

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC391594
Inspection date	3 August 2010
Inspector	Simon Morley
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	16 February 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 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 registered to provide care and accommodation for up to three children of either gender, between the ages of eight and 17 years old, who have a learning disability.

There is a range of local community facilities nearby and easy access to local transport. There is some car parking for visitors. The home has a driveway, on-street parking is for permit holders and there are some pay-and-display spaces.

The home is detached, with front and rear gardens, situated in a residential area of a large city. Downstairs there is a hallway, kitchen, dining room, lounge and play room. Upstairs are three bedrooms, a bathroom and office accommodation. The home has been fitted with minor aids and adaptations to help support children with physical disabilities.

Summary

This was an unannounced key inspection, which covered all the outcome areas below and checked compliance with the actions and recommendations from the last inspection.

Some of the statutory actions and good practice recommendations from the last inspection have been complied with. Further shortfalls in compliance with regulations and national minimum standards were identified at this inspection.

There are good outcomes for the health promotion of young people, and generally there is good individual support and care of young people. Assessment of young people's needs is robust with effective care plans put in place to help ensure their needs are met. Young people at the home are safe.

There are elements of good practice with regard to the promotion of young people's safety and of equality and diversity. However there are shortfalls in: the approaches to management of risk and behaviour; and quality of accommodation; this means these outcomes are only satisfactory. Management of the home, and quality monitoring by the registered provider has not addressed these issues. In light of there being some good outcomes as well, management of the home is judged to be satisfactory. As a result the overall quality rating is also satisfactory.

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

There is better practice of recording the use of discipline and a safer approach to the administration of medication. This helps protect the welfare and safety of young people at the home.

The effectiveness of sanctions is still not being reviewed which compromises the approach to behaviour management. A written development plan aimed at improving the home for the benefit of young people and a guide to the home in an appropriate format for young people were still not available.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The arrangements for promoting the health of young people contribute towards good outcomes for young people who live at the home.

Young people's health needs are identified and assessed as part of the admission process and regularly monitored and reviewed. Parents still retain responsibility for the health care of their children if they choose to do so and staff at the home work well in partnership with them. Information about individual health needs is used effectively within the home's nurturing environment to ensure young people receive the health care services they need. In addition staff provide a range of advice about different health issues and encourage healthy lifestyles. As a result young people receive good support to access a range of health services for treatment or guidance about their specific individual health needs.

Staff promote healthy eating and support young people to be involved in menu planning and making choices about their diets. Food provided is wholesome, healthy and nutritious. Diverse needs based on culture,

preference and health needs are catered for. Young people are able to use the kitchen to make drinks and snacks and develop their cooking skills and independence.

Staff are trained in first aid to provide help if there are any accidents. Medication procedures are thorough and have improved since the last inspection to help ensure young people get their medication at the right times. Staff have been trained to be competent in this area to also ensure that: medicines are stored safely and securely; administration records are well kept; and there is effective monitoring to ensure there is consistent good practice.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

There is suitable practice with regards to safeguarding young people's welfare. Shortfalls in the approach to risk and behaviour management though mean outcomes for young people are satisfactory. Staffing levels and care practice ensure that young people are safe, well supervised, rarely go missing and are free from bullying at the home. Staff receive safeguarding training and know what to do to keep young people safe if there are any allegations or suspicions of abuse.

There is appropriate promotion of positive, socially acceptable behaviour. Staff interact and respond well to young people engaging them in meaningful activities. There are firm but fair boundaries, and commitment to making clear to young people the expectations of acceptable behaviour. Sanctions or consequences are imposed for poor behaviour but these are repetitious, have not been reviewed and have no clear impact on improving desired behaviour. Records still do not record the effectiveness of a sanction which was a recommendation from the last inspection

Young people are praised for good behaviour and staff use individual strategies to resolve any aggressive, unacceptable behaviour. As a last resort, approved physical interventions are used to protect the safety of young people. This is infrequent and good records are kept of these

incidents. This is monitored by the manager to ensure staff practice is suitable and helps protect young people.

The home is suitably maintained and provides for the physical safety and security of young people. The management of risk clearly identifies potential risks to young people in relation to their known and likely activities. Measures put in place are not all appropriate and some are excessive, for example, the use of plastic crockery and cutlery and the restriction of young people's liberty by locking the front door. Young people are cared for in a safe environment and have no complaints about these measures. However, these strategies to promote safety do impinge on young people's rights and the promotion of equality.

Young people's privacy is respected, and there is respectful, sensitive practice with regards to helping them with personal care. Personal information is kept confidential and meetings can be held in private. There is a complaints process and effective action to resolve young people's concerns as they arise.

There is suitable recruitment of staff including necessary checks to make sure only those who are safe and suitable work in the home. Similarly, visitors are checked and monitored to ensure the safety of young people in the home.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

There are good levels of individual support for young people based on their needs, circumstances and backgrounds. This provides young people with good outcomes and opportunities for development, decision making and independence. This is reflected in the achievements and development young people have made since living at the home and feedback from parents, for example 'staff are very fair and understanding of the difficult needs, I am very happy with the progress and with all members of staff'.

Staff are flexible and support a wide range of needs helped by well developed links with other agencies for additional support. Young people have individual detailed placement plans identifying how their needs will be supported. Staff are knowledgeable about each young person, how best to support them and provide good care.

Education is promoted well and young people have good attendance at school. There is good communication with schools and parents to help ensure continuity and consistency of care between school, parents and care staff. Young people are able to take part in a range of leisure and social activities both in and outside the home to develop their confidence and skills. Social activities are diverse in nature reflecting the needs and wishes of young people.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

There are good arrangements for helping young people contribute to decisions made about their lives and the running of the home. This starts with well-planned admissions. No new young people have moved into the home since the last inspection but admission procedures are sensitive to the needs of young people moving into the home. Young people and their families are able to visit several times, including overnight stays before deciding to move in.

Both the needs of young people living in the home and those moving in are taken into account in managing admissions. This makes sure young people are appropriately placed at the home.

Young people's care needs are assessed and each person has a good individual plan of care, implemented in practice, to provide the support they need to ensure their health, welfare and safety are promoted and protected. Young people and their families' views of their care needs are responded to well. Young people's care plans are regularly reviewed to reflect their achievements and development.

There is good support for young people and partnership working with families so that young people maintain regular contact with their families and friends, who are also welcome at the home.

There is suitable promotion of social inclusion and young people have opportunities to participate in decisions about their care, the running of the home and social events. There are good relationships with staff who treat young people with respect and promote their individuality. Staff are caring, thoughtful and enthusiastic in making sure young people are well looked after and have a positive experience of living at the home.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

There is effective support for young people to make choices and develop their independence based on their needs and abilities. Staff provide various opportunities for young people to develop life skills, their social skills and confidence.

The home is situated in a quiet residential area which is of benefit to the needs of the young people who live at the home. The quality of accommodation, décor and furnishings is generally good though differs in the quality of bedroom accommodation. There is ample communal space and young people enjoy having a separate games room as well as the lounge.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Management practice is suitable and ensures outcomes for young people are at least satisfactory and in some areas good.

The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. Young people receive good support that reflects their needs, backgrounds and individuality. Records are in good order, reflect the individuality of young people and clearly show their needs, how they are supported, their achievements and development. Young people receive good support to access universal and specialist health services to meet their specific needs. However, this outcome is let down by the management of behaviour and risk that has elements of institutionalisation. This is shown by: the use of plastic crockery and cutlery; unrepaired damage to bedroom flooring; repetitious use of sanctions without any review of their effectiveness; and restriction of liberty with regard to the freedom of young people to leave the home through the front door.

There are adequate monitoring and quality assurance systems in place but these have not identified the issues raised in this inspection. There was no development plan aimed at improving what the service offers to young people as recommended at the last inspection. The manager

has completed an assessment of the quality of the home. However, this was only completed as part of the inspection arrangements and finished on the day of the inspection. Although there is monitoring by the registered provider this has not addressed the issues raised in this inspection. Copies of these monitoring reports have not been consistently sent to Ofsted to be overseen and to comply with regulation.

There is a suitable staff group with clear deputising arrangements in the manager's absence. All staff have or are working towards the recommended qualification to care for children and young people. There are satisfactory staffing levels to support young people with their care, activities, visits and appointments.

There is clear information about the home and what it provides for young people which is available to their parents and social workers. Young people are supported to know what they can expect from the home through the introductory visits that are part of the admission process. However, there is still no young person's guide to the home in a format appropriate to the age and understanding of young people in the home. Staff are suitably trained to ensure that they are able and competent to look after young people and that the home lives up to its aims and objectives.

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
1	ensure there is a children's guide that complies with the requirements of this regulation. (Regulation 4 (3), (4) & (5))	31 October 2010
17	ensure that no measure of control, restraint or discipline used on children is excessive or unreasonable (Regulation 17 (1))	30 September 2010
24	ensure all parts of the home are adequately ventilated including children's bedrooms (Regulation 31 (2) (a))	31 October 2010
24	ensure each child's bedroom has a suitable floor covering (Regulation 31 (8) (b))	31 October 2010
32	ensure that copies of reports required under this regulation are sent to Ofsted. (Regulation 33 (5) (a))	30 September 2010

Recommendations

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

- ensure that records of sanctions used include the duration and effectiveness of the sanction (NMS 22.1)
- ensure the monitoring of sanctions addresses the implications for the care of individual children and current care practice (NMS 22.11)

- ensure there is a written development plan reviewed annually for the future of the home identifying any planned changes on the operation or resources of the home. (NMS 33.5)