

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspection date	10/03/2011
Inspector	Catherine Ross / Chris Fuller
Type of inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	07/10/2010
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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 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

The children's home cares for up to five young people of both sexes aged between 11 and to 17 years of age who are diagnosed as being on the autistic spectrum and/or having learning disabilities. These young people are unable to live with their families due to the complexity of their diagnosis. The communal space in the home offers a range of leisure and recreational rooms and outdoor space in a secure rear garden. It is located on a residential estate next to a local park.

Summary

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

This was an unannounced follow up inspection from a key inspection visit in October 2010. The inspection focused upon how the service protects and safeguards the welfare of young people as well as improvements identified from the previous inspection. The other outcome areas of being healthy, enjoying and achieving, positive contribution, economic well-being and organisation were not assessed on this occasion. There were three actions and four recommendations set at the last inspection.

Management and staff have made considerable progress and achieved good outcomes for young people in respect of staying safe. A new manager has been appointed since the last inspection and staffing has also been increased. Staff and managers work hard to secure good outcomes for young people and considerable progress has been made to keep young people safe since the last inspection. Young people feel comfortable and safe at the home.

Two actions and two recommendations have been set as a result of this visit. These relate to adherence to policies, recruitment of staff, recording systems and monitoring respectively.

Improvements since the last inspection

There were three actions raised after the last inspection in respect of access to the kitchen, appointment of a manager, staffing numbers. All three have been met. Young people are protected from hazards inside the home so far as reasonably practicable. For example, access to the kitchen has been restricted and staff are working to create a safer kitchen environment to promote young people's independence.

New staff have been recruited since the last inspection and recruitment is ongoing. A new manager is also in post therefore there are a sufficient number of qualified,

competent and experienced persons working in the children's home.

There were 4 recommendations from the last inspection in respect of staff supervision and staff appraisal. All four have been met. Staffing levels have increased and the home's staffing is sufficient in practice to meet the needs of the young people accommodated.

Members of staff receive regular supervision and new members of staff receive supervision at least fortnightly. Plans are in place for annual staff appraisal. These measures will ensure that young people are looked after by staff who are themselves supported and guided in safeguarding and promoting children's welfare.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is not judged.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Staff respect the privacy and confidentiality of young people, for example, by keeping bathroom doors shut when young people are receiving personal care. All records are kept confidentially ensuring confidential information about young people is kept safe.

Staff are clear on complaints procedures and young people would be supported in making a complaint should they wish to. Young people are regularly supported in putting across their views, thoughts and opinions and receive feedback on a regular basis. Therefore young people are supported in having a voice and developing their independence.

Young people's safety is protected and there is clear evidence safeguarding concerns are treated seriously and in a timely manner. All relevant persons are notified including Ofsted, relatives of young people and the local authority. Outcomes of safeguarding concerns are acted upon appropriately and inform practice within the home. However, policies which safeguard young people are not always applied as thoroughly as they should be, meaning young people's welfare could be put at risk. For example, the implementation of the mobile phone policy so that the privacy and dignity is respected and young people are kept safe.

Staff work hard to protect young people from bullying behaviour and bullying occurs infrequently. When it does occur a multi-agency approach is used to support young people. There are no incidents of young people going missing from the home. The high staffing levels, staff competence and the security in and outside the building ensure young people are kept safe.

Staff respond positively to acceptable behaviour and recognise each young person's unique way of communicating. Staff ensure young people receive consistent messages with regard to behaviour by acting as a core team. Great progress in developing behaviour management recording systems has been made since the last inspection, however staff do not keep a numbered book which includes the location and name of staff members, young people or other people present. This means the system in use is not yet robust enough to meet regulation. Also the monitoring of the records has not been regularly or effectively completed which means that any potential errors or poor practice is not necessarily identified and acted upon.

Young people are protected by sound fire procedures. Fire evacuation procedures are practised regularly and fire systems are tested appropriately. Visitors are supervised and security measures protect young people's safety. The environment young people live in is kept free from hazards. Staff receive regular supervision and new members of staff are given an induction and opportunities for training. Young people are protected by adequate recruitment procedures however there is lack of evidence that references are appropriately scrutinised. Staff only commence employment when they have a satisfactory Criminal Records Bureau disclosure and two satisfactory references. Recruitment records are in a process of transfer to electronic systems and staff records were made available promptly upon request. However, personnel files do not evidence verification of reasons why employment may have ended where applicants have previously worked with children or vulnerable adults. Staff who have not had these checks completed could be unsafe to work with young people.

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.

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/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Std.	Action	Due date
17	ensure policies are followed so as to protect the privacy and dignity of children accommodated in the home, for example, staff use of mobile phones (Regulation 11.2 (a))	10/03/2011
27	ensure references for new members of staff are verified so far as reasonably practicable. (Regulation 26 Schedule 2 (4))	11/04/2011

Recommendations

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

- ensure restraint and sanction logs are numbered, includes the name of staff members, young people or other people present and records the location (NMS 22.9)
- ensure systems are robustly monitored, for example, records of restraints. (NMS 33.1)