

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	11 February 2010
Inspector	Sarah Oldham
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	28 April 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 provides residential care and accommodation for one young person. It is a semi-detached house with an enclosed rear garden. On the ground floor there is a living room with dining area and a kitchen. Upstairs there are three bedrooms. One bedroom is used by the young person, one is used as a staff sleep-in room and the other is used as a staff sleep-in room and office. There is also a family-sized bathroom.

The home is situated in a residential area and is a short distance from the town centre with its shops and leisure facilities.

Summary

At this unannounced full inspection, all key standards were inspected.

Young people have their health care needs clearly identified and are registered with health care professionals, including a doctor, dentist and optician. Additional health care is arranged if there is an identified need for this. Opportunities to access leisure facilities are provided, enabling young people to have a range of interests and use of community recreational facilities. They are also encouraged and supported to be involved in planning for their future and access to independent advocates and children's rights representatives is made available.

Young people are kept safe due to the consistent approach of staff and their good relationships with young people. They provide a stable environment where young people are treated fairly. The home works hard to provide a high standard of care and addresses shortfalls quickly.

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 interim inspection two recommendations were made. These related to ensuring that staff attended refresher training in child protection and other core training, and to ensuring that security arrangements for the storage of confidential information was improved. The home has addressed the first recommendation by ensuring that all staff have received up-to-date training in child protection. There is also an annual training programme for all staff covering core training. Staff are made aware of the training and the dates in advance. Appropriate cover is put in place to enable them to attend the training.

Security arrangements for confidential information have not been satisfactorily addressed. Information is stored within a lockable office. However, the cupboard that contains all confidential information relating to young people, within the office, is not lockable. This does not ensure that information remains confidential at all times. The manager has confirmed that this will be addressed.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The health care needs of young people are promoted. Each young person has an individual health care plan that identifies their needs and how these will be met. All young people are

registered with a doctor, dentist and optician and are supported to attend appointments. Referrals are made to specialist health care professionals if this is required to meet individual needs. Additional support and guidance is sought from health care professionals regarding smoking cessation and healthy living. Medication procedures are in place and medication is stored appropriately. Staff have received training in medication administration. Systems are in place to support this. Young people who manage their own medication are supported to do this.

Young people are provided with nutritionally balanced diets offering a choice of menu that has been discussed and agreed with them. Staff encourage and support young people to be involved in the shopping, preparation and cooking of meals to enable them to develop these skills.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Privacy for young people living at the home is respected and promoted. Young people have their own bedrooms which they are encouraged and supported to individualise. Bedrooms have locks which can be overridden in the case of an emergency. Confidential and sensitive information is stored in the office which is kept locked when not in use. However, storage of information is not in lockable cabinets and could be accessible if the office is left unattended and unlocked. Computers are password protected.

Details of how to make a complaint are included within the children's guide. This is made available and known to the young people. Information about external agencies and how to contact them is also included in this document. Staff are aware of the importance of ensuring that young people have the opportunity to access independent advocates. The home records any complaints made, the action taken to address them and the outcome. Young people say that they feel confident that complaints are listened to and responded to appropriately.

The safety and rights of young people are protected. The child protection policy has recently been updated and the home also has a copy of the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures. Training is provided to all staff with updated refresher training programmes in place for the coming year. Safeguarding issues are dealt with by appropriate referral to external agencies.

Bullying is not an issue at the home. Staff are aware of the importance of ensuring young people are aware of who to speak with if they feel that they are being bullied. Information about what to do with regards to bullying is included within the children's guide. Strategies to deal with young people being absent without permission are in place for each young person in their behaviour management plans and individual risk assessments. There have been no recent incidents of young people missing from the home.

Young people are supported with managing their behaviour. They are included in writing their behaviour management plan and agreeing appropriate interventions if these are required. This ensures that they are involved in developing strategies to promote positive behaviour. The home records any sanctions or interventions made. These include why the intervention or sanction was made, the impact and the outcome for the young person. The behaviour management policy is in the process of being revised to ensure that it details all information as required by the national minimum standards and is currently in draft format awaiting to be ratified within the organisation.

Risk assessments are in place for the home. These include identification of hazards and a fire risk assessment. Regular fire drills are undertaken; this ensures that staff and young people are aware of what to do in the event of a fire.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Staff at the home provide individual support and guidance to the young people. Young people say that they feel that they are supported well and enjoy living at the home. The home is aware of any restrictions that may be in place for young people but actively involves them to experience a wide selection of activities to promote independence. The home develops risk assessments for activities for the young people. This promotes their safety and well-being.

Education is promoted. For those young people not in education, alternative educational activities are sought and information provided about further education or vocational training courses.

Leisure activities are available for young people to access in the local community including the leisure centre, local parks and shopping area. Staff support young people to have an awareness of activities available. This is particularly important if the young person has moved into the area.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Placement plans for young people contain detailed information about the individual needs and how those needs will be met while living at the home. Staff receive information and training to ensure they have a good understanding of how the plans are to be implemented. However, there is no evidence to confirm that the home's placement plans are routinely shared with placing social workers. This does not ensure that any change to care as identified in the local authority placement plan has been agreed, although the home records verbal agreement within individual young people's files. Each month a review of the plan is undertaken and an updated report is made. These contribute to the young people's looked after children's reviews to inform the placing authority of the individual progress made between statutory reviews.

Where appropriate, young people are supported to maintain contact with their friends and families. Where there are restrictions on contact this is clearly recorded.

The home provides information to young people who are moving into the home and wherever possible encourages young people to visit the home beforehand. Plans are put into place to ensure that when a young person leaves the home they are supported to do so in a planned way. The home liaises with the placing authority and future services for the young person, to ensure that the transition arrangements are appropriate.

Young people's views are routinely sought and weekly children's meetings are held to consider the views of young people in relation to the running of the home. Young people therefore, feel listened to, involved and valued.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

The home is not physically distinguishable as a children's home. This ensures young people do not feel stigmatised by living there. The home's location ensures that young people have good access to local amenities. The home comprises a lounge with dining area, kitchen, bathroom and three bedrooms. Externally there is a small front garden and to the rear a larger garden. The home is maintained internally and externally to a good standard of decorative repair. However, the lounge furniture is showing some sign of wear and tear. This furniture was provided when the young person stated that the previous furniture was uncomfortable to use. Plans are in place to repair damage to the furniture

Young people are assisted to plan for independence, including budgeting, cooking and obtaining information and support in looking for employment, vocational training courses or further education.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The home has a Statement of Purpose. 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's and young person's guide that contains information about what it is like living at the home. Young people confirm that they are provided with information about 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 gender 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 adequate. There is an ongoing recruitment campaign for additional staff. However, if additional staff are required, these are sourced from within the company or from an external agency that the company utilises. This ensures that staffing levels are maintained and that wherever possible the staff are known to the young people. This also ensures a continuity of care for the young people.

The home's manager monitors, reviews and checks the home's administrative systems to ensure that the home runs smoothly. External monitoring of the home is undertaken by senior managers within the company. There have been some months when this monitoring has not been undertaken. To address this the company have sourced an external visitor to undertake monitoring visits. 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 Children's 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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Recommendations

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

- improve the security arrangements for the storage of confidential information (NMS 9)
- ensure that placement plans are consistent with any plan for the care of the child prepared by the placing authority. (NMS 2.1)