

Inspection report for children's home

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| <b>Unique reference number</b> | SC005567        |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 10 July 2009    |
| <b>Inspector</b>               | Helen Humphreys |
| <b>Type of Inspection</b>      | Key             |

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|--------------------------------|---------------|
| <b>Date of last inspection</b> | 31 March 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**

This children's home is a large house situated on a busy main road, close to all the usual amenities and public transport links. The home provides single room accommodation for three young people and a bed-sit for a young person preparing for independent living. The home aims to provide care on a medium to long-term basis and provides accommodation, care, food, clothing, activities and a holiday for the young people.

Education is provided in a registered school for children, owned by the organisation at an additional cost. The home does not admit any young people with physical disabilities. Therefore, no adaptations to the building or special arrangements are required.

### **Summary**

This was an unannounced inspection and all the key national minimum standards were inspected. This home is providing quality care to young people who are making good progress. The health and well-being is promoted well by the staff and through the therapy programme. Children feel safe at the home and have good relationships with the staff. The arrangements for care planning are very good and staff support contact and consultation well. There are a sufficient number of staff employed at the home and the manager has an appropriate qualification and experience. However, the staff have not had training on how to support young people with education or leaving care issues so that they can provide good support to young people. The arrangements for internal monitoring of the home does not meet the regulations and does not demonstrate clearly how this contributes to improving the quality of the care provided.

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 five recommendations and one action made at the last inspection and all have been dealt with appropriately. All the staff have undertaken training in first aid so that this is available to the young people at all times.

There are new systems in place to ensure that social workers know about any accidents which occur to the young people. The statement of purpose has been updated and now includes details of how young people can contact Ofsted should they need to.

Young people have been advised that they can seek medical attention following a restraint should they wish to, however no restraints have taken place since February.

Overall the number of staff with National Vocational Qualifications at level 3 has improved and now almost meets the national minimum standards.

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

The young people are provided with a healthy and nutritious diet which promotes healthy living. The young people like the food and help with planning menus, shopping and food preparation. The staff encourage the eating of 'five a day' fruit and vegetables and these are

marked on the menus. The staff provide opportunities for the young people to develop cooking skills and a variety of foods are provided to celebrate various festivals and events throughout the year.

The staff promote the health and well-being of the young people. The health care plans are detailed and provide good and appropriate guidance for the staff and they record information about the health of the young people. The staff have attended appropriate training and are able to implement this in their work. Most of the staff now have an appropriate first aid qualification, which means that first aid is available to the young people at all times. Young people who live at the home have access to a therapy programme which is delivered by trained therapists away from the home.

Although systems and processes are in place for the storage and administration of medication, a full range of homely medication is not available. The organisational policy allows for a wider range of homely medication than is currently being used, for example, if a child suffered a wasp sting, the home does not have appropriate medication in place. Although there is evidence of a good stock control system in place there is a minor error on one record. Some of the young people self medicate which is appropriate, however these arrangements are not consistent. Well stocked first aid boxes are provided and staff have appropriate training.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

The staff promote the privacy of the young people. The young people have keys to their bedroom doors and indicate that staff knock on their doors prior to entering. Confidential information is stored securely and appropriate policies are in place. The young people can use the cordless telephone so that they can keep in contact with friends and family.

The young people have access to information on how to make complaints and this is available in the children's guide and information is displayed in the home. Young people have confidence in the complaints procedure and also know a range of other people they can contact if they are concerned.

Staff have undertaken safeguarding training and appropriate policies are in place. Young people state that they feel safe at the home and the staff help to keep them safe. However, a child protection incident was reported which took place at the school attended by the young people. This matter has taken some time to be dealt with and it is not clear what role the staff have taken to ensure that the matter was dealt with speedily and that young people are protected.

The staff and young people confirm that currently there is no bullying at the home and appropriate procedures are in place should an incident occur.

There has been no need to report young people missing from the home for some time and appropriate procedures are in place should any young person leave the home without permission.

The staff encourage socially acceptable behaviour through a range of appropriate measures. The staff can manage the young people's behaviour and good relationships exist between staff and young people. The staff rarely have the need to use restraint and the sanctions imposed are appropriate. The staff use 'positive consequences' to encourage good behaviour and this is effective.

The young people live in a home which provides physical safety. The staff carry out fire drills on a very regular basis. However, some of the young people are reluctant to take part and this might mean that they would not respond in a real emergency. The arrangements for health and safety, risk assessment and gas and electrical safety are good.

The arrangements for the recruitment and selection of staff are good and appropriate.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

The young people receive individual support as required. The staff to child ratio is good so that young people receive good individual attention from the staff. All young people have access to the therapy programme and care and educational staff are involved with this to maximise the potential impact.

The young people attend a school owned by the organisation and are transported by the staff. The staff indicate that there is good communication between school and care staff. Staff attend events at the school, including one of the day of the inspection. However, staff have not had any training on understanding aspects of education, including the use of personal education plans, how progress is measured and they are not aware of the result of the recent inspection. Staff would welcome further information to enable them to give even better support to the young people and to give them confidence advocating on their behalf.

The young people have access to a range of activities both within the home and in the community. Games and computer games are available in the home and the staff and young people go out together on a range of activities. A hamster has been bought for one young person at their request and he is enjoying looking after him.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is outstanding.

The arrangements for care planning are very good. The plans set out clearly the day to day needs of the young people and how these are going to be met. The plans also include information on behaviour management, risk assessment and placement action plans. There is clear evidence of monitoring and reviews and young people are actively involved in the care planning process. The young people attend their statutory reviews. Reports and minutes of these meetings are on file to provide staff with additional information. The young people are making good progress at the home and the long term plans are known.

The staff support contact very well. Information about contact is recorded in the contact plans and are known to staff and young people. The staff actively support contact by accompanying young people, providing transport and activities. Some young people have friends in the community and positive friendships are encouraged.

The young people are able to contribute to the day to day running of the home and to make choices over their daily living. The staff and young people meet formally on a regular basis and the notes taken indicate that a range of matters are discussed and that suggestions made by the young people are actively encouraged and acted upon. Young people have opportunities to make choices over their daily living, for example, through menu planning, activities, clothes and the choice of television programmes. A representative from the National Youth Advisory

Service visits the home on a monthly basis to ensure that young people have access to an external advocate should they require it.

## **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is satisfactory.

The young people are provided with a range of opportunities to develop skills for independent living. They are provided with a portfolio to complete in conjunction with staff which covers a range of matters, which is well set out and attractive for the young people to work through. However, staff have not had any training in this area and some understanding is limited, in particular the difficulties young people face when they leave care, particularly if they do not go onto live in appropriate accommodation which fully meets their needs.

The young people live in good quality accommodation. The home is clean, well furnished and maintained. There are no outstanding maintenance matters. The young people like their bedrooms and have personalised these to their own tastes. There is sufficient communal space and a pleasant garden, where the staff and young people can enjoy barbeques and picnics when the weather is appropriate.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Staff have undertaken training on equality and diversity and some can describe the impact this has had on their work. Appropriate policies are in place and available to the staff. One team member is appointed as the equality and diversity champion. Her role is to plan a range of celebrations to help the young people understand about faiths and cultures from across the world. The staff have a good understanding of identity and how this impacts on looked after children and their care. Issues relating to equality and diversity are addressed through the care plans.

The statement of purpose and children's guide contains a range of accurate and up to date information for young people, staff and professionals.

The home employs a sufficient number of competent and experienced staff and most have an appropriate qualification. The young people get on well with the staff who they find to be kind and helpful. The staff are supported through regular supervision, training and staff meetings and enjoy good support from the senior management team. Appropriate policies are in place and staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities.

The arrangements for the external monitoring of the home are good. The visits are carried out regularly by a range of suitable people and the reports produced are clear and detailed. The arrangements for internal monitoring does not meet the Regulations, in that it is not clear how this process contributes to improving the overall quality of the care provided at the home. The process does not include consultation with young people, social workers and parents and largely consists of repeated information relating to Schedule 6 of the Children's Homes Regulations.

The young people's files contain a range of documents, which the staff require in order to look after the young people. They are in good order and securely stored. The young people have access to the files and the staff record when they have read them.

## 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         |
|----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| 33       | ensure that the internal monitoring procedures meets the Regulation and contributes to improving the quality of care provided at the home (Regulation 34, 1,2, 3). | 1 September 2009 |

### Recommendations

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

- ensure that a range of homely medication is available for the young people and is consistent with the organisational policy (NMS 13.10)
- ensure that the arrangements for young people self medicating is consistent and encourages the development of independent skills (NMS 13.9)
- advocate on behalf of one young person to ensure that a safeguarding investigation is completed swiftly (NMS 17.1)
- provide training and information for the staff on how they can support the educational achievement of the children placed, use Personal Education Plans and progress reports (NMS 14.2 and 4)
- provide training for the staff on how they can better support young people to develop independent living skills and understand leaving care issues (NMS 6.1).