

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	2 June 2010
Inspector	Monica Hargreaves
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	15 October 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 local authority home is registered to provide a short-breaks service for up to five young people of either gender, who are aged between five and 17 years and who have a range of disabilities.

The accommodation is all on one level and has been adapted to provide suitable facilities for children and young people who are wheelchair users. There are five bedrooms which are used by young people, all of which have sinks, call alarm systems, television and computer points. One bedroom has a ceiling track hoist. There is a large dining room and two lounges, both of which have ample storage space for suitable play equipment and toys and there is a separate fully-fitted multi-sensory room. There is one bathroom and two shower rooms which are all suitably adapted.

The home is located in an established residential area. It is detached and set in its own grounds, with sufficient safe parking for staff and visitors. The grounds have been landscaped and have suitable play equipment for disabled and able-bodied young people.

There were seven young people present during the inspection.

Summary

This unannounced key inspection was undertaken to assess all the key standards in all outcome areas and to consider the response of the provider to the recommendation made at the last inspection.

Young people receive care and support that is tailored to meet their individual needs from a committed team of staff who are qualified and appropriately trained for their work. Staff are skilled in communicating with young people in a variety of ways and they support young people to make their wishes and feelings known. They have a very positive view of the young people they look after and work hard to make sure that young people enjoy their breaks. Relationships between staff and young people are good and young people are encouraged and supported to behave well.

The good health of young people is promoted during their stay. Young people's health needs are understood by staff, they are encouraged to eat healthily and medication is managed safely.

There are good arrangements in place to ensure that young people are kept safe. Staffing levels are arranged to ensure that young people are properly supervised, so that they are protected from bullying and do not leave the service unsupervised. There is a high regard for the privacy of young people and personal care is given in a way that promotes their dignity. The arrangements for the recruitment, selection and vetting of staff are robust and contribute towards ensuring young people are cared for by suitable adults.

One recommendation has been carried forward from the last inspection. This relates to an aspect of recording. One new recommendation has been made. This refers to the information about transition plans that is available to staff in 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

One recommendation was made at the last inspection. This is not yet met. The manager was asked to ensure that there is a separate bound and numbered book to record any incident of physical intervention. There have been no incidents of restraint since the last inspection, but the home does not have the necessary system in place to record any that might occur. This does not meet the standard and the recommendation is carried forward.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The service provides good support to young people during they stay, to ensure that their good health is promoted. Their health needs are clearly identified in individual care and support plans which are agreed with their parents. Staff make sure that the information that is held about young people is kept up to date and accurate, through good communication with parents and professionals outside the home. Training is provided to staff in respect of the specific needs of young people, such as autism and epilepsy. This ensures that staff have the knowledge and skills to care for young people.

The dietary needs of young people are met in the home. Clear information about young people's requirements, allergies, likes and dislikes is recorded as part of their support plan. Staff work well with parents so that they have a good understanding of young people's dietary needs. They make sure that young people are provided with healthy and nutritious food during their stay at the home. Young people with complex needs who are fed by gastric tube, are well-nourished during their stay, because staff are fully trained to carry out this task safely. The dining room is able to accommodate all the young people and staff, so that they eat together. Staff support young people well at meal times and make these pleasant social occasions.

Young people are protected by the home's arrangements for the storage and administration of medicines. Staff are trained and systems for the receipt, administration, recording and disposal of medication are sound. These help to ensure that medication is safely administered to children and their welfare is safeguarded. Staff are also trained in the delivery of first aid, so that they know how to look after young people safely in an emergency.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

There are good arrangements in place to ensure that the privacy of young people is respected. For example, young people have the use of a single bedroom where they can be private. Staff undertake personal care tasks in a way that promotes the personal dignity of young people and they make sure that information that is held about young people is stored securely to protect confidentiality.

Parents and placing social workers are provided with good information about the complaints procedure. Parents say that they know how to make a complaint and feel confident about raising issues with staff. There is an information leaflet for young people which explains how they can complain and encourages them to let staff know if they have a problem. This is produced in a style that is appropriate to the needs of young people. Staff understand how

young people who do not use speech, make their dissatisfactions known and work hard to resolve any problems they identify. There have been no complaints about care at the home since the last inspection.

Staff are vigilant about keeping young people safe at all times. They are trained in safeguarding issues and understand their responsibilities in relation to managing and reporting any child protection concerns. Young people are appropriately supervised and there have been no instances of young people going missing from the home. Bullying is not an issue in the service. Care is taken to match appropriate young people together, and to ensure suitable levels of staffing when planning short-break stays. These measures reduce the risk of bullying. Parents say that they are confident that young people are safe when they stay at the home.

Staff effectively promote socially acceptable behaviour by encouraging and recognising positive behaviour. In addition, young people have a positive handling plan, which gives clear guidance to staff on what interventions are to be used to manage behaviour. This ensures a consistent approach. Staff are trained to respond positively to challenging behaviour, which includes training in the use of physical intervention. There have been no incidents that have involved physical restraint since the last inspection. There is minimal use of sanctions. Records of sanctions and significant incidents are kept, but the service does not have a dedicated bound and numbered book to record restraints, as required by the standards.

Young people benefit from being looked after in a home that is kept safe. The service undertakes the required checks in respect of fire equipment, gas and electrical installations. All staff are trained in fire safety procedures and evacuation drills take place frequently, so that staff know how to evacuate young people from the building in an emergency. There are comprehensive risk assessment and management arrangements in place and the home is kept free from hazards.

There are sound recruitment procedures which ensure that all staff working at the home are assessed as suitable and safe to work with young people. The identity of all visitors to the home is checked and they are required to sign in and out. Staff are aware of visitors whereabouts when they are in the home, ensuring young people are not left unsupervised with them. These systems are effective in protecting young people.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people receive a good level of care and support in accordance with their individually assessed needs. Each young person has an allocated key worker who takes a lead responsibility for making sure that care and support plans are in place and that there is good oversight of their care in the home. Staff use a variety of ways of communicating with young people who do not use speech, which enables them to give young people the specific support they need during their stay. Care staff also work effectively with parents and agencies outside the home, to ensure that young people have access to the services that they require.

Young people who use the service are in school and parents retain responsibility for the oversight of their education. However, staff support young people with their education during their stay. They contribute to school reviews and other meetings, so that all relevant information is shared and they also visit young people in school to ensure that there is consistent practice.

Young people are able to take part in a range of activities during their stay and the home has its own mini-bus which enables staff to take young people out on trips. The service is appropriately resourced with a computer, games and equipment. This enables young people to enjoy their stay and helps them to develop their skills.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The assessed needs of young people are well met when they stay in the service. Detailed care and support plans provide staff with good information on young people and ensure that their care is consistent. Support plans address all aspects of a young person's needs, including those arising from their culture, religion and disability. They are agreed with parents and carers and are regularly monitored by staff in the home. The care of young people is also regularly reviewed through the statutory reviewing process, to ensure future plans for young people are made and acted upon.

There is good consultation with young people, parents and other professionals, which enhances all aspects of young people's short breaks and provides them with consistency. Staff understand how different young people communicate their wishes and feelings. They are skilled in the use of a variety of communication methods and techniques, such as signing, symbols and pictures and the interpretation of body language or facial expressions. Staff help young people to make choices and to have a say in how they are looked after. They also talk to parents and professionals regularly to make sure that plans are up to date and reflect young people's developing needs.

As young people live at home with their parents, contact is not an issue. If parents are estranged, or a young person's contact with any specific individual is prohibited, there are clear details of these arrangements on file to avoid any confusion.

Young people move into and leave the service in a planned way. Introductions to the home take place gradually and at a pace that is appropriate for the individual young person and their family. Staff work well with parents and professionals to ensure that young people and their families are also supported when young people move on from this service.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

The home provides a range of experiences for young people to develop personal, social and independence skills, according to their individual abilities and needs. For example, all young people are encouraged to make choices throughout their stay and are supported to help with shopping, make snacks and drinks and help in the garden or with the laundry. Young people who use this service will continue to need some support throughout their lives and plans for their move on into adult support services at 18 are discussed at reviews. However, the home does not receive written information about the plans that are made for young people, so that staff are not able to contribute fully to the transition planning process.

Young people benefit from spending time in an environment that is accessible and appropriately adapted to their needs. The bungalow is homely, warm and welcoming and is well maintained, internally and externally. Staff make sure that the home is kept clean and tidy and that any necessary repairs are attended to promptly. Young people have ready access to a range of

equipment and toys inside the home and in the garden. Parents make positive comments about the home such as 'it's a lovely place' and 'staff keep the home very nice' and say that it's a place that their children enjoy visiting.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Staff are trained in issues of promoting equality and valuing diversity and there are appropriate policies in place to guide their practice. The service demonstrates a strong commitment to promoting choice and inclusion and to ensuring that disability is not a barrier to young people's involvement in the decisions that are made about their care. Staff have a good knowledge of the young people they work with and are skilled in ensuring that young people's views are promoted through the creative use of communication methods. Young people receive care in the service that meets their specific and diverse needs.

The home has a detailed Statement of Purpose and there is a young person's guide to the service that is produced in a format that is appropriate to the needs of the young people who stay in the home. These documents give clear information about the service and are made available to parents and young people, so that they know how young people are looked after when they stay in the home.

Young people benefit from being cared for by an enthusiastic team of competent staff, who are trained and qualified. This is an experienced and established team, who are supported by a small number of casual staff who work regularly at the home and who therefore know the young people well. The staffing arrangements ensure that there is consistency and continuity of care, as young people are looked after by staff who are known to them. Arrangements for the support and supervision of staff are good and there is a detailed handover between every shift. Team meetings take place regularly and are used to discuss the work of the home and care of the young people. These systems promote consistency and provide staff with opportunities to reflect on their practice and to identify ways in which the service can be developed.

The arrangements that are in place for the monitoring of the service are good. Regular checks are made every month by the manager and separately by a senior person in the local authority. These systems ensure that the welfare of young people is promoted and that good standards of care are maintained in the home.

The service maintains good information on young people. This helps staff to provide care to young people that is consistent with their needs. Each young person has an individual file where information is recorded and all files are stored securely to protect confidentiality.

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 Children's 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):

- keep a dedicated bound and numbered book to record any incident of physical restraint (NMS 22.9)
- ensure that staff are able to contribute to the development of transition plans for young people who are preparing to leave the service. (NMS 6.3)