

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Stella Henderson
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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 home provides care and accommodation for children and young people who have learning and physical disabilities. It is situated in a residential area and has access to a wide range of local amenities. The property is domestic in size and adapted to meet the needs of children and young people with disabilities.

Three young people were at the home at the time of this inspection.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

The purpose of this visit was to undertake an unannounced full inspection. All key standards were assessed to form a judgement on the provision of care.

The home has made significant improvements since the last inspection. As a result outcomes for young people are positive and their health, welfare and general well-being is enhanced.

A new manager has been registered and a fundamental review of all young people's files and practice has taken place to ensure both compliance with these regulations and good outcomes for young people.

Staff are now better supported and trained to ensure young people are well looked after, comfortable and safe.

Improvements since the last inspection

The home was judged to be inadequate at the last inspection and the provider was required to make improvements across all outcome areas. Actions were required in relation to health, behaviour management and placement plans, individual support, statements of educational need, risk assessments and the home's safeguarding policy.

Other actions included the encouragement of leisure interests, training for staff, amendments to the Statement of Purpose, staffing levels, training and supervision for staff and monitoring under Regulations 33 and 34.

An action plan has been provided and evidence from this inspection demonstrates that the home has met all the outstanding actions, and the two recommendations in relation to medication and fire safety records.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people receive good support in respect of their health and development. Each young person has a comprehensive health plan that is effectively implemented by staff to promote their well-being. The home ensures young people have access to specialist and routine health care services to meet their general and specific and complex health needs. Close links are established with health professionals and there is effective inter-agency working to secure improved health outcomes for young people.

Young people's make their own choices over what they want to eat. Staff encourage young people to try new dishes, while still respecting personal preferences. Where young people need food to be pureed, photographs are provided so that young people know what they are being offered.

Medicines are safely administered and records are kept to a good standard. This ensures that young people receive prescribed medication in accordance with their doctor's instructions. All shifts are covered by at least one member of staff who has had first aid training so that any emergency can be quickly responded to.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Staff are sensitive to young people's needs and promote their privacy and dignity. A visitors' book is kept and the identification of visitors checked. Staff were observed to knock on young people's bedroom doors before entering. Confidentiality is appropriately maintained to ensure personal information about young people remains protected.

Staff demonstrate good knowledge and understanding of the actions needed to safeguard and protect young people from abuse. The home has relevant policies and safeguarding procedures. This was recently tested in relation to a safeguarding incident and found to work effectively, and notifications are made in a timely manner to the relevant agencies. Although bullying and absences without authority are not issues at the home, policies and records are in place should these eventualities arise.

Comprehensive behaviour management plans are in place and tailored to suit the needs of each individual young person. Staff monitor the emotional and behavioural needs of young people and implement guidance from specialists to ensure young people receive the support and guidance they need.

Records demonstrate that complaints from the local community are dealt with promptly and courteously. Information about complaints for young people is available in an appropriate format, and staff are good at interpreting behaviours and are aware of young people's likes and dislikes.

There is little opportunity however for young people to convey any concerns or complaints in a more formal way, for example in young people's meetings or through independent monitoring visits. A recommendation is raised to improve practice in this area.

The home provides a safe environment for young people. Staff receive training in all safe working topics including food hygiene, fire safety and first aid. Risk assessments are completed and take account of young people's different needs arising from their complex needs. There are effective systems for testing fire safety and routine maintenance checks. The management monitors any health and safety records completed by staff.

The home has an established system for the vetting and recruitment of staff to ensure that only those deemed suitable to work with vulnerable young people are employed at the home.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people are given good individual support in all aspects of their identified needs and wishes. Suitable staffing levels ensure that young people receive support that is delivered in a manner that responds to their changing needs and specific complex needs.

Young people are well supported by staff who take a positive approach towards their education. Good communication is established with the organisation's educational facility to ensure young people are being supported to reach their full potential.

Young people make their own choices about how to spend their spare time. Staff encourage young people's personal interests and provide opportunities for them to enjoy days out at places of interest and attend clubs, such as Scouts. Young people are assisted to undertake various leisure activities such as pamper nights, or simply to do things such as stay in and watch television or listen to their favourite music.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Young people have placement plans that fully capture all aspects of their specific diverse needs. The well-being and development of young people is monitored through on-going general observations and communication between staff. This means that any changes in behaviour or developmental need is quickly noticed and steps are taken to respond to those changes. The manager maintains oversight this process, ensuring that the development and progress of young people is effectively monitored.

Statutory reviews to monitor young people's placements take place at the required intervals. A formal report is completed by the home that shows the progress and achievements a young person has made during their stay. This helps the young person, their families and professionals to reflect on areas of development and plan future needs.

The home provides opportunities for consultation with young people, such as through young people's meetings and less formally through day to day observation and communication. An independent visitor meets with young people regularly to ascertain their views.

Staff support and nurture positive relationships for young people with their families and other people significant to them. Their families are welcome at the home at any time, and the manager keeps parents fully informed of any progress and changes.

The home has clear policies and procedures for young people moving in and leaving the home. Useful information is provided to young people in an appropriate format to introduce them to the home. There is effective working with young people to help to prepare them for moving on to new accommodation.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Young people are encouraged to be as independent as is possible given the level and nature of their complex needs. Those young people who are eligible are fully involved in their plans to move on to more independent living accommodation. This includes attending meetings for the building project and meeting other young people who they will be sharing with.

Staff have been very effective in helping to facilitate these meetings and support young people in this respect, but the home's own plans do not reflect the good work that staff have undertaken. A recommendation is raised to improve recording practice in this area.

Young people live in a comfortable well-furnished home that is designed to accommodate their specific needs. There is room for communal activities and space for privacy should they so wish it. Each young person has their own individual bedroom which is personalised to their own tastes. Specialist equipment, such as rise and fall sinks, have been installed to further promote and facilitate their independence.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

A new manager has been registered at the home who has been instrumental in achieving significant improvements in practice and outcomes for young people. Staff

confirm they feel well supported and that the manager is helpful and approachable.

Young people benefit because staff attend relevant training, have team meetings and regular supervision which enables them to develop and maintain their skills and competences in care practice. Good staffing levels mean that young people not only enjoy continuity of care but also have support to pursue their hobbies and interests, undertake activities and attend any appointments necessary.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. Staff have an excellent understanding of the young people they work with and are skilled in communicating with them. Care is highly focussed on the needs of young people with complex needs and each young person is treated as an individual in their own right.

Young people make good progress because of the effective management systems that are in place. The home is monitored in all aspects of service delivery both by the manager and the Regulation 33 visitor. Appropriate action is taken where necessary to maintain quality of care within the home, but these reports do not fully reflect the views of young people, their parents and other stakeholders. A recommendation is raised to improve practice in this area.

The young people's guide and Statement of Purpose provides a good range of information about the home and accurately reflects what it provides for young people in care. This enables young people, their parents and placing social workers to know what they can expect from the home and how they will be cared for.

Administration within the home is excellent. Standard documentation and policies and procedures are to hand and young people's records are in good order. Case files are methodically and systematically arranged and outline, in clear detail, the individual needs of young people and contain all the essential information required by the regulations.

What must be done to secure future improvement?

Recommendations

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

- provide further opportunities to ensure that young people know how and feel able to complain if they are unhappy with any aspect of living in the home (NMS 16.1)
- improve the content of young people's transition plans to reflect the support and assistance they receive to enable a successful transition into independence (NMS 6.1)
- ensure that the views of children, their parents and placing social workers are reflected in monitoring visits. (NMS 33)

