

Inspection report for children's home

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| <b>Unique reference number</b> | SC008271            |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 23 July 2009        |
| <b>Inspector</b>               | Katarina Djordjevic |
| <b>Type of Inspection</b>      | Key                 |

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|--------------------------------|------------------|
| <b>Date of last inspection</b> | 17 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**

This is a children's home that is part of a large organisation. The home provides care for two young people aged between 10 to 17-years-old who have significant social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The accommodation is a three bedroom semi-detached house. It is within commutable distance from leisure and sports facilities, shops and a selection of mainstream schools.

The accommodation comprises of a lounge, kitchen/diner, bathroom and staff sleeping-in room which is also the staff office. Each young person has their own bedroom. There is a front and rear garden.

There is always one member of staff on duty which includes sleeping-in cover. However, staffing is flexible and is increased when necessary depending on the needs of the young people. There are on-call arrangements.

Two young people are currently living at the home and were present during this inspection.

### **Summary**

This was a full unannounced inspection. The purpose of the visit is to assess the quality of care provided for young people, in line with statutory requirements. All key standards were inspected and standards 15, 21, 28, and 32 were also inspected. All outcomes are judged as good with the exception of Economic Wellbeing which is judged as outstanding.

This is a good service where young people receive care based on their individual assessed needs. The ethos of the home is on empowering young people and preparing them for their adult lives. Clear leadership and direction provided by the Registered Manager results in a well-motivated staff team. Practices and systems in the home protect young people from the risk of harm or abuse whilst at the same time allowing young people to take controlled risks appropriate to their age and abilities which helps them to grow and develop. Positive relationships exist between staff and young people and young people make significant progress whilst living at the home. Young people are happy living at the home and feel safe and well supported.

Young people are supported to manage their own health and medication needs which is based on risk assessment of young people's needs and abilities. However, written risk assessments are not in place for young people who self-administer their medication.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

There were no actions made at the last interim inspection which took place on 17 February 2009.

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

The emphasis of the home is to enable young people to manage their own health needs and develop skills and knowledge to live a healthy life style as part of their preparation for adulthood. Young people are given the necessary support and advice to do so from staff and other professionals. Staff receive a range of training to enable them to support young people including basic first aid, food hygiene, the administration of medication and drug awareness. Training is also provided by relevant health professionals where there is a specific health need identified, for example, training on the management of diabetes. Young people are encouraged to talk openly about all issues relating to their health including drug and alcohol issues and sexual health matters. There is plenty of information on display for young people to access regarding smoking and sexual health matters.

Procedures are in place to ensure that medicines are appropriately handled and stored to safeguard young people's welfare. Where possible young people are supported to self-medicate and learn how to manage their health needs. Appropriate storage facilities are provided for young people to keep their medication safe. Risk assessments are in place regarding specific medical conditions. However, individual risk assessments are not in place for young people who manage their own medication.

Young people embark on an independence programme when they move into the home. On leaving school they are given a weekly budget which includes money to buy their food. Young people are supported by staff to plan, shop and cook their meals and staff guide them in trying to ensure they have a balanced diet. Meal times are relaxed and based around individual's commitments. Young people are also given the opportunity to undertake food hygiene training.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

The ethos of the home is to enable young people to learn how to keep themselves safe and take on responsibility for their actions in preparation for adulthood. This includes supporting young people to take controlled risks and staff are skilled and experienced in assessing any risks which may result in harm or abuse to young people. Staff work closely with other agencies to promote the protection and wellbeing of young people. The home has various policies and procedures on safeguarding children and young people. The home has a child protection procedure and has a copy of the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) procedures. Staff understand their responsibilities in reporting any concerns which helps to protect young people from the risk of harm or abuse. All staff receive child protection training. Young people feel safe living at the home and are well supported by the staff team. Young people commented on how they have developed since living at the home in particular in learning how to manage their behaviours, how to keep themselves safe and live a healthier lifestyle. Bullying is not tolerated and is made clear to young people on admission and is regularly discussed at the weekly children's meetings. The home has a copy of the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) 'Safe from Bullying in children's homes' which is displayed on the young people's notice board. Young people said bullying is not an issue.

Young people's privacy is respected. Young people have keys to their bedrooms if they want one and staff knock before entering their rooms. Young people can make and receive private phone calls. Information is kept secure and staff are aware of the need for confidentiality.

Young people know how and feel able to complain if they are unhappy with any aspect of the care they receive at the home. Staff are open and approachable and there are various systems

which make it easy for young people to raise any concerns. This helps to protect and safeguard young people from the risk of harm and abuse. In addition to the home's complaints procedure details are readily available of other agencies which young people can contact should they have any concerns including Ofsted. Complaints forms and stamped addressed envelopes to the organisation's Responsible Individual are on the young people's notice board which gives young people the opportunity to make a complaint in confidence. Records are kept of complaints received. No complaints have been received since the last inspection.

Clear procedures and practices to deal with unauthorised absence help to protect young people from the risk of harm and abuse. Risk assessments are carried out for each young person. All relevant agencies are informed and records kept as required.

Young people are supported to develop socially acceptable behaviours and to take on responsibility for their actions. The emphasis is on recognising and rewarding positive behaviour and young people are praised by staff for their achievements and good behaviour. Incentive schemes are in place to encourage good behaviour. This helps to increase young people's self-confidence, prepares them for adulthood and being part of the wider community. Young people are clear about the boundaries in the home and what is expected of them. Restraint has not been used since 2006 which is testament to the skills of the staff team. Young people said sanctions imposed are fair. Records of restraint and sanctions are kept and are monitored as part of the internal quality assurance systems and the Regulation 33 visits. This helps to ensure that the management of young people's behaviour is appropriate, safe and proportionate.

The management of health and safety of the environment is good which helps to protect young people from the risk of harm and injury. Equipment and installations are serviced as required. Regular checks of the fire alarm system are carried out and the fire evacuation procedure is explained to each young person on the day of admission.

The home has clear policies and procedures regarding the recruitment of staff which are in line with the Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and National Minimum Standards. No new staff have been employed at the home since January 2008 when Ofsted carried out an audit of the organisations' policies and procedures which were found to meet National Minimum Standards. However, a recent audit undertaken by Ofsted in May 2009 of the organisation's policies and procedures identified some shortfalls in recruitment practices in some services which the provider is addressing.

## **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Staff have an in-depth knowledge of young people's needs which results in young people receiving a good level of care based on their individual assessed needs. Staff receive training on equality and diversity which helps to meet individual's different needs. Young people feel valued by staff which helps to develop their self-confidence and develop skills in preparation for adulthood. Individual risk assessments are in place in relation to the care of young people and young people are supported to take controlled risks, appropriate to their age and understanding. Risk assessments are reviewed regularly. Staff work closely with a range of other agencies to ensure young people's needs are being met. Young people's educational achievements and leisure interests are well supported enabling them to achieve their potential in learning and social skills.

Staff see education and helping young people prepare for employment as important. Young people are actively supported with their education and vocational needs. This helps young people make good progress in trying to achieve their full potential academically, socially and as part of their development into adulthood. Staff work closely with local colleges and other educational organisations to ensure young people are supported to access educational courses based on their interests, abilities and talents.

Young people are given support with pursuing their interests and hobbies when needed.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

Staff are committed and caring in their approach and work hard to enable young people to make positive contributions to their daily lives and have a say in their future. Systems within the home and the approach of staff empower young people enabling them to prepare for their adult lives. Positive relationships exist between young people and staff which helps young people to feel valued and improve their self-esteem and confidence. There are various opportunities for young people to contribute to the running of the home and to make decisions about their futures. For example, weekly young people's meetings are held.

All young people have individual files which contain 'looked after children' (LAC) documents, care plans (known as placement plan trackers), risk assessments and case records. Care records are of a good standard and inform staff how to meet the needs of young people. Young people are involved in drawing up and reviewing their placement plan trackers. Care records are reviewed regularly. Weekly progress reports are sent to young people's placing authorities which helps social workers to ensure that young people are receiving the care and support they need. Review meetings are held as required and young people attend their review meetings and are able to contribute to their future plans. Key workers meet regularly with individuals and sessions are used effectively to empower young people and to enable them to live safely and take responsibility for their actions.

Contact arrangements are clearly recorded to ensure that staff understand each young person's situation with regards to meeting with their family. Staff work hard to support young people to maintain valued relationships with family through appropriate contact arrangements.

The home has established systems for managing referrals, assessments and reviews in conjunction with placing authorities. Placing authorities complete the home's referral form which is assessed to ensure the home can meet the needs of the young person. Young people are given the 'welcome booklet' either prior to admission or on the day of admission. This gives good information about what life is like at the home, what the young person can expect and what is expected of them. Staff try to ensure young people are given appropriate support when moving in and are sensitive to young people's feelings. Staff spend time with young people on admission which also involves going through an induction which gives young people an insight into the routines and rules of the home.

### **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is outstanding.

Staff are highly committed to enabling young people prepare and develop the necessary skills and knowledge in preparation for their adult lives. Procedures and practice in the home provide

young people with realistic opportunities to progress into adulthood. Pathway plans are in place and all young people work through the home's independence training programme. Young people are given the opportunity to live on a weekly budget based on the current job seekers allowance which provides a more realistic experience of living independently and what it is like to have to manage their own finances. Young people are well-supported with this by staff and young people are expected to do their own meal planning, shopping, cooking and laundry. As a result young people are able to develop a range of independence skills. Staff provide a high level of both practical and emotional support during the transition period of young people preparing to leave care.

The home is decorated and furnished to a good standard which provides a comfortable and safe environment for young people to live in. It is homely in appearance and reflects the likes, interests and personality of young people living there. The home is clean and well maintained.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

This is a well-managed home with a long-established and experienced staff team which results in a consistent level of care being provided to young people based on their individual needs. Staff are well supported by the Registered Manager and receive monthly supervision. Regular staff meetings are held to discuss young people's care, changes in policies and procedures and any new developments affecting the running of the home and the provision of care to young people. All staff have the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People and receive a range of training to enable them to meet the needs of young people. There are quality assurance systems in place to monitor the quality of care, which include monthly Regulation 33 visits and Regulation 34 checks. The internal quality assurance systems carried out by the Registered Manager are effective in identifying shortfalls and these help to safeguard young people from the risk of harm and ensure young people's needs are met. The Registered Manager carries out monthly Regulation 34 checks, produces an action plan and takes remedial action where necessary. Regulation 33 visits take place monthly and reports are produced.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good and care provided to young people is based on individual assessed needs. Policy, procedure and good practice helps to ensure young people's individual needs including race, ethnicity, disability, sexuality, gender, age and religion are valued and met.

The home's Statement of Purpose has all the information required in Schedule 1 of the Children's Homes Regulations 2001. The home's children's guide gives clear and comprehensive details to young people about what is provided in the home and what to expect.

Young people's files contain all the necessary information as detailed in Schedule 3 of the Children's Homes Regulations, 2001, to inform staff about the needs of young people and how to meet their needs.

## 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      |
|----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| 13       | ensure that unnecessary risks to the health and safety of young people are identified and so far as possible eliminated with particular reference to carrying out a written risk assessment for young people who self-medicate. (Regulation 23 (c)) | 3 August 2009 |

### Recommendations

There are no recommendations.