

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	4 August 2009
Inspector	Martha Nethaway
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	26 November 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 is one of four children's homes owned by a private company. It is registered to provide care for two young people of either sex between the ages of 10 and 18 years with emotional or behavioural difficulties. However, the home only provides care for one young person at any one time, unless the two children are siblings and it is considered appropriate for them to share a bedroom. Admissions to the home are usually planned but emergency admissions are accepted.

The company operate the home and the Registered Manager is responsible for another two children's home close by. The Statement of Purpose states that there are two staff on duty on each shift including sleeping-in duty. However, there may be occasions where there is one staff member on duty but this will be dependent on the young person's needs at the time and will be risk assessed.

The home is a semi-detached mews type property built in 1999. It is situated in the residential area on the outskirts of a town. The home is in close proximity to a variety of shops and local leisure facilities and amenities.

On the ground floor there is a kitchen and a lounge/diner with patio doors onto the rear garden. The payphone is situated in the hallway. On the first floor there is a bathroom and three bedrooms. One bedroom is for the young person living at the home. The other two are used as staff sleeping-in rooms, one of which is also used as an office.

Summary

This inspection was an unannounced full inspection visit. The outcome groups relating to Being Healthy, Staying Safe, Enjoying and Achieving, Positive Contribution, Economic Wellbeing and Organisation were assessed.

The overall quality rating is good. Young people experience positive care and support which meets their needs. Staff show good commitment and enjoy their work with young people. This is well conveyed to them.

As a consequence of this visit there is one recommendation being set. This only relates to developing a more comprehensive fire risk assessment that takes fuller account of changes as a result of the Fire Regulatory Reform Act 2005.

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, there were three actions set. The first related to ensuring that staff receive suitable training to carry out the role of a competent first aider. This has now been addressed. The second related to improving the level of supervision taking place for staff and this has now been achieved consistently at the home. The final action was to address the monitoring of care and practice at the home and clearly identify areas for continual improvement and this now been addressed by the management team.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people's diet is recognised as an important factor that can impact positively on their health. A young person commented, 'staff encourage me to eat a healthy diet and ensure I have three meals a day'. They are fully involved in planning menus, purchasing food and with the preparation for cooking. This allows them opportunities to appreciate healthy eating. They experience mealtimes as relaxed and enjoyable in a pleasant dining area.

Young people feel safe and cared for in terms of staff supporting their physical, emotionally and welfare needs. They have access to universal health services such as a doctor, dentist and optician. This ensures that their routine health checks are being completed and monitored. Staff complete a health plan which is an integral part of the young person's placement plan and is monitored by a key worker. Young people recognise that their fitness is important so they have regular opportunities to take part in sport and other activities.

Staff ensure that they are responsible for looking after and giving medicines and that it is done safely. Records show a consistent level of practice and that young people's medication are handled and administered safely. All staff receive accredited training so that they have a basic knowledge of medication and safe practice.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The safeguarding of young people's welfare is good. Staff are provided with good policies that address child protection and safeguarding, safe recruitment, complaints, counteracting bullying, absconding and behaviour management. Young people are well served by a staff group that have attended safeguarding training and know the correct steps to take for promoting their welfare. The Registered Manager has also attended advanced training.

Young people know how they can make a complaint and feel confident with how staff respond and address any concerns that they raise. Information about the complaints process is well published and circulated to parents, social workers and other key stakeholders.

Young people clearly understand that staff see no place for bullying at the home. They are encouraged to communicate confidently and know the devastating consequence of bullying if it is allowed to go unchecked.

Young people are provided with excellent staffing levels and their whereabouts are always known to staff. There are no incidents of unauthorised absence from the home.

Staff manage young people's privacy and respect their personal privacy. Confidential information is handled securely. They have private access to a telephone and private access to their social worker and representatives.

Young people behave well and they are courteous and respectful to staff. Staff have high expectations and make young people aware of their right and responsibilities. As a consequence, young people choose responsible behaviour and staff regularly use praise and rewards to reinforce positive behaviours. All staff are trained in the use of physical intervention but this is not used at the home. Staff do use a 'permissible measure of control' which gives a forceful

message about unacceptable behaviours. For example, losing the use of a computer for a temporary period of time.

Young people are guided to develop a good understanding of their personal safety. A young person commented, 'staff speak to me about keeping myself safe and give me leaflets and booklets to read'. They have a personalised risk assessment which is reviewed in light of changing circumstances. Staff use documented risk assessments effectively to clearly demonstrate how they have evaluated and minimised hazards related to the day-to-day running of the home. Young people participate in fire drills so that they know what steps to take in an emergency. The home has in place a basic fire risk assessment but it does not take full account of the expected level of detail for a fire risk assessment under the Fire Regulatory Reform Act 2005. The Registered Manager recognised this was a gap and intends to address this in the near future.

Young people are receiving care and support from a staff group that are deemed suitable to work with vulnerable young people. The Registered Manager ensures that all pre-employment checks are completed prior to staff working at the home. The recruitment systems in place help to protect young people.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people are supported to develop personally and staff nurture their confidence and skills. Staff work hard to ensure that young people experience good health, education and social outcomes. They receive individualised support planned with their needs and wishes and receive help, guidance and support when needed or requested. Young people are allocated a key worker and young people invest in this key worker relationship because quality time is made available to meet on a weekly basis. They appreciate the opportunity to discuss specific aspects of their care and progress.

Young people are attending school and achieving good outcomes in terms of their education. A young person commented, 'if I ever need help with the college school work all I have to do is ask a member of staff to help'. Staff actively promote young people's inclusion and involvement in life at the school, in both curricular and extracurricular activities.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Young people's admissions to the home are mainly planned admissions. They are encouraged to visit with their social worker and have a clear opportunity to meet and speak with all staff and see the property and its facilities. The Registered Manager has a formal process in place for enquires and referrals. Staff aim to gather as much information as possible prior to the young person's admission. Introductory visits are paced to meet the needs of young people and usually involve a visit for tea and weekend visit. As a result, they are able to move into the home in a planned and sensitive manner, which is good.

Placement plans are used as part of the care planning process for young people. They are aware of the decisions that are taken and how their needs are being supported on a day-to-day basis. They are actively involved in contributing to their placement plans. Key workers regularly review the plans so that any changes in response to young people's needs can be made quickly.

Young people's progress and achievement is being monitored through the statutory review process. They are involved in preparing reports together with staff. Young people are involved in their review and attend and contribute their views and experiences about quality of care being provided at the home.

Young people's contact arrangements are clearly described in their placement plans. Any restrictions of contact that are in place to protect the young person are strictly followed by the home. Young people are able to maintain constructive contact with their families, friends and other people who play a significant role in their lives, which is good.

Young people are regularly consulted through their key worker meetings, house meetings and by meeting with the whole staff group on a weekly basis. Young people really value this level of communication and regularly provide feedback to staff about areas that are going well and further areas that need consideration.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Young people receive clear advice, assistance and support as they approach leaving care age. Staff have good working relationships with leaving care services that serve the needs of the young people accommodated. Young people are using an in-house 'preparing for adulthood programme' which is a straightforward plan that supports opportunities to develop the practical skills to lead fulfilling adult lives. They are involved in managing their money, paying bills and budgeting wisely. In addition training, relationships and practical skills are also supported. A young person commented, 'they have an independence booklet that they help me fill out'.

Young people are benefiting from living in a well maintained domestic home. It is pleasantly decorated and maintained to a good standard. Young people can personalise their own living space and currently have plans in place for some repainting a number of different rooms in the house.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Young people are living in a home that is well managed. A young person commented, 'the home is helping ensure my needs are being met'. The Registered Manager has a clear strategic vision for the home which is shared and understood by the staff group. This is clearly explained in the Statement of Purpose which is up-to-date. Young people also receive information about the home in an accessible format that is user friendly and easy to understand. The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Staff understand that young people have the right to be unique and value their individuality.

Young people are provided with care and support that adequately meets their needs from a suitably trained and experienced staff group. The staffing levels are high and all staff are trained to National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Level 3. Staff rotas are managed effectively which ensures that staff training, sickness and annual leave is suitably covered.

Staff complete their mandatory core training and some additional training related to practical management of the home is planned for the year ahead.

The Registered Manager has in place, an internal audit system, to monitor the day-to-day practice and quality of care at the home. In addition, there is a more in-depth quarterly quality assurance assessment completed which evaluates how the home is performing and identifies areas for overall improvement.

The home has an independent visitor who completes the monthly monitoring visits which are announced and unannounced. A range of records are sampled and time is spend with young people to gain their views and thoughts about how the home is running and staff contribute to this feedback. The Registered Manager receives written reports and responds to any areas of weakness.

Young people's needs, development and progress are recorded to reflect their individuality, which is good.

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
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Recommendations

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

- implement a fire risk assessment under the Fire Regulatory Reform Act 2005. National Minimum Standard 26.1.