

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Debbie Foster
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	7 August 2008
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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 long-term care and accommodation, for up to four young people aged from 11 years old to 17 years old. Admissions to the home may be on a planned or emergency basis. The home is a detached house, which is situated on the outskirts of a small town centre. The town centre is within walking distance of the home and there are good transport links in the area.

The home provides individual bedrooms for the young people and two bedrooms for the use of staff. Facilities in the home also include a quiet room, lounge, dining room, kitchen, two bathrooms, first floor toilet and two staff offices. A car parking area and garden are to the rear of the house.

Summary

This was an unannounced full inspection. The focus for the care inspection of young people is upon 25 key national minimum standards (NMS) under the Every Child Matters outcomes for children and young people.

The four actions and eight recommendations made on the last inspection in August 2008 have also been checked to see if they have been implemented.

A young person took part in this inspection.

A healthy lifestyle for young people is provided through the promotion of healthy eating, good access to health care and regular exercise. Priority is given to young people's safety. Staff and young people are aware of how they should be kept safe and measures are in place to ensure this happens. Education is well promoted and young people are making good progress.

There are some shortfalls in recording fully the outcomes of complaints. The daily recordings do not always demonstrate how the goals and areas of support for young people are implemented, to show the progress they are making. A large proportion of staff are still to complete the National Vocational Qualification level 3 caring for children and young people to meet the national minimum standards.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

The following actions and recommendations have been implemented since the last inspection;

Changes have been made to how staff manage young people's behaviour. This relating to the locking of doors to restrict young people's liberty. This practice has ceased. The address and phone number of Ofsted are included in the children's guide for their information, to use when required. The new manager covers all the specified areas set out in schedule 6 of the regulations to assist monitoring the service on a monthly basis to a good standard. Questionnaire's have been sent and completed by young people and their parents to attain their views on the care and the service they have received.

Risk assessments describe the risk level to ensure the staff are clear on the risks involved. The home has been decorated throughout since the last inspection to ensure it provides a suitable environment for young people to live in. There is clear information and a risk assessment on bullying which, includes the circumstances which may arise within the home to assist in safeguarding young people. The insurance certificate includes the name of the home to demonstrate it is fully insured.

Staffing levels provided to care of young people are included in the home's statement of purpose to set out the minimum staffing levels clearly provided. There is information included in the children's guide on how young people gain access to an independent advocate for when they may require it. The working rota's for staff include the full shift working times, again to show clearly the staffing levels on duty at any one time providing care to young people. Staff have received an annual appraisal to monitor their work and development.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The health of young people is a priority in the home. A healthy and balanced diet is promoted with young people and they are involved in making choices for the week's menu. Young people regularly help to shop, prepare snacks and meals to assist in living a healthy lifestyle and promote independence skills. A young person said they enjoy cooking with staff and eats healthily.

The health care needs of young people are identified and services provided to ensure that their health is well promoted and maintained. Young people are always supported to attend health appointments when required. There is access to healthcare professionals to meet individual young people's needs. Therefore, the health needs of young people are well promoted and met.

Good practices and procedures are in place to ensure that young people's medication is administered, stored and recorded safely through the home's policies, procedures and practices of staff. Staff are trained on how to administer medication and in first aid.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Staff are aware of how to respect young people's privacy. A young person said they have time alone in their room and the lounge when they want. Young people have access to a phone where calls can be made in private. Staff demonstrate a good awareness of the rights of young people. Records are securely stored and information confidentially handled.

The staff and the young people are fully aware of the procedure for how to complain. There have been two complaints made since the last inspection. Complaint records show that prompt action is taken to address complaints the made. However, the outcome to the investigation into the complaints is not always recorded in full. Neither is it clear if the complainant is satisfied or not with the outcome. Therefore, it is evident that concerns are taken seriously but the outcomes are not always clear.

Measures have been put in place to keep young people safe and to promote their welfare. All staff have received safeguarding training and can verbalise the procedures. The procedures are

detailed and available for staff to refer to and use. The home has made contact with the Local Safeguarding Children Board. Strategy meetings have taken place.

Young people are protected from bullying through the home's policies, procedures and the practice of the staff. They are aware that bullying is not tolerated. A young person said no bullying is occurring at the home at this time. Staff are aware of how to deal with bullying situations and they would monitor young people closely.

Staff talk to young people about keeping themselves safe and respond appropriately to protect them when they go missing without authority. Young people are aware of the circumstances when they will be reported missing. The number of incidents of absconding have been minimal since the last inspection.

Managing behaviour positively is a priority in the home. It is well promoted and encouraged. This is to try and ensure young people behave in a socially acceptable way. Staff's approach to caring for young people is to have clear boundaries in place. Young people are involved in the decision making process and the rewards put in place for them. A young person said they are well behaved and receive rewards weekly, for this.

The sanctions and restraint records contain the required information. Few sanctions have been given and one physical intervention has been made since the last inspection.

Young people's safety is promoted through the practices and support from staff. For example, risk assessments are in place, which cover the relevant areas, and the supporting safety measures, which are implemented with young people, to keep them safe.

Fire records indicate that frequent checks on the system and fire instruction and drills have taken place for the majority of staff. However, the times of drills undertaken are not recorded or indicate any taking place in the hours of darkness.

Thorough vetting and recruitment procedures for staff ensure young people are prevented from being cared for by unsuitable persons. The organisation undertakes the required and relevant checks on the staff recruited. This includes the Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) check, references from the previous employer and having a full employment history of the worker. However, the memo information recording the CRB information does not specify it is undertaken at an enhanced level to work with children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The young people receive individual support from the staff and some professionals when they need it to assist them to make progress in their lives. They have links with some health care professionals and the advocacy service.

Education is provided at the home. Young people are attending school on a full-time basis. They have Personal Education Plans in place which have been completed by the provider's teacher. The placing local authority have not completed the young persons PEP which is their allocated area of responsibility. Progress is being made by the young people attending education at the home.

Young people have good opportunities to undertake activities and hobbies. Sport and recreation are also built into the education curriculum. A young person said they had a chance to do lots of things and enjoyed going fishing, playing snooker/pool, squash, football and cricket. There are a selection of books, board games and computer games available. A young person did say having access to a car on a regular basis would improve their life and access to activities. This information has been passed to the manager.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Young people's needs are assessed and documented within the care plan and supporting documents to outline how their needs will be met and implemented. Staff demonstrate well the specific care they provide to young people to meet their individual needs. This is reflected in some of the focus work sessions and daily recordings undertaken with the young people. Although, there are some deficiencies on how and when the care plan goals are implemented and evidenced within the records.

Young people's progress is monitored and built upon by the undertaking of care reviews. These take place at regular intervals. Statutory review minutes are held on case files.

Staff ensure important links with the young people's family and community are maintained. Young people said they have contact with their family and friends on a frequent basis.

Support and encouragement is given to young people to make decisions about their lives and the running of the home. Young people make decisions about the food they eat, daily activities and contributing to their future when attending statutory reviews. Young people interact well with staff, chatting and deciding on what they wished to have for the evening meal.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

The accommodation is decorated and furnished to a good standard, providing a positive and domestic environment for the young people to live in. The home is clean and tidy. There are good repair and maintenance programmes in place. Since the last inspection, the home has been refurbished, decorated throughout and a new kitchen fitted. Each young person has a single bedroom, these are equipped with a range of furniture.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The statement of purpose informs others what to expect from the home and how young people are cared for. This is to enable and assist in the appropriate admissions to the home. The children's guide is in a child friendly format and includes the relevant information.

Staff have received formal supervision at regular intervals. There are weekly staff meetings and daily handovers to support staff working as a team and help to provide a consistent care approach to young people. Staff commented that although they are a new staff team they think they work well as a team which, assists them in providing a consistent care to the young people. They spoke about their work with young people with commitment. Therefore, staff have good support systems to assist in promoting young people's welfare.

Young people receive care from competent staff who can meet their needs. The morning shift was worked by two residential care staff and the manager.

The vast majority of the staff team have not met the target set in the NMS, of 80 per cent of the work force achieving and completing the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) training at level 3 in the care of children and young people. This has recently been affected by the majority of staff being newly recruited to working in residential child care.

The staff have access to a good selection of other training in current childcare practices to ensure they are competent to meet the needs of the young people. They undertake mandatory and other training in a number of areas, such as relevant legislation, restorative practice, safeguarding children and health and safety areas.

The staff have a good knowledge of the young people's needs and ensure the right support and care is being provided. The individual and personal needs of young people are identified.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. This is evidenced through care practices, supporting policies, procedures and the individual placement plans.

A good monitoring systems is in place. Monthly monitoring visits are undertaken by the provider to check on aspects of the care provided in the home. Further monitoring is undertaken by the manager and staff team.

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
16	ensure the outcome of complaints are clearly and fully recorded (Regulation 24)	28 November 2009

Recommendations

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

- ensure the complaints records if the complainant is satisfied or not (NMS 16)
- ensure the that fire drill records record the time they are undertaken and at least one per year occurs in the hours of darkness (NMS 26)
- provide clear information on the CRB information to identify if it has been undertaken at an enhanced level to work with children (NMS 27)
- ensure that the daily recordings fully reflect the care plan goals and identified areas to support the young people (NMS 2)
- ensure that the minimum ratios of 80 per cent of all care staff complete their NVQ level 3 in the Caring for Children and Young People. (NMS 29)