

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	David Coulter
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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

This is a children's home that offers short-term respite placements for up to eight young people who may have learning disabilities, physical disabilities, complex health needs and/or autism and associated challenging behaviours. The home, a large detached property, has been specifically converted and extended to meet the needs of the young people it accommodates and contains specialised facilities, such as a sensory room, outside play area and specially designed bathrooms. The home is situated in a residential area of a city and is accessible to a range of services and facilities including parks, health centres, schools and shops.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

This unannounced random inspection focused on how the respite service is meeting key national standards in relation to staying safe. During the course of the inspection it was possible to meet with a number of staff, including the manager. A full tour of the home was undertaken and a range of records and documents examined. Two young people were observed in the company of staff.

Evidence indicates that young people undertaking respite stays are being kept safe by a team of experienced and well motivated staff. Although the manager has only been in post for a year, he has completed a comprehensive review of the services, policies, procedures and working practices. In the light of this a number of new systems have been introduced to identify areas of potential risk that could impact on young people and staff. For example, a system has been introduced that ensures that the fire prevention systems are now checked by both day and night staff. Most of the new systems have now bedded down and staff are fully aware of their specific roles and responsibilities.

Evidence indicates that the service has developed outstanding systems to keep young people safe during their respite visits. Staff are to be commended on their ability to successfully introduce a number of significant policies, procedures and working practices while meeting the needs of an extremely vulnerable group of young people. There are no actions or recommendations arising from this inspection.

Improvements since the last inspection

There were no actions or recommendations arising from the last inspection.

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.

An excellent range of policies, procedures and working practices keep young people safe in both the home and local community. Staff operate within a risk management framework that subjects the service and its working practices to regular health and safety checks. Equipment and facilities within the home are well maintained. There are effective monitoring systems to minimise the risk of fire and all staff are conversant with evacuation procedures. The home is appropriately secure and entry can only be gained via a locked door. All visitors have to report to staff on admission, produce identification and sign in. Risk assessments are developed in respect of each young person and updated in response to changing circumstances. Due to their vulnerability, none of the current residents are safe to leave the home unaccompanied. Staff carry 'key information folders' on each young person that can be relayed to police in the unlikely event of them going missing.

Staff operate a 'child centred approach' to care in which each young person is treated as an individual with their own specific care needs. One-to-one working provides staff with the flexibility to respond effectively to the changing needs of each individual. The privacy of each young person is given a high priority and each individual is assigned their own room for the duration of their stay. Each young person's room is prepared for them prior to their visit and specialist equipment introduced if required. Due to their vulnerability, many of the young people require visual checking at regular intervals throughout the night. Non-intrusive systems ensure that young people's sleep will not be disturbed. Staff treat young people with dignity and respect and issues, such as personal care, are dealt with sensitively. Confidential information relating to each young person is kept in an appropriate locked facility.

The home has a well developed child protection policy and there are clear guidelines for staff on the reporting of any concerns to the area safeguarding team. All staff undertake child protection training during their initial induction and receive regular updates. Staff are clearly aware of their personal responsibilities in regard to reporting any protection worries or concerns and body maps are used to record any unexplained bruises or marks observed on a young person's body.

Behaviour management plans are developed in respect of each young person and provide clear and concise guidance for staff. Staff respond positively to acceptable behaviour, however, they are fully aware that many of the young people have limited control over their behaviour and experience involuntary actions that can unintentionally impact on others. Staff assist young people in understanding the link

between their and actions and possible consequences. Staff deploy a range of diversionary techniques and periods of 'time out' to manage challenging behaviour. Physical interventions are only ever used if it felt a young person is putting themselves or others at risk. There is a good system for recording physical interventions and other significant incidents. Each incident and its antecedence are examined in an effort to prevent a reoccurrence.

As many of the young people using the service experience communication difficulties, staff deploy a range of techniques, including sign language and pictorial cards, to seek out their views. Staff are pro-active in addressing any worries before they develop into major concerns. The home has a written complaints policy and all young people, their parents and placing social workers are made aware of it on admission. The service keeps a record of all comments received from parents and placing authorities. No complaints have been made since the last inspection and correspondence examined indicated there is a high level of satisfaction with the service. Positive comments were made in regard to the quality of care being provided and the dedication and professionalism of staff.

Arrangements for the recruitment and training of staff are good. The service, being part of the Cornerstone group, subscribes to a rigorous recruitment procedure that requires applicants to complete a detailed application, submit to a Criminal Record Bureau check and provide two written references. All new staff have to complete a detailed induction programme and successfully complete a six monthly probationary period before becoming permanent staff. All new staff work alongside experienced staff until they are deemed competent.

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.