

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Sarah Oldham
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	5 February 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 a supportive family-type environment, creating an ordinary life within the community. It is a three-bedroom end terrace property with a kitchen and dining area, separate lounge, three bedrooms and a bathroom. There is a small garden to the front and a secluded garden to the rear of the house. The home is within walking distance of local amenities and reasonably close to shops and leisure facilities. Local towns are accessible by public transport.

Summary

This was an unannounced key inspection to assess how well the home was meeting the needs of young people under the Every Child Matters outcomes. All of the key standards were inspected.

All young people living at the home have a placement plan in place, this outlines the care and support that individuals need to promote their health, safety, education and wellbeing. These plans are kept under review and the home has good links with the placing authorities and Local Safeguarding Children's Boards (LSCB). However, some information with regards young people is missing from individual young people's files and this does not ensure that their privacy and confidentiality is maintained at all times. In addition, information regarding the young people is placed on notice boards and although access to the office is restricted most of the time, this could also compromise the confidentiality of the young people.

The policies and procedures for the home are in the process of being updated and amended, including a behaviour management policy. These have yet to be implemented and further delay in the policies being put into action could impact on the safety and wellbeing of the young people. In particular, to the policy and procedure regarding behaviour management.

The home has had a change of staff and young people and although staff receive induction training and ongoing training to enable them to meet the needs of the young people, staff supervision has not been consistently provided to ensure that staff have ongoing support.

Monitoring of the home is undertaken by the manager on a regular basis and a monthly managers report is produced. In addition, to this an independent visitor report is undertaken by a senior member of the company. Both reports are available at the home and contain information regarding any shortfalls in the home and the action to take to address these.

Risk assessments are in place to ensure that the health and safety of the young people living at the home and the staff working at the home. These are kept under review. The home also ensures that equipment, including fire equipment is serviced and maintained in accordance with the Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and health and safety legislation.

The home promotes equality and diversity to a satisfactory standard, ensuring the cultural religious and ethnic needs of young people are identified within placement plans and how these will be met whilst they are living at the home.

The overall quality rating is inadequate.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous interim inspection, three recommendations were made. The recommendation highlighting the need for a written record of all incidents of absconding and the action taken has been completed. Staff are aware of the procedures to follow when a young person is missing from the home. Training has been provided and links have been made with the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB). Regulation 33 external monitoring visits are undertaken by a senior manager within the company, the home is provided with a copy of this report and actions to be undertaken to address issues raised.

There is still a shortfall in 80% of staff qualified to National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People. This training for staff is ongoing and new staff have been nominated to undertake this training.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is inadequate.

All young people are registered with a doctor, dentist and optician to enable them to have any health care needs addressed. In addition, the home ensures that if young people require specialist health care support, this is obtained. A record is maintained of health care appointments. However, the records for some medical appointments had been removed from the young people's files and it was unclear where these had been placed. This does not ensure that the confidentiality for young people is maintained and does not provide up to date information to enable staff to provide appropriate support in meeting health care needs.

There is a policy and procedure in place for the administration of medication and staff have received training regarding this. However, medication records do not clearly demonstrate that medication has been administered in accordance with the prescribed information, with no explanation why. This does not promote the health care needs of young people and could place them at risk.

The home provides a good standard of meals, offering choice and enabling young people to have a nutritionally balanced diet. Young people are involved in the planning of menus, shopping and supported to prepare meals as part of their overall placement plan. Young people say that they enjoy the food at the home.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is inadequate.

Staff are made aware of the importance of ensuring that privacy and confidentiality regarding young people and any relevant documentation is maintained. Young people have their own room and staff seek permission of young people to enter unless it is identified that the young person is at risk of harm. Confidential paperwork is stored within a lockable office. However, some information had been removed from young people's files and there was no audit trail of who had removed it, why or where it had been placed. This does not ensure that confidential information regarding young people is maintained securely at all times.

Young people are aware of how to make a complaint. The home maintains information about how to make a complaint and has recording mechanisms in place for both external and internal complaints. However, these are not consistently applied and one complaint made had not been recorded in detail, the outcome of the complaint or any follow-up action that had been taken.

Staff at the home have received training in promoting the welfare of young people in placement, to protect them from abuse, and how to respond if an allegation or there is a suspicion of abuse. The home has a copy of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) procedures and all staff are aware of them. The home has developed good links with the LSCB to promote staff awareness and understanding all aspects of safeguarding. Other procedures in place include how the home responds when a young person is missing from the home and the promotion of a culture where bullying is unacceptable.

Young people are encouraged and supported to develop positive behaviours. Staff have received training and guidance in responding to negative behaviours and have received training in physical intervention. However, this has not had to be implemented within the home for over two years. The behaviour management policy and procedure is in the process of being updated to ensure that it will comply with the Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the national minimum standards for children's homes. However, it is currently not in place. It is important that the home has clear guidance for staff and young people to ensure that positive behaviour is effectively promoted.

Appropriate risk assessments are in place regarding fire and health and safety. Fire drills and equipment are tested on a regular basis to keep young people, staff and visitors safe from the risk of fire and other hazards. Staff are recruited following a recruitment process that ensures all staff appointed have the necessary skills, experience and have undertaken a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) enhanced disclosure prior to commencement of their employment.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Support is provided to young people in accordance with their wishes and agreed placement plan. Relationships between staff and young people are strong and young people feel that they are supported well with their individual needs.

The home supports young people with their educational and further education needs to enable them to plan for their future. Risk management strategies are in place to enable young people to take controlled risks. The staff team works well together to provide care that is consistent and based on the establishment of clear boundaries and guidance.

Opportunity is available for young people to pursue a range of leisure activities that promote their self development and educational skills.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Young people have a detailed placement plan that identifies the individual needs and how those needs will be met whilst at the home. The details of the placement plan are agreed with the placing authority and young people are involved in the development of the plans. These plans are reviewed on a monthly basis and any amendments made are clearly reflected within the plan. Contact arrangements for young people form part of the placement plan and are known to staff to ensure that young people maintain appropriate contact. Any restrictions are clearly identified and reasons for this. Where appropriate, risk assessments are also completed with regards restrictions on contact.

The home encourages the young people to express their views regarding the home the way that it operates. This is undertaken on a formal and informal basis, including written feedback forms. Staff and young people appear to have positive relationships that are based on respect and understanding.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is satisfactory.

The home supports young people with the transition to adulthood. This includes liaising with aftercare workers and involvement in the pathway plan. Young people receive pocket money and clothing allowance in accordance with their agreed level of finance. The home maintains records of monies received and monies issued.

The home is decorated to an adequate standard. However, there are some areas showing signs of wear and tear. Ongoing plans are in place to further decorate the home and the young people are involved in planning the décor for the home and are able to decorate and personalise their own rooms as they wish.

Organisation

The organisation is inadequate.

The home has a statement of purpose in place that has been reviewed and updated to reflect any changes in staffing. This document is made available to all interested parties including placing authority's, parents and guardians. There is also a children's guide that provides details about the home, facilities and what a young person can expect when living there.

The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. The home ensures that the needs of the young people are clearly identified including their culture, religion and ethnicity. The placement plans in place reflect this.

The manager undertakes monthly regulation 34 reports on the home and a senior manager from the company completes regulation 33 visits. Any issues identified on these reports are acted upon and a record of this is maintained. However, some of the managers monitoring forms do not provide an accurate picture with regards case records at the time of the inspection.

Staff have access to staff training and records are maintained of the training undertaken. Currently, the staff team do not have 80% of staff qualified to National Vocational Qualification Level 3, however, staff are being nominated to undertake this. Regular supervision for staff has not taken place in accordance with the agreed timescales and this has been raised by the independent regulation 33 visitor. Staff require supervision on a consistent basis to ensure that they have the necessary information and support to provide a consistent level of care for young people placed at the home.

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
13	ensure that prescribed medication is administered and recorded in accordance with the instructions (Regulation 21 (1))	30 September 2009
16	ensure that a written record is made of any complaint, the action taken in response, and the outcome of the investigation (Regulation 24 (5))	30 September 2009
22	ensure that the home has a written behaviour management policy in place which sets out the measures of control, restraint and discipline which may be used in the children's home; and the means whereby appropriate behaviour is to be promoted within the home (Regulation 17 (2)(a)(b))	30 September 2009
35	ensure that information in respect of each young person includes all records as specified in Schedule 3, is kept up to date and is signed and dated by the author of each written entry (Regulation 28 (1)(a)(b)(c))	30 September 2009
35	ensure that all documentation regarding a young person is kept securely in the children's home so long as the child to whom it relates is accommodated (Regulation 28(3)(a))	30 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 minimum of 80% of all care staff have completed NVQ Level 3 in the Caring for Children and Young People (NMS 29.5).