring processes which include consultation with parents. This monitoring assists in the young people living at the home are well cared for.

The young people's files contain a range of documents, which the staff require in order to look after the young people. They are in very good order and securely stored. The young people and parents have access to the files if they wish.

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):

- ensure the reviewing of the menu is undertaken in a reasonable period of time and action is taken to address the repetition of some meals (NMS 10)
- ensure all staff receive fire instruction in line with the home's policy and procedures (NMS 26)
- ensure the daily recordings for each young person evidence the care and support young people receive to achieve the care plan aims which have been set for each individual (NMS 2)

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- build further on consultation with young people (NMS 8)
 - ensure that pathway plans are up to date, detail services and resources in place to meet the needs for young people when leaving the service. Pathway plans should include contingency plans for young people in line with the standard. (NMS 6)