

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	19 January 2010
Inspector	Bill Drumm
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	1 June 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

Care and accommodation is provided at the home for up-to-four young people aged from 9 years old up to 17 years old. The home is a detached bungalow with an enclosed rear garden. The home comprises of a kitchen, dining room, lounge, another room used for doing school work or relaxing. There are four bedrooms and two family sized bathrooms. There are a further two rooms, which are used by members of staff as office space and sleeping accommodation. Each young person has their own single bedroom.

The home is close to local shops. Bus routes are nearby if young people wish to visit nearby towns with their larger shops, cinemas and leisure facilities.

Summary

This was an unannounced interim inspection of the home. The outcome areas for young people in the area of staying safe were inspected and found to be good. Recommendations made at the previous inspection were also looked at. All recommendations made at the previous inspection have been met. One recommendation has been made following this inspection and the overall quality rating of the home remains good.

Four young people currently live at the home, although none were available to contribute to the inspection process.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last inspection the manager of the home has provided a computer, which all young people can use to assist their learning. In addition, outdoor play equipment has also been provided. The gardens to the home have been tidied and are well maintained.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is not judged.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Each young person has their own bedroom, which has been personalised in a style reflecting their own personality. Young people are encouraged to keep their rooms clean and tidy. The home has policies and procedures in place which explain what action members of staff should take when it is necessary to search a young person's bedroom. No room searches have been carried out since the last inspection. The room search records comply with national minimum standards. Personal information relating to each young person is stored securely to prevent unauthorised access. Members of staff spoke fondly of the young people living at the home and of treating them with dignity and respect.

There are good procedures and systems in place to support young people who may wish to make a complaint. Information about how to make a complaint is freely available, as are contact numbers for a number of independent agencies who can help young people. There have been

a number of complaints made since the last inspection. Records examined show that these complaints have been taken seriously and investigated. Young people living at the home know how to complain if they are unhappy about any aspect of living there. In addition, there have been two compliments received about the care provided to young people.

Procedures and guidance for identifying and reporting child protection concerns are good. Local Safeguarding Children's Board procedures are available to staff and these are supplemented by the home's policy and guidance. Safeguarding procedures from the local authorities placing young people at the home are also available. All staff have received up-to-date child protection training. These measures all contribute towards safeguarding young people and keeping them safe.

Young people are protected from being targeted by bullies. The home has policies and procedures in place with regard to countering bullying and there have been no recorded incidents of bullying since the last inspection. The young people's guide to the home includes information for young people about what action they should take if they feel they are being targeted by bullies. Members of staff have received training in countering bullying. Each young person has a comprehensive risk assessment, which includes issues about bullying. Young people receive individual care and support from members of staff on a 1:1 basis. This helps to reduce the likelihood of bullying taking place. Young people know how to protect themselves and to seek help if they think they are being bullied.

The home has policies and procedures in place with regard to what action members of staff should take if a young person is absent without authority. Procedures fully comply with national minimum standards. There have been a number of occasions since the last inspection when a young person has been absent without authority, although the last occasion was some months ago. Young people are responded to positively on their return following an absence.

The home works effectively with young people to help them develop socially acceptable behaviour. Sanctions are used sparingly and their effectiveness is monitored by the home's management. All sanctions used, appear reasonable and not excessive. Records relating to sanctions are retained within a bound and numbered book used specifically for that purpose. The home places a strong emphasis on the use of positive reinforcement and all young people have behaviour management plans in place. Staff are trained in positive handling techniques and strategies. The use of holding or restraint is only ever used as a last resort. However, a number of holds or restraints have been used on young people since the last inspection. Written records relating to these incidents have been made. The reason for the restraint is not always fully documented and clear. This could put young people at risk.

The home has good systems in place to assess and reduce risks posed to young people. Effective policies, procedures, risk assessment and management arrangements contribute towards ensuring that young people's welfare is safeguarded. Fire drills and evacuations are undertaken regularly and all emergency safety equipment is well maintained. All these measures help to keep young people safe from harm.

Staff working at the home have undergone a robust recruitment and selection process to ensure that they are suitable to work with young people. The home has appropriate arrangements for the vetting of all visitors. The careful selection and vetting of all staff and visitors helps to prevent young people from being exposed to potential harm or abuse.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

All young people living at the home attend school. The attendance of young people at school, and their education is fully supported by members of staff. The home has a computer available for young people to use to help them with their school work.

Young people are supported and encouraged to develop their own hobbies and interests both within the home and the local community. This helps young people to develop self confidence and new skills.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is not judged.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

The home is well decorated and furnished. Young people are encouraged to look after their home and to help keep it clean and tidy. The home is indistinguishable from others in the same locality.

Organisation

The organisation is not judged.

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
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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):

- improve the quality of all written information regarding the restraint or holding of a young person. (NMS 22.9)