

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Debbie Foster
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Date of last inspection	9 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 long-term care and accommodation, for up to four young people aged from 11 to 17 year-olds. Admissions to the home are 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 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 lounge, dining room, kitchen, two bathrooms, first floor toilet, two staff offices, education and games room. A car parking area and garden are to the rear of the house.

Summary

This was an unannounced key inspection focusing upon 25 key national minimum standards (NMS) under the Every Child Matters outcomes for children and young people.

The five recommendations made at the last inspection in February 2010 have been reviewed to see if they have been implemented.

A young person took part in this inspection.

The health of young people is given importance. This is achieved through encouraging a balanced diet and ensuring young people have regular healthcare check ups. The safety of young people is a priority. The staff are fully aware of how to keep young people safe. Positive reinforcement and very clear boundaries assist young people to maintain and have acceptable behaviour. Staff work and care consistently with young people.

Young people are making good progress in education with strong support from the staff. Independent life skills are well promoted. There are good opportunities for young people to pursue hobbies and interests. There is a wide range of training available and good communication systems in place. This equips staff with the necessary skills to meet the needs of young people.

The shortfalls found relate to some healthcare information not being place, aspects of some areas of focus work not being recorded to show that all care plan aims are being implemented. Therefore, this does not show in full the progress young people are making in certain areas.

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 last inspection, the registered person was asked to take action in relation to aspects within staying safe, positive contribution and the organisation.

Support and assistance has been given to a young person to pursue and conclude a complaint made with the local authority. There are clear and detailed behaviour strategies in place to assist in managing the behaviour of young people consistently. Professional support has been accessed to assist young people in managing and developing socially acceptable behaviour.

The daily recordings made on the care and support provided to young people do reflect the care plan goals. This shows the progress being made by the young person.

The following recommendation is still to be achieved. The minimum ratios of 80% of all care staff are still to complete their National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) at level 3 in the caring for children and young people.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The health of young people is important. This is achieved by staff promoting a healthy and balanced diet with young people. Young people routinely plan the menu, shop; prepare snacks and meals to assist in living a healthy lifestyle. Good independence and life skills are being nurtured. A young person said they enjoy cooking. Staff encourage young people to eat healthy snacks. However, the menu and other records do not always indicate that five fruit and vegetables are incorporated into the daily diet along with sensible portion sizes.

Young people's health needs are identified and services are provided to meet them, and their good health is well promoted. Young people are registered with primary healthcare services such as doctors, dentists and opticians and they attend appointments. The home has links with some specialist health services. Daily routines include good personal hygiene and healthy lifestyle approaches. The majority of healthcare records are up to date and accurate. Although, the immunisation details for a young person are not recorded.

The staff are trained in medication matters to enable them to safely store, administer and record the medication that they are responsible for, and safeguard young people's welfare. All staff have received training to enable them to provide first aid if necessary. Therefore, young people's welfare is protected by good medical policies and practices.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Young people confirm that their privacy is well respected. Young people have access to a telephone and calls can be made in private. Details about young people's care are recorded and stored appropriately to maintain appropriate levels of confidentiality.

The staff and young people are fully aware of the procedure for how to complain. The home has not received any complaints since the last inspection. Previous complaint records show that prompt action is taken to progress complaints made and record the outcomes. This indicates complaints are taken seriously.

Since the last inspection the long standing complaint made by a young person to a local authority has finally been resolved satisfactorily. This was about the number of changes of social worker for one young person. The young person has been supported by the staff and a children's rights officer within Ofsted to resolve this.

Staff demonstrate a sound knowledge and understanding of the safeguarding procedures to promote and protect the young people's safety. The manager and staff have received child protection training. The provider has a good safeguarding procedure for staff to follow in the event of any allegation or suspicion of abuse. Therefore, the welfare of young people is

promoted, they are protected from abuse and an appropriate response to any allegation or suspicion of abuse is taken.

A young person said there is no bullying occurring at the home. Staff are aware of how to deal with bullying situations and high staffing levels ensure close supervision of young people. This assists in preventing and addressing bullying incidents promptly. Therefore, young people are protected from bullying through the home's policies, procedures and the practice of the staff.

Staff talk to young people about keeping themselves safe and respond appropriately to protect them when they go missing without authority. Since the last inspection there have been no incidents of young people going missing. The appropriate procedures are followed and records kept when such incidents occur.

Young people are assisted well to develop socially acceptable behaviour, through encouragement and constructive staff response to inappropriate behaviour.

The positive management of young people's behaviour continues in the home and has been built upon further. This is achieved by consistently promoting and encouraging acceptable behaviour. All staff are aware of, trained in, and follow in practice within the registered person's policy. Staff promote and use praise, encouragement and de-escalation to manage the behaviour of young people. Young people have clear and concise boundaries in place. There is an emphasis on rewarding young people for their good and positive behaviour. Young people are involved in the decision making processes and the rewards put in place for them.

The sanctions and restraint records contain the required information. Two sanctions have been given and no physical intervention has been made since the last inspection. The manager monitors the records for effectiveness and appropriateness.

Young people's safety is promoted through the practices and support from staff. For example, fire records indicate that there are weekly checks made on the system. Fire instruction and safety training have taken place for all staff at the required frequency. Fire drills have taken place at frequent intervals exceeding the minimum specified.

Good detail and specific risk assessments are in place, which cover the relevant areas and supporting safety measures for staff to follow. These assessments have been reviewed. These reduce the risks identified for individual young people to keep them safe.

The organisation ensures young people are prevented from being cared for by unsuitable people with thorough vetting and recruitment procedures for staff. The organisation undertakes the required and relevant checks on the staff recruited. This includes the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check, references from the previous employer and having a full employment history of the worker. In addition, declarations are obtained from staff to ensure they have not been disqualified from caring for 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 healthcare and other professionals.

Education is a high priority and it is vigorously promoted. Young people receive education on site at the home. They have a full-time programme. Personal education plans are in place, which have been completed by the provider's teacher. Good progress is being made by the young people attending education at the home. With achievement being made in a range of accredited schemes.

The opportunities to undertake and access activities and hobbies have increased further since the last inspection. Sport and recreation are undertaken as part of the education curriculum and extended through the personal choice of the young people in the evenings. A young person said they had a chance to do lots of things and particularly enjoyed going fishing, playing pool, ice skating and tennis. There are a good selection of books, DVD's, board games and computer games available. A young person said they are now able to access a car on a regular basis. This has improved them accessing a number of activities which are sited in a nearby city.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Young people's needs are assessed well and documented within a care plan and other supporting documents to outline how their needs will be met. Staff show a good understanding of young people's needs and explain how they meet their individual needs on a daily basis. This is reflected in daily recordings and some of the focus work sessions undertaken which record the care given to individual young people. The daily recordings are now more detailed to reflect the care plan. However, a few deficiencies have been found in the focus work area. The work undertaken has not always been recorded or cross referenced to show the ongoing areas the young person is working on the progress made.

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

Staff give importance to ensuring links with the young people's family and the local community. A parent and social worker visited a young person during the inspection. A young person said they see their family on a weekly basis and speak on the telephone regularly. Further community links are being forged and a young person said they have recently joined a local group, playing in a pool team.

Young people receive good support and are involved in decision making about their lives and the running of the home. There are young people's meetings. They take part in preparing their own menu, weekly activities and contributing to their future when attending statutory reviews. A young person said they get on with all the staff. There is positive interaction between staff and young people. They spoke to each other with respect; there was joking and general banter.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Young people receive good support to develop independent living skills. They are involved in practical daily living tasks, such as processing budgeting, shopping, cooking and keeping their bedrooms tidy. Young people said they are good at cooking and can cook a Sunday lunch. This is appropriate to their age and understanding.

The interior and exterior of the home are maintained in a good state of structural and decorative repair. The home is clean and tidy and provides a positive and domestic environment for the young people to live in. The home is well furnished with modern amenities. Each young person has a single bedroom; these are equipped with a range of furniture. The young person said their bedroom is comfortable and personalised.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

A statement of purpose is available to inform professionals and members of the public about how care is provided at the home. There is a good written children's guide to the statement. This informs young people on what to expect if they choose to live there.

The staff have good support systems to assist in promoting young people's welfare. They receive formal supervision at regular intervals. There are monthly staff meetings and daily handovers to support staff working as a team and help to provide a consistent care approach to young people. Staff said they work well as a team and this assists them in providing consistent care to the young people. They spoke about their work with young people with commitment.

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 to care for one young person.

The vast majority of the staff team have not met the target set in the NMS, of 80% of the workforce achieving and completing the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) at level 3 in the Care of Children and Young People. This has recently been affected by the majority of staff being recruited to working in residential childcare in the last 12 months. Staff are actively working and being supported to complete this qualification.

The staff have access to a wide 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, self harm, autism, 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, which are reported on in all sections of this report.

Unannounced monthly monitoring visits are carried out by the provider. Together with the internal monitoring by the manager, these form part of the good quality assurance system at the home. In addition to this a health and safety audit is undertaken on a monthly basis. Contact is made with parents to attain feedback on the service provided to their children. This assists in reviewing the service and making changes and addressing deficiencies when required.

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
12	ensure that immunisation records are kept and up to date for each young person. (Regulation 28 schedule 3)	28 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 the menu incorporates the full recommended daily intake of fruit and vegetables to provide a balanced diet. Continue to build on the healthy diet including sensible portion sizes (NMS10)
- ensure the ongoing work undertaken with a young person relating to the care plan is demonstrated within the focus work reports and any other work undertaken is suitably cross referenced to the care plan (NMS2)
- ensure that the minimum ratios of 80% of all care staff complete their National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in the Caring for Children and Young People. (NMS 29)