

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	11 August 2010
Inspector	Anthony Kyem
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	28 April 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 care and accommodation for up to eight young people between the ages of 10 to 17 years. The home is a large, detached house situated within its own grounds. The home comprises of eight single bedrooms, a lounge, dining area, play room, washing facilities and toilets appropriate for the registered numbers. The home is located in a residential area with good access to local amenities.

Summary

This unannounced inspection was used to look at the home's performance in meeting the national minimum standards for children's homes and the Every Child Matters outcomes for being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution, achieving economic well-being and organisation. Actions and recommendations made at the last inspection were also reassessed to identify improvements made since the previous inspection.

The home is a good service that provides care for young people to good standards. Young people's needs are effectively assessed and good services are provided to meet young people's individualised needs. The staff are dedicated and there is a strong commitment amongst team members towards delivering and achieving successful outcomes.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

A number of actions and recommendations were made at the last inspection. The home has made good progress in meeting these, having ensured that all actions and recommendations have been met. This has resulted in the following improvements.

The home's manager has now submitted an application to be registered with Ofsted.

Serious incidents are now reported to Ofsted, in accordance with the home's responsibilities to do so. Young people's behaviours are responded to consistently and secure arrangements are now in place to ensure that medication is stored safely.

The home's Statement of Purpose has been updated to include detailed information about each staff member's individual qualifications and experience. Complaints records are now recorded to show what action has been taken to address and resolve any complaints.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people receive good support which helps them to lead healthy lifestyles. Menus are planned in consultation with young people and their food preferences are taken into account to ensure that mealtimes are enjoyed. Young people are involved with the food shopping and they are able to cook and prepare their own meals to promote their independence. Young people are encouraged to eat healthily and they receive a well balanced diet, which is varied, wholesome and nutritious.

Young people are registered with local health services. Details of their health needs are clearly recorded and the promotion of health forms an important part of young people's placement plans. Where additional health needs are identified, the home ensures that young people receive specialist support through the provision of specialist health services.

The procedures for storing young people's medication are managed safely. Staff are trained in the use of first aid and there are suitable provisions available for staff to administer emergency treatment, if required. Since the last inspection staff have relocated their office, however, the home's medication cabinet has yet to be reallocated for the staff team's use.

The home is currently reviewing its policy on the use of non-prescribed medication. The manager plans to seek expert advice on the use of non-prescribed medication following uncertainty about whether or not the home should hold or administer home remedies. The home does have consent for the administration of home remedies, although no medication is currently stored within the home.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Young people's rights to confidentiality and privacy are well respected. Information the home keeps about young people is handled in a secure and sensitive way. There are locks fitted to all washing facilities to enable young people to wash with privacy and dignity. All young people are provided with their own bedrooms to allow them to keep their personal belongings safely and to provide them with their own private living space.

There are appropriate systems in place for responding to any concerns to do with safeguarding and for managing young people's complaints. Staff are trained in safeguarding so they are familiar with the home's procedures for promoting young people's welfare. Unauthorised absences are managed safely and the home works closely with all relevant authorities to share important information and to take action, where necessary, to protect young people from harm.

Bullying is not a current issue of concern. Staff remain vigilant towards bullying and staffing levels are such that any problems with bullying are quickly identified and alleviated. The use of physical intervention is rare and young people are supported in times of individual crisis. Negative behaviour is managed fairly, through the use of sanctions to discourage unacceptable behaviour. Positive behaviour is promoted through the effective use of encouragement, praise and reward.

Appropriate action is taken to reduce any known or identified risks. Risk assessments are clearly recorded and used to alert staff towards potentially harmful behaviours. Environmental safety is promoted and this ensures that young people live in a home, which is free from unnecessary or avoidable hazards.

The home's recruitment practices ensure that staff are vetted and police checked prior to their appointment within the home. However, gaps in employment histories are not appropriately considered to ensure that robust systems are followed and adhered to.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people receive good support from designated support staff. Key working provides young people with extensive support, enabling young people's thoughts and views to be explored and their progress reviewed. Young people's views about these sessions are positive and it is clear from the records held that young people find their sessions useful. One young person commented, 'I like key working... I can get things out of my head... it was good getting my point across and being listened to.'

Since the last inspection the home has established a new position for a child mentor. The mentor provides young people with a positive influence, who is understanding of their needs and is able to identify with their experiences as a looked after child. Staff and young people find the mentor's services valuable and the home is commended on establishing such a positive position.

Young people receive good support with their education, which enables them to attend school. Those of school leaving age are supported in attending college and gaining work experience. The home is now in the process of opening its own school so that education can be provided on site for those who are unable to attend mainstream school.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Young people's files are well organised and these provide staff with good information to help them provide care safely and meet young people's needs in an individualised way. Young people's placement plans are well written and informative.

There are formal systems in place for reviewing young people's needs as individuals. Young people are able to participate and contribute in their review meetings and this enables them to have a voice and express their opinions about any decisions made in relation to them. The home produces in-depth reports for the purposes of all reviews.

Young people receive good support with contact, so that they can sustain their relationships with their own families. They are actively encouraged to make decisions about their lives and to have influence in the way in which the home is run. They are consulted informally and are also provided with formal opportunities to be consulted through key working and resident group meetings.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

A tour of the premises was undertaken. The home was found to be clean and tidy and furnished to a good quality standard. There are sufficient washing facilities to meet the needs and numbers of those resident. There are good facilities for young people to socialise and meet their visitors in private. There are games and leisure activities provided for young people's amusement and leisure. All of the young people are provided with their own bedrooms, which they are encouraged and free to personalise.

The home is set within its own pleasant and private grounds. The home is not distinguishable as a children's home and fits in well with other local properties. The external premises are well maintained and provide a spacious area for relaxation or play. The home's location ensures there is appropriate access for young people to use the local amenities.

Whilst there are opportunities for young people to develop their life skills, none of the older young people currently have a pathway plan. However, some young people are having these prepared to show what support they will need to receive to enable them to make the transition towards their independence.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The home has a written Statement of Purpose and a children's guide about the home. The statement includes details of staff team's relevant qualifications and experience and it shows that staff are appropriately qualified to National Vocational Qualification standards at Level 3 or above.

The home is staffed in such a way that meets the needs and numbers of the young people placed here. There is always enough staff on duty to respond to young people needs for safety and support. There is an effective staff training programme in place, which enables staff to develop and strengthen their skills. Young people's day-to-day routines are maintained and they receive continuity of care to help them form trusting relationships.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Young people are treated as unique individuals and they receive fair and equal treatment from staff. Their individual rights are promoted and services are used to meet identified needs. Young people receive care from a diverse staff team with staff employed from a broad range of backgrounds.

There are appropriate systems in place for reviewing the home's performance. Systems include the manager monitoring the home's administrative systems to make sure that the home is running smoothly. The home's owner also visits the service each month and prepares a written report on the home's conduct. Combined, these systems are used by the manager to make identified improvements.

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 Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

Standard	Action	Due date
27	obtain for all staff, before they start work at the home, all the information set out in schedule 2, specifically in relation to any gaps in employment history. (Regulation 26)	1 September 2010

Recommendations

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

- ensure that medication is stored in a safe place (NMS 13.10)
- ensure that where appropriate, young people have pathway plans in place to help them prepare for adulthood. (NMS 6.1)