

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Susan Mullin
Type of inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	21/01/2010
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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

This home is a new purpose built children's home for young people aged between 5 and 17 years on admission, who have a learning or physical disability. The home provides two different services within the same building. Short breaks are available for young people over weekends and school holidays. Boarding placements are also available, so that during the school term the home provides care and accommodation to young people attending Churchill Park School or another accessible special school.

The home is run by Break, a registered charity, under contract to Local Authority Children's Services. The home is located in a well-established residential area of a town and within walking distance of its centre and plentiful amenities. Five young people were resident at the time of the inspection and four took part in the inspection process.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

This was a key announced inspection of the service to assess compliance with the national minimum standards for children's homes. The home was assessed under the headings of 'Every Child Matters'. Being healthy and enjoying and achieving received a judgement of outstanding whilst, staying safe, positive contribution, achieving economic wellbeing and organisation received a judgement of good. Overall the home was judged as good.

The acting manager is in the process of registering with Ofsted and has been working in the home for several weeks. There is a homely and welcoming atmosphere at the home and young people feel safe and well cared for. Young people are observed to be comfortable and relaxed in their interactions with the staff and these relationships incorporate mutual displays of warmth and affection, which clearly make the young people feel valued and secure. Staff have very good awareness and understanding of young people's specific learning disabilities and particular health needs. These needs are well documented within placement plans and are appropriately met.

Three actions were made; to include better recording of sanctions and restraints; to ensure that 80% of the care staff have completed the National Vocational Qualification Level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People and to ensure staff rosters indicate hours actually worked. One recommendation was made to ensure the liability insurance certificate specifies the setting's address.

Improvements since the last inspection

This is the home's first inspection since registration therefore there are no outstanding actions or recommendations.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Young people's health needs are robustly prioritised within the home. Young people's records contain clear and comprehensive health information. Many young people have complex health care needs and high medication requirements. There are sound working relationships with young people's families, with the local pharmacy and with health professionals to ensure that young people's specific medical conditions are closely monitored and that they consistently receive any necessary treatment in a timely way. Many of the young people have no verbal communication. Individual records clearly detail how young people demonstrate that they are in pain or feeling unwell to support staff, so they can recognise that medical attention is needed.

All staff complete regular first aid training and medication management training. Staff have a clear understanding of medication protocols and there are robust recording systems for the receipt and administration of both prescription and non-prescription medicines. Managers retain excellent oversight of staff practice in relation to the administration of medication and any inconsistencies or shortfalls are quickly addressed. There are robust emergency protocols in place, for example, where young people are subject to seizures, and dedicated training is provided where this is relevant in relation to specific medicines required to manage these.

There is very good promotion of healthy eating. All food is home cooked on the premises and meals incorporate lots of fresh fruit and vegetables. The menu is displayed for young people on colourful picture cards. There is a vegetarian option available every day and special diets, such as gluten free or carbohydrate free, are well catered for. The cook has a list of each young person's likes and dislikes and takes account of these when compiling the menu. The staff ensure that young people receive appropriate support with any dietary issues, such as encouragement to lose weight. Dieticians, or other professionals, are involved wherever necessary.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Policies and procedures on privacy and confidentiality, complaints, child protection and behaviour management are in place and staff adhere to them in practice. This promotes young people's safety and creates a secure environment.

Staff build strong relationships with young people. They are able to discuss shortfalls in behaviour with young people and explore ways to improve behaviour in the future. Praise and reward is used to encourage positive behaviour. Staff understand the

antecedents to young people's behaviour and how they may divert young people from certain behaviour. Staff help young people to understand their behaviour to enable them to develop self-control. By these methods, young people are guided to develop socially acceptable behaviour. As a result, sanctions and restraint are used infrequently. However, the recording of restraints and sanctions does not fully meet minimum standards. Full information is contained in several documents but not in the correct format.

Staff understand how to manage concerns about abuse or neglect. Where appropriate these are referred as safeguarding matters to the local authority. Staff are well trained in recognising any concerns young people with non-verbal communication may have. The home responds appropriately to any issues of bullying. As a result of these practices, young people are kept as safe as possible in the home and the community. Staff demonstrate good practice in securing the safety of young people and there have been no incidents of young people going absent without authority, since registration.

The home is well maintained. Risk assessments are completed and updated to address environmental and behavioural risks in the home. The management of health and safety processes is good which helps to protect young people, staff and visitors from the risk of harm or injury. The home's equipment and utilities are regularly serviced. Fire safety tests are carried out that include fire drills and practise evacuations. Recruitment procedures are robust and all visitors to the home are required to provide evidence of their identity and to sign a visitors book. The certificate of insurance does not specify the name and address of the setting.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Staff demonstrate a very good knowledge and understanding of young people's individual care and support needs and provide a strong commitment to meeting those needs. Careful and comprehensive care planning and robust risk assessment, ensures that staff are able to support young people to develop their identity and independence through positive social interaction and enjoyable leisure experiences. Young people are seen very much as individuals and receive a high level of individualised support. There is robust management oversight of young people's individual care plans, to ensure a consistent focus on achieving identified aims and objectives.

Staff work closely with young people's families and with education and health professionals to promote consistent approaches. Young people attend various special schools and staff are in regular contact with their teachers and always attend educational meetings. Young people who stay at the home for short breaks have their education organised by their families, who retain primary responsibility but staff support their educational attendance and achievement well.

A wide range of in-house activities is available to all young people, with good access

to books, games, art and craft materials, television and educational toys, as well as a sensory room. The home has good outside play space providing young people with good sensory experiences. Staff are pro-active in providing young people with a whole range of new opportunities and experiences.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Young people have their needs fully assessed. Care plans provide clear guidelines about how to meet young people's needs. They are of a high standard and contain detailed information and parents, carers and young people, where able, are fully involved in the care planning process.

Young people only stay at the home for short breaks and are not away from their parents or carers for extended periods. They are able to maintain contact with their families by telephone if needed. Parents and carers are welcome to visit the home. Young people are introduced to the service in a way that meets their needs. Following a referral, staff ensure that they have detailed information about young people's likes, dislikes and routines. A series of introductory visits are arranged prior to overnight stays.

Young people are encouraged and supported to make decisions about their daily lives. They are encouraged to make choices, either verbally or by using a variety of non-verbal communication methods. An advocacy service is available on request and can be involved for future consultation.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

The home only provides short breaks and weekly boarding accommodation. Staff will contribute to pathway planning and reviews as appropriate and follow any independence programmes that young people may be on.

The whole house is wheelchair friendly and two of the bedrooms have hydraulic tracking and other features that will support the care provided for those with significant physical disabilities. On the ground floor there is a large lounge, kitchen/diner, play room and a sensory room as well as some more functional areas. A large television, games console and touch screen computer are available for the young people, along with a range of other resources for leisure time activities. There is a lift to the first floor. The spacious single bedrooms are located on the first floor and all have en suite facilities.

Outside there is a small, private garden that has been designed to allow relaxation or outdoor play, with good accessibility for everyone.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The service is effectively managed which contributes to the home having a good focus on outcomes for young people. The home's staffing arrangements are clearly organised to ensure that the changing needs of young people can be met, however, the duty rotas need to show all staff hours worked. The acting manager is in the process of registering with Ofsted to ensure the regulatory requirements for this role are achieved. The home's Statement of Purpose provides a good range of information about the service. The document has been recently reviewed, to ensure it accurately reflects what the service does and who works in the home. Young people are well informed about what the home's facilities as this information is given to them in a child-friendly or picture summary.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Young people are benefiting from living in a home where the acting manager and staff team are committed to meeting the diverse needs of each young person. Staff are well informed about young people's needs, in relation to their identity and backgrounds and are fully aware of how to help and support them in a fair and non-judgemental way.

The acting manager is actively involved in the day-to-day operation of the home and has clear expectations that the staff team will achieve the best possible outcomes for young people in their care. There are well planned handover times to ensure effective communication between shifts takes place. This is to ensure that staff working with young people on any given day know about each young person's progress and needs. The staff team are working towards the National Vocational Qualification in Caring for Children and Young People at Level 3 or this qualification, albeit with very slow progress. Managers have good information systems to inform them about the team's training and development needs.

There are good management systems in place for monitoring and reviewing the operation of the home. Regular external monitoring visits are carried out by an independent visitor and recent reports detail what is working well and what improvements are needed. In addition, the acting manager has internal systems in place to review how well young people's needs are being met. Written reports are produced giving an overall picture of the home's operation which includes actions to be taken to improve the quality of care provided.

Young people's case files are kept securely and contain an appropriate range of information about their history and progress which matches the requirements set out in Schedule 3 of the Children's Homes Regulations 2001. Young people, where able, have access to their records at any time.

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
22	ensure that within 24 hours of the use of any measure of control, restraint or discipline in the young people's home, a written record is made in a volume kept for the purpose which includes all those matters required by (Regulation 17(4)(a) – (g), with particular reference to the records of restraints and sanctions (Regulation 17(4))	02/02/2011
30	establish and maintain a system for monitoring duty rosters of persons working at the home, and the rosters actually worked (Regulation 34 (1) (a))	02/02/2011
31	ensure that 80% of the care staff have completed the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People. (Regulation 27 (4)(a))	02/06/2011

Recommendations

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

- ensure certificates of insurance specify the name and address of the particular home (NMS 26.9)