

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Mick Earl
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	23 September 2009
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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

Care and accommodation is provided at the home for up to five young people aged eight to 17 years. The home is a detached house with an enclosed rear courtyard. The house has two floors. The ground floor comprises a kitchen, dining room, lounge and quiet room. A toilet is also situated on the ground floor. Included on the ground floor is a separate self-contained flat. The flat has its own kitchen, lounge, bedroom with en suite shower and toilet. Upstairs each young person has their own single bedroom with en-suite shower and toilet facilities, a family size bathroom is also situated on this floor. Office space and sleep-in accommodation is provided for members of staff. The home is close to local shops and a library. Bus routes are nearby if young people wish to visit the town centre with its larger shops, cinema and leisure facilities.

Summary

The purpose of the visit to the home was to carry out an unannounced inspection to inspect the key national minimum standards.

National minimum standards were sampled in all outcome areas and identified the home has good strengths. These are in promoting young people's health, providing privacy and confidentiality for young people, supporting young people's education, involving young people and obtaining their views, providing a wide range of activities and social outings, providing comfortable accommodation and individual support.

There are areas for improvement which include the provision of staff supervision and training, the provision of looked after children documentation and ensuring personal education plans and educational statements are available to the home.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

There were no areas for improvement at the last inspection.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people living at the home enjoy a healthy, well-balanced diet and nutritious meals are provided based on the young people's needs and preferences. Young people are provided with any special diets they may need for religious or health reasons. The dining area is pleasant and homely and staff promote mealtimes as social occasions.

The healthcare needs of young people are met well with staff members providing high levels of care and an understanding of each young person's individual needs. Health needs are clearly identified in the young people's records and health care plans are detailed and specific. Staff are proactive in pursuing any specialist support required. This ensures that young people get a timely and efficient service to meet their needs.

Policies and procedures relating to the safe handling and administration of medication are detailed and underpin good practice. The home has obtained advice on its medication administration systems and they are clear and well recorded. Staff members receive training in first aid and the administration of medication. Records show that the home has regular information and contact with medical professionals for each young person. This ensures that children are kept safe as they get the correct medication.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Young people living at the home are treated with dignity and respect. There are en suite bedrooms and sufficient bathrooms, showers and toilets, to meet the needs of the young people accommodated. There are policies in place covering the provision of care and effective care planning ensures that support is appropriate for each young person. There is a separate telephone for young people to make personal calls and they can also use the home's telephone to keep in touch with their families and social workers. Their personal information is stored securely in locked cabinets in a locked office.

The home has good procedures for handling any complaints received in an effective and timely manner. There has been one complaint received by the home since the last inspection. Young people living at the home and their families have access to complaints information and young people spoken with said they knew what to do if they wanted to complain.

Young people living at the home are protected from exploitation and abuse. A copy of the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures is available to the home and there are a range of guidance documents relating to safeguarding. The home has policies and procedures relating to child protection. These have been submitted to the Local Safeguarding Children Board for consideration and comment. Training in children's safeguarding procedures is available to members of staff working at the home and there have been no child protection referrals since the last inspection.

The home has a policy and procedure regarding countering bullying and a procedure with regard to what action staff should take if a young person should go missing. Good staffing levels within the home help to minimise the chance of the young people experiencing bullying behaviour and reduces the opportunity for them to go missing without authority.

Children's behaviour is well managed in a way that ensures they are kept safe and are helped to manage their own behaviour. The home has policies and procedures relating to the safe holding or restraint of young people and members of staff have received appropriate training. There are eleven records of restraint since the last inspection and they contain the correct information. This helps to show that staff are physically controlling young people in a safe way. Sanctions are rarely used; the home has a policy covering the use of sanctions but staff prefer to use less punitive measures to help young people change their behaviour, such as guidance, support and encouragement.

Risk assessments and health and safety checklists are used to help ensure that the home is a safe place for young people to live. Staff carry out routine checks on the building and fire safety equipment that might be needed in an emergency. Fire checks and tests are carried out at the correct intervals as recommended by the fire authority. The records of safety maintenance

and building risk assessments are up-to-date and a current fire risk assessment is in place to help minimise the risks to young people.

The home has good recruitment and selection processes and procedures. The procedures are implemented in practice with checks being carried out to ensure the suitability of each applicant. This procedure helps ensure children are kept safe.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people receive the individual guidance and support that they need. Each young person is allocated an individual worker, who takes responsibility for making sure that their identified needs are met.

All of the young people living at the home, have a school, college or training placement and members of staff actively support, encourage and promote their attendance. Regular attendance helps to promote the self-esteem and life chances of young people. The individual needs of the young people living at the home are well met, by staff who provide high levels of individual support. Young people have access to educational materials, both at the home and via local community facilities. Staff liaise with education professionals, establishing good communication, so they can provide support, help and advice to young people. Records show that some placing authorities have still not provided the home with young people's personal education plans and special educational needs statements despite constant requests from the service.

The home provides a range of equipment, books and toys and the young people are involved in regular trips, outings and activities.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Young people benefit from having clear placement plans that set out how the home will meet their assessed needs. However, some placing authorities have still not provided the home with the appropriate looked after children documentation for young people despite constant requests from the service. The home has developed their own in-house plans which are regularly updated. Staff encourage young people to give their views and their plans are updated regularly.

Each young person's key worker reviews their progress on a regular basis and statutory reviews take place at the right times. Young people's contact with friends and family is agreed at the start of the placement and monitored at their review. This helps to promote their social well-being.

There are clear procedures covering how staff should support young people when they move into and out of the home. Staff make sure young people feel welcome and know what to expect. Young people are also encouraged to bring appropriate personal possessions with them so that they can personalise their rooms.

Staff are good at encouraging the young people to give their views about how the home is run, and helping them to make decisions on matters that affect them. Staff take the views and opinions of young people seriously, and where possible act appropriately upon them.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Staff are good at assisting young people to prepare for adulthood. Young people are supported by staff to practise skills, which will help them to develop their independence. They are encouraged and supported to take part in tasks, such as shopping, cooking and cleaning and helped to learn how to budget finances. Staff monitor the young people's progress as part of their care plan. Young people are encouraged to be involved in decisions about their lives and to help with the practical running of the home.

The young people benefit from living in comfortable and homely accommodation. The general standard of repair, décor and furnishing is very good. The home has recently been completely redecorated and the furnishings in the young people's bedrooms have been renewed. Each young person has their own en suite bedroom which they can personalise.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The young people receive an individual service, designed to meet their personal needs and preferences. Staff have a good knowledge of the young people and they work hard to make sure their needs are being met at all times.

The home has an appropriate Statement of Purpose that provides information about how it operates, although there were some required areas that were not included. There is a young people's guide that provides a useful introduction to the home. The home operates in line with its Statement of Purpose.

Young people receive the care and services they need from competent staff. All members of staff are trained to a minimum of National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in caring for children and young people and they can also access short courses that cover specific needs of young people. Training records show that staff have completed all areas of mandatory training, but could not confirm that they had received six paid days training a year.

There are sufficient staff working in the home to provide a good quality of care to the young people and staff rotas have designated handover periods built into them. The records do not confirm that members of staff receive the right amount of formal supervision each month or that new staff receive fortnightly supervision. This is needed to show that the work of staff members is being monitored by the manager and staff are looking after young people in a safe way.

The arrangements for the internal and external monitoring of the home and the care and welfare of the young people are appropriate. The Registered Manager monitors, compiles and forwards to management the home's records and statistics, to identify any patterns or issues requiring action. The management monthly visits take place at the right times and copies are sent to Ofsted. An annual development plan for the organisation is available but there is no evidence to show who has been consulted during the gathering of information for the plan.

Young people's case files are properly kept and the records of their needs, development and progress, reflects each young person's individuality.

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 Childrens Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

Standard	Action	Due date
2	ensure that the home's placement plan is consistent with any plan for the care of the child prepared by their placing authority (Regulation 12)	26 March 2010
28	ensure that a written record is kept in the home detailing the time and date and length of each supervision held for each member of staff, including the registered person (Regulation 27)	26 March 2010
28	ensure that new members of staff receive one to one formal supervision at least fortnightly during the first six months of their employment (Regulation 27).	26 March 2010

Recommendations

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

- ensure that young people given individualised support in line with their needs and wishes and are informed that discussions about this support are recorded (NMS 7)
- ensure that each child's file contains a copy of their personal education plan (NMS 14)
- ensure that all childcare staff receive at least six paid days of training per year (NMS 31)
- ensure the annual development plan provides for consultation with children accommodated in the home, their parents and placing authorities (NMS 33).