

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC387684
Inspection date	20 November 2009
Inspector	Peter Daniel
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	5 June 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

The home is a residential home for children with learning difficulties and disabilities. The home has accommodation for six children/young people aged 12 to 17 years, of either gender. It is able to offer placements to young people with associated complex needs, such as epilepsy, autism or challenging behaviours. The home can offer planned, emergency and respite placements. The home is conveniently situated for rail and bus routes and is within walking distance of local shops. It is a detached property with its own secluded private gardens.

Summary

This was an unannounced random inspection. The inspection focussed on the outcomes of safeguarding and organisation. The home opened earlier this year. The home has positive leadership. The home has effective safeguarding and behavioural management systems in place and is meeting all the National Minimum Standards in relation to this outcome. Following an initial period when the home was short of staff, it now has filled all vacant posts. The home has a competent staff group who are child-centred and have positive relationships with the young people. The majority of the staff, however, still need to complete National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) training at level 3. They have been enrolled on a course, due to start shortly. Young people report that staff are meeting their needs and safeguarding their best interests.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

The home has filled all vacant posts and has sufficient numbers of staff. The home has held a fire drill at night time. The statement of purpose now includes a section on Equality and Diversity.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is not judged.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

The home safeguards young people and promotes their welfare. The home has appropriate child protection and anti-bullying procedures. Staff understand their responsibilities in relation to protecting children and know the process for reporting and recording concerns when a young person is at risk of harm. Significant events are recorded and notified to the local authority and to Ofsted.

The home's recruitment of staff is robust. There are proper vetting systems and selection procedures in place. Criminal Record Bureau checks are up to date. There is a signing in book for staff on arrival and departure.

The home has appropriate systems for managing and safeguarding children's behaviour. These include the management and monitoring of unauthorised absences, a restraint log, a record of Schedule 5 events and notifications and a complaints log.

Young people's views are represented. Each has a key worker with whom they can discuss their individual needs. They also attend their Looked After Review. The young people have the opportunity to attend regular house meetings where they can discuss issues in relation to the running of the home. Young people know the procedure for making a complaint. There has been one complaint since the last inspection.

The home has ensured the provision of training in safeguarding issues for staff. All staff have done induction training that covers the home's child protection policy. They are currently doing Children's Workforce Development Council training that includes safeguarding training, health and safety and basic fire safety training. Three staff have done a formal two day course in child protection training. The remainder of staff will be booked on to the same training early next year.

The home employs a stable staff group who are providing consistent care and control. On admission of the young person the home undertakes careful matching that includes a risk assessment. Each person also has a behaviour management plan. The staff assist young people to develop socially acceptable behaviour. Young people enjoy positive relationships with staff, based on mutual respect, care and concern. Young people report that they feel supported and cared for by staff. Restraint is used only minimally.

Since the last inspection, there has only been a small number of notifications to Ofsted, mostly concerning young people acting out. Notifications demonstrate that the home is notifying appropriate authorities. There have been no incidents of bullying.

The home ensures that steps are taken to keep young people safe from hazards within the building. Fire drills are carried out with regularity. This has included a night time drill. The home undertakes fire safety risk assessments and health and safety checks on a regular basis. Checks of building and premises are done at regular intervals. The home has a crisis plan, involving placing children elsewhere, in the event of an incident.

Young people are advised about their personal health and safety regarding sexual health, sexual exploitation, drugs and alcohol abuse.

Young people's privacy is respected. Bedrooms, bathrooms and toilets have locks. Files are securely kept.

The overall judgement regarding safeguarding is outstanding. There are very positive relationships between the staff and service users. The young people speak favourably about the care they receive. The National Minimum Standards in relation to this outcome are being met exceptionally well.

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 home has a statement of purpose and relevant procedures.

There are five young people in placement. The home is fully staffed. There is a minimum of two staff on shift at any one time. The manager is on call evenings and night time. The ratio of staff to children is approximately one staff to two/three young people. Agency staff are used as a last resort but the same agency staff are deployed to provide continuity.

There is a stable staff group who are relatively new in post. The composition of the staff gives a good gender balance, including three male and four female staff. One of the staff is from an ethnic minority. The three agency staff are from ethnic minorities.

The staff group is competent. Staff have successfully completed induction training and a probationary period. The majority of however staff still have to complete NVQ at level 3 and have been enrolled on a suitable course due to start in the immediate future. Staff have received other training, including safeguarding training, restraint training, fire safety, first aid, health and safety, food hygiene and medication administration.

Formal supervision is offered to staff, on a monthly basis. Staff share their practice at informal supervision sessions. Since the staff are new in post they have not yet had an annual appraisal.

The home is monitoring the quality of care it provides. Regulation 33 and Regulation 34 are routinely done.

The filing and record keeping on the young people is in good order. Information contained includes a front sheet, a referral form, a young person's induction, a placement plan, a risk assessment, a behavioural management plan, a health plan, a daily record sheet, a monthly progress report, a pocket money form, incident reports, looked after review minutes, medical notes and education notes.

The home has equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory policies. Since the last inspection, the home has included Equality and Diversity in its statement of purpose. The promotion of equality and diversity is good. This is reflected in the make up of the staff team, the ethnically sensitive menus and the celebration of cultural events and links with the community.

The overall judgement for this outcome is good. Young people receive excellent individualised care and support appropriate to their needs. The home is effectively implementing equality and diversity. Staff receive supervision and support. The home opened earlier this year and the staff group is relatively new. Staff are receiving appropriate in-service training but still need to complete NVQ training and embed this into their practice. There is good record keeping and effective monitoring.

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 new staff undertake and complete the Caring for Children and Young People NVQ at level 3. (National Minimum Standard 29.5)