

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	12 July 2009
Inspector	Diana Waters
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	21 January 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

The children's home is a semidetached Victorian house, situated close to the centre of a small town. The home is registered for five young people and currently accommodates four teenage girls. The home provides individual support and preparation for independent living and offers an outreach service to support young people who have moved locally. The home offers a range of educational provision which includes individual tuition. The home aims to provide a range of emotional and behavioural support to vulnerable young people to prepare them for independent living.

Summary

This was an interim unannounced inspection of the home. The focus of the inspection was to inspect the outcome area Staying Safe. The manager, three members of staff and three young people were present. At this inspection the home was judged satisfactory. The young people continue to access the support to make positive choices and are at different transitional stages. Positive relationships exist between previous residents and the staff group and give current young people hope for their future. Two requirements and one recommendation are made at this inspection: up to date written placement plans must be available on each young person; when a person has previously worked with children or vulnerable adults, verification of the reason why employment ended must be sought from all employers; the provision of window restrictors for the first and second floor windows should be reviewed.

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection in January 2009, one action was set. The home was required to ensure staff are appraised at least once a year and that staff meetings are held regularly, have an agenda and are minuted. This action has been completed. The home continues to offer a positive experience to young people.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is not judged.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Young people's privacy is respected and their information is confidentially handled. Case files are stored securely.

Young people confirm they know how to complain both internally and externally and concerns are responded to and resolved quickly.

Staff are well informed about child protection procedures and take appropriate action to safeguard the welfare of young people when concerns arise. The home has a positive relationship with the local police and local schools and seeks to engage young people in looking at their own safety. Placing officers confirm good communication from the service.

There are no reports of bullying between the girls. Staff remain alert to the possibility and appropriately address any concerns between the young people. The home endeavours to meet the individual needs of each young person and encourages tolerance.

There have been a significant number of recent unauthorised absences. Staff follow agreed procedures if young people go missing. They try to maintain phone contact and offer support to enable young people to return. Good relationships with young people underpin the service and are used to encourage young people to make positive choices.

Young people are encouraged to behave in a socially acceptable way, with negotiation and discussion to resolve difficulties. Young people are given choices and treated with respect. Sanctions and rewards are recorded. No restraints have been used in the home since 2002. Young people, previously resident in the home who remain in the area and have been supported into independence, continue to keep in touch and receive support from staff. This demonstrates the positive relationships that have been retained with staff and gives current residents hope for their own future.

The home provides a comfortable domestic style environment with acceptable standards of physical safety. A placing social worker comments 'It feels like a home not an institution. It has a warm inviting atmosphere'. Fire checks are undertaken regularly. Fire alarms include night time evacuation. Risk assessments are undertaken and monitored by the service. Windows at first and second floor level open widely without restrictors.

The service has recruited one member of staff since the last inspection. Schedule 2 information is available. The service has additionally verified two references. However, the service has not ensured that, when previous positions include work with vulnerable adults or young people, the reason why the employment ended is verified. Visitors to the home are adequately monitored.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is not judged.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Young people have their needs assessed effectively. Written placement plans were not in place for all young people. There is regular communication between placing social workers and young people's families. Young people are encouraged to discuss, understand and contribute their views. A placing social worker comments 'The home regularly keep me up to up date and encourage young people to remain in touch, they are extremely good at engaging with young people, they remain consistent and positive and allow young people to think things through.'

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is not judged.

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

Standard	Action	Due date
2	ensure that there is an up to date written placement plan for each child or young person as they are admitted to the home.(Regulation 12)	31 August 2009
27	obtain for all staff, before they start work at the home, all the information set out in Regulation 26.Specifically,when previously employed in a position working with children or vulnerable adults,verification of the reason why the employment ended.(Regulation 26)	31 August 2009

Recommendations

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

- review the provision of restrictors for first and second floor windows (NMS 26)