

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	14 January 2010
Inspector	Sarah Oldham
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	17 July 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

The home is a single occupancy children's home, which provides care and accommodation for young people aged from 11 years old up to 17 years old, of either sex. The home is situated within a town and is within easy access of public transportation and local amenities.

Summary

This interim inspection looked at the progress the home has made with the recommendation made at the last inspection in July 2009. This related to ensuring that all policies and procedures clearly reflected the aims and objectives of the home and complied with the national minimum standards. In addition, this inspection also looked at how well the home were supporting young people with their health care, including promoting a healthy lifestyle, and ensuring that young people are effectively safeguarded.

Young people living at the home are supported with their health care needs. The recording and monitoring of the medication procedure is in the process of being amended. This is to ensure a clear and consistent record is maintained for young people and is consistently applied throughout the organisation. Currently records maintained are duplicated in a number of record sheets and this could cause some inconsistencies if not effectively cross referenced.

The home benefits from an established staff and management team. This ensures consistent care and support for the young people. Staff are supported within their role through training, supervision and appraisal and are able to demonstrate a good understanding and knowledge of the needs of the young people. The manager undertakes monthly monitoring, however, external monthly monitoring is not consistently undertaken. This is a breach of the regulations and does not ensure comprehensive independent monitoring. The manager has raised this with the organisation.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous inspection the home were in the process of having all their policies and procedures reviewed and updated. As some of the policies were in a draft format, a recommendation was made to ensure that policies and procedures in place effectively promoted the care and support of young people and complied with the national minimum standards. Although progress has been made in updating and amending policies, some continue to be in draft format and therefore the recommendation has been raised again. This is to ensure that policies in place for the effective running of the home have been ratified by the organisation.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people living at the home are encouraged and supported to develop and maintain a healthy diet. They are involved in planning menus, budgeting and shopping for food. This enables them to develop skills for independent living. Young people say that they are able to cook meals with support from staff and enjoy doing so. The home maintains copies of meals

planned and where changes have been made to the menus, this is clearly recorded. This ensures that young people have meals providing choice balanced with maintaining a healthy diet.

All young people are registered with a doctor, dentist and optician and details are maintained of individual health care needs. This is to promote individual health for the young people in accordance with their placement plans and individual health care plans. Where additional health needs are identified, the home ensures that referrals are made to specialist health care professionals. Staff have sourced additional information and training to further support the young people. This includes information regarding sexual health and drug awareness. Young people have annual health care reviews and records of these are maintained.

There are procedures in place for the storage, administration and recording of medication. Some of the procedures currently in place duplicate one another and although there is an audit trail, this can be complex to follow. To address this, the home has introduced new medication recording systems to simplify systems. Health care risk assessments are in place, although there are no risk assessments regarding young people who are preparing for independence, managing their own medication. Staff at the home maintain responsibility for the administration of medication. This does not enable young people to effectively develop these skills. This is being reviewed by the home, to ensure that health care plans for individuals support the development of this.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Information relating to the young people is stored within lockable cabinets within the office. Staff are aware of the importance of maintaining confidentiality. Training is provided to staff regarding this as part of the induction programme. Young people have adequate bathing facilities and appropriate locks are fitted to promote their privacy and dignity. In addition to this young people have privacy locks fitted to their bedrooms, these can be overridden in case of an emergency. Young people say that staff respect their privacy.

Staff ensure that the welfare and safety of young people is promoted and safeguarded. Examples of this includes procedures in place to respond appropriately to unauthorised absences, complaints or issues of bullying. Young people are supported to develop appropriate socially acceptable behaviour. They are supported to make positive changes to their behaviour. Sanctions are rarely used, however, if they are these are discussed with the young people and records are maintained. Young people confirmed this at the time of the inspection. Staff have received training with regards physical intervention in the event of a young person presenting significant harm to themselves or others. However, there have been no incidents where this intervention has been required.

Environmental checks are maintained to ensure that the home remains a safe environment for the young people. These include regular fire safety checks, including regular fire drills, to ensure that staff and young people are aware of what to do in the event of a fire. Maintenance of gas and electrical equipment is up to date.

Recruitment and selection of staff was inspected at the previous inspection and found to be undertaken appropriately. All visitors to the home are requested to sign in and identification is checked to promote the safety of the young people living there.

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 good.

The home has a Statement of Purpose in place. This details the aims and objectives of the home as well as the facilities available. This is kept under review and made available to interested parties including placing authorities. The home also has a children and young person guide that contains information about what it is like living at the home. Young people confirm that they are provided with this information. The organisation continues to develop the policies and procedures for the home, with some still in draft format. It is important that the organisation ensures that policies and procedures in place are ratified to provide guidance to staff for the promotion of the welfare and safety of the young people living at the home.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Staff have a good knowledge of young people's individual needs and young people's care plans are personalised. The staff team are diverse in terms of their age and there is a genuine commitment towards anti-oppressive practice. Care plans include details of young people's cultural and religious needs and how they will be supported with these.

Staffing levels at the home are appropriate to meet the needs of the young people in placement. There is also a continuity of care due to the staff team remaining the same with no recent additions to the staffing team. Young people feel that their needs are met effectively at the home. Internal monitoring systems are used effectively to evaluate the home's performance. The home's manager monitors, reviews and checks the administrative systems to ensure that the home runs smoothly. However, external monitoring of the home has been inconsistent and this has been raised by the manager with senior staff of the organisation. The lack of consistent external monitoring is a breach in the regulations and an action has been raised regarding this.

Young people's private records are well organised and provide staff with a detailed account of young people's needs, progress and achievements.

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
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33	ensure that monthly regulation 33 visits are undertaken and prepare a written report on the conduct of the home. A copy of which is provided to Ofsted and the registered manager of the children's home. (Regulation 33 (1) (4)(c) (5)(a)(b))	12 February 2010
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Recommendations

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

- ensure that a concise written record of all medication, treatment and first aid given to children is maintained, giving the reason for administration (if not prescribed), which is regularly monitored by an appropriate designated senior member of staff (NMS 13.2)
- ensure that young people keeping and administering their own medication are assessed by staff as sufficiently responsible to do so, and are able to lock their medication somewhere not readily accessible to other children (NMS 13.9)
- ensure that the home's policies and procedures are updated and implemented to reflect that the home is operating in accordance with its Statement of Purpose. (NMS 33.4)