

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspection date	09/02/2011
Inspector	Kevin Whatley
Type of inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	30/06/2010
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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 setting is predominantly a respite service for children and young people with both physical and learning disabilities, although longer-term placements are catered for. The home is registered for a maximum of 16 young people aged from approximately seven years upwards.

The home is a purpose-built building which offers the young people a wide variety of facilities. The spacious accommodation includes single bedrooms, communal lounges with dining space, soft play areas and a well-equipped sensory room. There are several large bathrooms which provide enough space and the facilities for those requiring personal care or who are physically disabled. Ceiling tracking for hoisting is available in part of the building, ensuring those who are less mobile are included and involved in activities. The home is close to the local town and countryside which can offer the children and young people a wide range of activities based in the community.

At the time of the inspection some 30 plus children and young people were accessing the service, predominantly for respite care.

Summary

The overall quality rating is inadequate - notice of action to improve.

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

This unannounced interim inspection took place on a weekday. The focus of the inspection was to review the two actions and three recommendations made at the last visit and to assess all key standards found within staying safe. Four actions and one recommendation were made at this inspection. The setting was judged as inadequate overall. Young people have confidential information concerning them stored appropriately. Staff receive child protection training with good staffing levels in place. Aspects of behaviour management are unacceptable and restrict the liberty of young people in an unlawful manner; the monitoring of such concerning practices is inadequate. Fire drills are not carried out at the required levels, potentially placing staff and young people at risk, while the keeping of records in relation to health and safety is poor.

Improvements since the last inspection

Two actions were made at the last inspection. One action concerned the need for staff employment records to include photographic identification; staff files seen confirmed this is now the case. The second action focused on staff not receiving formal supervision as required. A review of this situation found there are still inconsistencies in practice and significant shortfalls; therefore, this action is repeated.

Three recommendations were made at the last inspection. One related to the administration of medication and, in particular, the need to keep accurate records. Medication storage and administration practices were assessed and found to be up to date, safe and accurate. The second recommendation concerned the need to keep accurate records of the outcomes of complaints. No complaints have been recorded since the last inspection and no issues, which indicated a complaint should have been noted, were identified. The final recommendation considered the need to keep the numbers of agency staffing working at any one time at no more than 50% on each shift. Since the last inspection efforts have been made to address this matter with very few occasions found when temporary staff exceed 50% on any given day.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is not judged.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is inadequate.

Young people have their privacy respected. Staff are mindful of allowing adolescent young people private space when it is appropriate. Confidential information is stored securely in the office.

Suitable information concerning how to make a complaint is available in a number of formats including pictorial and words so as to aid communication. A clear process of how complaints will be addressed is in place. Complaints are dealt with in good time with clear protocols followed and good communication maintained between the home and parents and carers including confirmation of actions taken. No complaints have been received by Ofsted since the last inspection.

Appropriate policies and procedures are in place to address child protection. Staff receive training in safeguarding protocols which is repeated annually. No child protection matters have been reported since the last inspection.

Suitable staffing levels reduce the risks of bullying type behaviours occurring. Similarly, no incidents of young people going missing had been noted since the last inspection and no issues were identified.

Risk assessments are completed which highlight the risk young people maybe to themselves or others. Young people have behaviour management plans which focus on their particular issues with guidance in place for staff to follow. Focused intervention strategies have led to improved outcomes in reducing the negative behaviour of young people who stay at the setting for long periods. The level of physical interventions at the setting is generally low.

Documents kept to ensure behaviour management procedures are carried out

appropriately are not consistently monitored. Restraints are recorded in a central log with sections for the Registered Manager or person in charge of the setting to review each incident and make comment. However, a number of errors were identified with a number of restraint forms not being reviewed or signed.

Care practices at the setting sometimes restrict the liberty of young people in an unlawful manner. An incident had occurred involving a young person being locked in their bedroom to enforce compliance. This obviously seriously restricted the liberty and movement of the young person in question. The record of the incident did not highlight any immediate serious risk to the young person, staff or property with the measure seemingly implemented as the young person would not 'settle to bed'; the shift leader and Regulation 33 visitor had signed the restraint log off without further comment or action. Of continuing concern is the fact that the Registered Manager stated they were unaware of this incident. This incident had occurred some six weeks prior to the inspection, however the Registered Manager or a person in day-to-day charge of the setting had not reviewed or monitored the relevant log as required. Such practice is clearly unacceptable with no legal grounds for its implementation.

The approach toward health and safety is inconsistent and does not ensure the well-being of all who live and work at the setting. Regular fire alarm tests are completed as well as the routine servicing of fire fighting equipment. Fire training is provided to staff with a drill occurring during the inspection. However, the number of fire drills which have taken place over the course of the past 12 months falls short of standards. The servicing and testing of gas and electrical equipment takes place, although records to confirm such checks, and indeed to plan when the next one is due, are difficult to locate. No appropriate system for keeping health and safety records is currently in place.

An appropriate recruitment process ensures no members of staff work at the home until all necessary checks and references have been confirmed.

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 no measures of restriction or discipline are excessive or unreasonable, notably the locking of bedroom doors to enforce compliance in accordance with Regulation 17 (1). (Regulation 17)	23/03/2011
22	ensure all matters set out in Schedule 6 are monitored, in particular the use of restraint and behaviour management in accordance with Regulation 34 (1) (a). (Regulation 34)	23/03/2011
26	ensure fire evacuation drills are completed as regularly as required in accordance with Regulation 32 (1) (c) (v). (Regulation 32)	14/04/2011
31	ensure that staff receive formal supervision as required in accordance with Regulation 27 (4) (a). (Regulation 27)	14/04/2011

Recommendations

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

- consider developing a more robust system for the monitoring of health and safety processes, notably the keeping of records to confirm the servicing of gas and electrical equipment (NMS 26.4)