

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	2 February 2010
Inspector	Chris Passmore
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	2 September 2009
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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 registered children's home provides residential assessments for children with complex individual needs. Primarily it provides care for children with Autistic Spectrum Disorders though other disabilities, including physical disabilities, can form part of the complexity of needs. The assessment period can last up to 24 months, following which the child may return home with a support package or transfer to an appropriate longer term placement. If the latter course is taken then the assessment period will be followed by a further period of accommodation whilst transition arrangements are put into place. The service is also designed to accommodate children in crisis, in which case their stay should be much shorter.

Summary

This was an unannounced interim inspection of the home and as such not all the national minimum standards for children's homes were assessed. The inspection focussed on all the standards under staying safe, some in being healthy and organisation, together with improvements since the last inspection. The number of children using the service has increased through two crisis admissions both of which are within the registration criteria of the home. The home is successfully working with other professionals to achieve appropriate transitions for all the young people into appropriate follow-on placements. Several of these arrangements are planned to be completed within the near future. The home's practices and procedures safeguard the children well and promote individual children's welfare, education and development. There is one action point arising from this inspection but it has more to do with procedure than practice. Outcomes for individual children are good in that they are supported well by the staff in the home and their future care needs are being addressed in a thorough and planned manner.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

There was one recommendation arising from the last inspection related to recording procedures in place. These records have now been adapted to meet the requirements of the regulations and standards and therefore the home is considered to have fully met the recommendation.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The home manages children's general and particular health care needs well. The complexity and diversity of individual children often makes routine medical procedures difficult to achieve but the home works with a range of health and behaviour specialists to achieve positive outcomes for children's health.

Children's general health is quite robust but they are prone to self-injurious behaviour and accidental damage through their behaviour patterns. Staff are aware of these tendencies and take preventative action to protect children from themselves. Minor cuts and grazes can be treated by staff but other injuries are referred to health professionals at the appropriate level.

Lifestyle health is promoted through balanced diet and regular exercise using children's known preferred activities or pastimes to encourage their engagement.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The home has sound practices and procedures to promote and safeguard the welfare of children. Appropriate logs are in place to record complaints, sanctions and unauthorised absences but the nature of the children's needs mean these are little used. Children have personal space and privacy when required, procedures are in place to promote social behaviour and are planned to meet individual need and assessments.

Behaviour management is risk assessed and individual support plans are in place. Strategies for modifying behaviour are in place and regularly reviewed. The use of rewards, praise and humour to assist behaviour is totally appropriate as is the use of personal calming space, time and the withdrawal of staff attention. Sanctions are not generally used other than when tailored to individual behaviour plans.

The use of physical intervention as a final measure has increased but is in relation to individual behaviours and there is a clear trend showing frequency and need is in decline. These incidents are well monitored, but not always reported to Ofsted as required in certain circumstances. Staff are supported through regular interventions training, de-briefing after an incident and allied professionals are notified, including the local authority safeguarding managers, when appropriate.

The premises are well maintained and physical safety in the home environment is well managed.

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 good.

The organisation and management of the home is good. There are clear lines of responsibility and staff work well as a team to provide children with consistent care in order to prepare them for transition to their next placement or return to home. Staff receive appropriate training and were clearly enthused by particular topics of training received.

Children's progress through their stay is comprehensively recorded and there are clear plans and timescales in place for each child's follow-on placement.

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
20	notify without delay the relevant persons or agencies of the matters set out in Schedule 5 in particular in relation to child protection and complaints against persons working at the home. (Regulation 30 and Schedule 5)	5 March 2010

Recommendations

There are no recommendations.