

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Sarah Oldham
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	6 February 2010
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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

At this unannounced inspection all, key standards were inspected.

This is a good service. Young people's welfare is enhanced by good relationships between staff and young people. Young people are encouraged to eat healthily and enjoy regular and varied activities. Staff are supported by the manager and there is a strong focus on the needs of individual young people. The home promotes further education and this enables young people to access appropriate educational courses to pursue their future career choices. Young people are also supported to prepare for independence by means of support with planning, budgeting, preparation of meals and gaining independence skills.

Young people are encouraged to display socially acceptable behaviour. Positive behaviours are also recorded and when any sanctions are made, these are fair and recorded appropriately. Staff are supported to provide appropriate care through supervision, team meetings and training. Monthly monitoring of the home is undertaken by the manager. In addition, each month an independent visitor to the home undertakes a comprehensive report of the service that the home provides. This enables the manager to ensure that the home is providing the appropriate support and care.

The home has recently had a change of manager. However, this was not notified to Ofsted. An application to register the new manager is in the process of being submitted.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

The manager and the staff team have continued to improve the care and support provided for young people.

At the previous inspection three actions and five recommendations were made. The actions related to ensuring that there was a behaviour management policy in place, that meals provided demonstrated that young people had nutritionally balanced and varied diets and that external monitoring of the home was undertaken. All three actions have been addressed.

The recommendations related to three outcome areas, being healthy, staying safe and organisation. The two recommendations under being healthy related to ensuring that meals as served were recorded and medication risk assessments were in place. Both of these recommendations have been addressed. The two recommendations in relation to staying safe were with regard to the records of young people who are missing from home being correctly completed and with regard to staff receiving training in responding to complaints. The records

of young people missing from home have improved, although some information recorded is unclear. Staff have received informal training on the complaints procedure and are able to demonstrate appropriate knowledge on how to respond to a complaint. The final recommendation was in relation to the Statement of Purpose containing up to date information. This document has been updated and reviewed in June 2010. However, information regarding the training and qualifications that staff hold has been omitted and information about making a complaint does not include the contact details of Ofsted.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The home supports and encourages young people to eat nutritious and healthy diets. Menus are planned in conjunction with the young people and ensure that their choice is included. Themed menus also help young people explore different foods from different cultures. Young people are also included in budgeting and preparation of meals to enable them to develop their independence skills.

Young people are supported and encouraged to lead a healthy lifestyle. All young people are registered with health care professionals, including a doctor, dentist and optician. Young people are encouraged to attend regular routine medical appointments and they see a medical professional when they need to. Annual health care assessments are undertaken and outcomes of these assessments are clearly recorded, including any further follow up details and who is responsible for these. Written medical consent from the person with parental responsibility is contained with the young person's case file and each young person has a detailed health plan which is kept up-to-date and ensures that children's individual health needs are successfully met.

Young people are administered medication safely and records of administration are clear and well maintained. Young people are given homely remedies and pain killers when they are needed and these are also administered safely and are clearly recorded. Young people who self medicate are appropriately assessed to ensure they are safe and competent to do so. Overall the system for administering medication is safe and effective.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Young people enjoy an appropriate level of privacy. Personal space is respected and there is no unnecessary intrusion into bedrooms. However, if it has been necessary to search a young person's possessions, records are not always signed by the manager or by the young people. This does not demonstrate that the home follows the policy and procedure at all times. Young people say that they are made aware of why the staff are undertaking a search of possessions. Confidential information is kept secure and sensitive information is discussed discreetly thereby ensuring young people are afforded a good level of respect and privacy. Access to a telephone to make and receive calls in private is available via use of a mobile phone in accordance with placement plans.

Young people are effectively safeguarded from abuse and their welfare is promoted and protected. Staff receive training on safeguarding and child protection as part of initial induction training and then specific child protection training. The home has a training plan in place. However, some staff have yet to update their child protection training. To address this, staff

meetings have been identified to provide training which provides additional information and guidance. Staff are supported and encouraged to raise concerns about practice or in relation to individual young people thereby ensuring young people are safe.

Young people are aware of how to make a complaint and feel confident that any complaints made will be addressed. The complaints procedure is outlined in the Statement of Purpose and the children's guide. However, details on how to contact Ofsted have been omitted in the Statement of Purpose. This does not ensure that all interested parties are aware of how to contact Ofsted. Staff have an understanding of the complaint process and further training is planned in a team meeting.

Bullying is not currently an issue at the home. Staff have good knowledge on the issues of bullying and how to respond to any incidence that may occur.

Staff are aware of the procedures to follow in the event of a young person missing from the home. There are clear risk assessments in place that provide detailed information on the response to take following a young person being missing from the home. However, some recording lacks clarity about the time of when a young person has returned to the home. To address this there has been further guidance issued.

Young people are guided appropriately to ensure they display socially acceptable behaviours. Sanctions are recorded clearly and there is a direct correlation between behaviours and sanctions administered. Sanctions are simple and reasonably effective although the young people benefit more from the discussions they have with staff if they have behaved inappropriately than they do from sanctions issued.

Young people are protected from the risks of fire through consistent and regular testing of fire alarms and emergency equipment. Fire drills and test are completed regularly to ensure young people know how to respond in the event of a fire. There are clear records made of tests and drills.

Young people are cared for by staff who are vetted during their recruitment. All required checks are completed for staff prior to them working with young people and these checks are evidenced in the staff personnel files. All visitors to the home are required to sign the visitors book and identification sought. This is to ensure that the young people are effectively safeguarded.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people are supported in accordance with individual placement plans. Young people clearly value and benefit from the relationships they have with staff and these are very positive. Staff are supportive and responsive to the needs of the young people.

Young people are supported to attend education, including further education. Staff work hard to motivate young people to achieve good educational outcomes. This is evident in recent academic results that young people have gained.

Young people enjoy a range of activities both within the home and in the community. For young people who have left school, staff extend the range of activities to encourage independence

skills and widen the experiences of the young people so that they are better prepared for when they leave the home.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Young people's needs are comprehensively assessed and there are good written placement plans in place which provide staff with clear and up-to-date information. This enables staff to provide care in accordance with young people's individual needs. Young people's placements plans are regularly reviewed and updated when changes are considered necessary. All young people's needs are reviewed within timescales and changes in relation to services provided to young people are appropriately recorded. This ensures that staff have current information about individual care needs.

Young people enjoy regular and planned contact with friends and family and these arrangements are supported and encouraged by staff. Young people have detailed contact information within care plans, this provides staff with up-to-date and relevant information which enables them to properly manage contact arrangements.

Arrangements are in place for young people to visit the home prior to moving in, wherever possible. This enables them to meet with the staff and to view the facilities that the home has.

Young people are supported and encouraged to express their views both formally and informally about issues that affect their lives including practice within the home. Young people's views and opinions are taken seriously and enable staff to change practice within the home where appropriate. This creates a culture of placing the young people's needs at the centre of staff practice.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Young people are supported to develop independence skills to enable them to prepare for adulthood. This includes skills with budgeting, shopping, cooking and accessing local community facilities as well as planning for future careers.

Young people enjoy living in a good standard of accommodation which is kept clean, tidy and well-decorated. The home blends into the local community very well and is a domestic style property which is well maintained. Staff take great care in keeping the home tidy and clean and this clearly encourages the young people to respect their surroundings and helps create a homely and calm environment. Young people enjoy their own personal space which they are able to decorate to their own particular tastes enabling them to feel welcome and comfortable.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The home has a Statement of Purpose in place. This was reviewed and amended in June following the recent change of manager at the home. However, this change has not been notified to Ofsted. An application to register the new manager is in the process of being submitted. The Statement of Purpose contains most of the information required but does not contain information about the qualifications of the staff team or the contact details of Ofsted within the information about making a complaint.

Staff receive regular and relevant training supporting them to provide good quality care to the young people. Staff receive good support from the management team both formally and informally enabling them to perform their duties confidently and competently.

The home is regularly monitored through monthly visits of behalf on the registered provider. The reports that are produced as a result of these visits provide a good assessment of the care practices within the home and include any issues the young people raise during the visit. This provides the manager with an objective view of the home and any issues raised are dealt with transparently. Young people therefore benefit from having their care arrangements externally monitored.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good, young people are provided with care and support which directly links to their individual needs. Young people enjoy positive social links with the local community and care is given in accordance with young people's cultural identity.

Young people have well maintained case files which are kept securely. Case files contain all required information which is accessible and up-to-date which provides staff with relevant information about the young person's needs and circumstances enabling them to provide appropriate care.

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
30	ensure that where the registered provider appoints a person to manage the children's home, he shall forthwith give notice to Ofsted of the name of the person so appointed; and the date on which the appointment is to take effect (Regulation 7 (2)(a)(b))	12 July 2010
16	ensure that the complaints procedure includes the name, address and telephone number of Ofsted (Regulation 4 (a))	12 July 2010

Recommendations

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

- ensure that when it is necessary to search a young person's room, all searches are documented and records should be signed by all those present (NMS 9.8)
- ensure that written records of absconding contain all action taken by staff, the circumstances of the child's return, any reasons given by the child for absconding, and any action taken in the light of those reasons (NMS 19.6)
- ensure the provision of training for all staff, including ancillary staff, agency staff and volunteers, in the prevention of abuse, recognition of abuse, dealing with disclosures or

suspicious of abuse, and the home's child protection procedures. This training is ongoing for the staff group in keeping with the aims and objectives of the home (NMS 17.8)

- ensure that the Statement of Purpose provides all the information required in Schedule 1 of the Children's Homes Regulations 2001; this relates specifically to the qualifications of the staff employed at the home (NMS 1.2)
- ensure that the Statement of Purpose clearly identifies the right of children, parents, staff and others working in the home, and placing authorities to make complaints to Ofsted (NMS 16.5)