

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Debbie Foster
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Date of last inspection	17 November 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 home provides a single occupancy placement to young people aged 11 to 17 years who have a history of placement breakdowns, emotional and/or behavioural problems.

This is a domestic dwelling, with a kitchen, dining lounge, two single bedrooms, one of which has an en-suite, a bathroom and an office.

It is situated near to local shops, schools, health, leisure and employment facilities. There is a bus route servicing the local area and the town centre, which is three miles away.

Summary

This was an unannounced key inspection focusing upon 25 key national minimum standards under the Every Child Matters outcomes for children and young people. The one recommendation made on the last interim inspection in November 2009 has also been checked to see if it has been implemented.

A young person has taken part in the inspection process.

This is a good service. The health needs of young people are well promoted. Safeguarding young people is a priority. The home particularly excels, in assessing the risks for young people, managing their behaviour positively and having robust recruitment processes to ensure suitable staff are employed to care for young people.

Education needs is strongly promoted. Young people are motivated, encouraged and supported well by staff to pursue individual interests and hobbies which, develops their confidence and self esteem. Placement planning is good and care plans are well recorded.

The ratio of staff to care for young people is high. Staff are well trained, child centred in their approach and are adaptable. Monitoring of the quality of care at the home is good.

The following shortfalls have been noted. Young people have not received a full medical assessment; the record of food served to young people does not record five fruit and vegetables taken regularly on a daily basis. Independence skill development for young people is not recorded within care plans in full.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

The home has met the target of 80% of the workforce gaining National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) at level 3 in the caring for children and young people.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

A healthy and well balanced diet is promoted in the home. Young people contribute weekly to the menu planning which includes varied meal options. There is good support for young people to shop, prepare snacks and meals. This assists in the promotion of a healthy lifestyle. A young

person said that they can now cook a few meals and do this well. However, the record of food eaten does not show that five fruit and vegetables are eaten daily or on a regular basis.

Young people's health is well promoted and maintained. Personal healthcare information is held on file for young people. Their daily routines include the encouragement of good personal hygiene and a healthy lifestyle. The reward based incentives in place for individual young people also support this. Healthy activities take place, such as football, swimming and dancing. Staff have identified the immediate health needs of young people and addressed these. Young people have been supported to attend health appointments when required. These have included visits to the doctor, dentist and optician. However, a young person has not received a health assessment since their admission.

All staff are trained in medication matters to ensure that they know how to safely store, administer and record the medication that they are responsible for, and safeguard welfare. In addition staff have received training in first aid, sexual health matters and alcohol and drugs awareness. All medication is appropriately recorded and stored. Regular monitoring of medication stocks takes place within the home. A young person's medication has been reviewed and this has brought positive outcomes for the individual concerned. Therefore, young people's welfare is safeguarded by good procedures and practices.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Young people's privacy is respected appropriately. Young people have access to a private telephone, which is free to use for reasonable periods. They have a key for their bedroom to help them feel that they control that private space. Details about young people's care are recorded and stored appropriately to maintain good levels of confidentiality.

The young people are aware of the complaints procedure and staff said they support young people to complain where this is needed. A compliment has been received from a parent who is pleased with the care their child is receiving at the home. The home has received no complaint since the last inspection. Prompt action is taken to resolve any complaints received and the outcome recorded when they do occur. Therefore, concerns are taken seriously.

Measures have been put in place to keep young people safe and to promote their welfare. Safeguarding procedures are in place and available for staff to refer to and use. All staff have received safeguarding training and they receive an annual refresher. Staff are clear on the procedures to follow to safeguard young people. Young people said there is no bullying occurring in the home or in the community currently. Staff are aware of how to deal with bullying situations. Therefore, young people are protected from bullying, through the home's policies, procedures and the practice of the staff.

There are good measures in place to manage unauthorised absence. Individualised risk assessments for young people give good guidance for the staff to follow in such events. There have been no incidents where young people have gone missing from the home since January 2010. Young people are clear in what circumstances they will be reported missing.

There continues to be a strong emphasis on managing behaviour positively in the home. This ensures young people behave in a socially acceptable way. There are clear boundaries and well structured daily routines, education and activity plans in place. Young people are involved in

the decision making process. They determine their weekly plans, rewards and the incentives. This influences the success of this approach. Young people are responding well and behave well. A young person said they get on with all the staff.

The sanctions and restraint records include the required information. There have been two sanctions given and no physical interventions have taken place since the last inspection. The young people have signed the sanctions records made and said they think the sanctions given are fair.

Staff are knowledgeable about the risks to individual young people. Good written risk assessments are recorded to enable staff to know what action to take to minimise the risk to young people during their known and likely activities. Therefore, the safety and welfare of young people is well protected by the home's risk management practices.

Thorough fire safety practices are in place to protect young people. The fire safety check records are up to date. All staff and young people have been involved in a number of fire safety drills to ensure that they are aware of the procedure to be followed in case of fire in the home. All staff working at the home have received up-to-date fire safety training to assist them in minimising the risks to young people in the event of a fire at the home.

There are robust vetting and recruitment procedures for staff in place to ensure young people are prevented from being cared for by unsuitable staff. The organisation undertakes the required and relevant checks on the staff recruited. This includes the Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) check, references from the previous employer and having a full employment history of the worker. In addition, declarations are obtained from staff to ensure they have not been disqualified from caring for children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

There is individual support for young people from the staff and some professionals when they need it to assist them to make progress in their lives. The home has links with health and care professionals such as the children's area mental health service.

Education is a high priority and it is strongly promoted. This assists young people to achieve their potential and gain skills which will support them into adulthood. Staff are assisting and supporting young people to attend and participate in the full time education programme. Personal education plans are in place and set out the academic level of the young person to assist in planning a suitable curriculum for them. The home has a good selection of books and games, and study materials are available. There is a computer for the young people to access for education and leisure purposes.

Young people are motivated, encouraged and supported well by staff to pursue individual interests and hobbies which develops their confidence and self esteem. They undertake a selection of leisure activities and hobbies on a weekly basis, such as football and street dance. A young person said they have tried a lot of different activities since being at the home, such as tennis, badminton and swimming but have got bored with these. They said they really enjoyed playing football and going to the cinema.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Young people's needs are well assessed and this is documented within their care plans and supporting documents. Attention is paid to ensuring that care plans reflect young people's needs. Staff present young people with plenty of opportunity to be involved in this process and they have regular opportunities to discuss their needs with staff. Independent living skills are promoted and carried out well with young people. However, the care plan records do not reflect this area in full and the progress the young person are making in this area is not documented.

A systematic review process is effective in highlighting young people's progress and in identifying any shortfalls or concerns. Contact with families is recognised as an important aspect of a young person's life and a means by which young people can have a positive sense of identity reinforced. The young person said they see their family weekly and speak with them on the telephone.

The nature of this placement and the good practice of staff ensures that there is frequent dialogue with young people about their care, needs and wishes. They are offered the opportunity to participate in review meetings and voice any concerns they may have. Young people are provided with a range of information about how the home operates. Introductions to the home and the settling in period are managed well.

Good support and encouragement is given to young people to make decisions about their lives and the running of the home. Young people are actively involved in making decisions about the weekly activities and the menu. Young people said they also contribute to decision made about incentives, rewards and their views sought when attending their statutory reviews.

There are positive relationships and good communication between young people and the staff. This is evident in the discussions seen between both parties during the inspection. They discussed the morning activities and the plans for the afternoon. A young person said they like living at the home and enjoy the activities provided.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Young people are being supported, to develop some independent living skills appropriate to their age and understanding. They are involved in undertaking practical daily living tasks, such as, processing their own laundry, keeping their own bedrooms tidy and preparing snacks and meals.

The accommodation is decorated and furnished to a good standard, providing a positive and domestic environment for the young people to live in. There is sufficient room for privacy as well as for communal activities. It is clean and tidy, with good repair and maintenance programmes in place. Young people have personalised their bedrooms. These are well equipped with a range of furniture.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Management of the home is good and ensures that young people receive good quality care.

The home provides any referring professional with comprehensive information about the home in the form of the Statement of Purpose. Young people are equally well informed through a children's guide that helps to familiarise them with what they can expect from the service.

Staff are well supported and guided in promoting young people's welfare. Staff receive formal supervision at regular intervals. There are regular staff meetings and daily handovers. Staff commented that they work well as a team and have good communication systems which, assists them in providing consistent care to the young people. Management support and supervision are described as, 'good' by staff.

The young people benefit greatly from being looked after by a staff team who are child centred and supported by the manager. There is a consistent staff team with a range of skills and experience among its members. The team present as open and adaptable to work with young people, trying different approaches. They seek to provide best outcomes for young people in their care.

The target of 80% has been achieved by the workforce being trained in the National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in caring for children and young people. The staff have access to a wide selection of training in current childcare practices to ensure they are competent to meet the needs of the young people. They have opportunities to undertake mandatory and other training in a number of areas, such as, leaving care, self harm and self esteem, drugs and alcohol.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. This is evidenced through practice, supporting policies, procedures and the individual placement plans. Young people receive an individual service which is tailored to meet their personal needs. The staff have a good knowledge of the young people's needs and are working with them to ensure the right support and care is being provided.

Monthly monitoring visits take place to check how care is provided in the home. Further monitoring is undertaken by the manager in line with the regulations. In addition regular health and safety audits are undertaken, parents and young people complete evaluation questionnaires. All of these contribute to the good monitoring system to ensure the young people living at the home are well cared for and National Minimum Standards and regulations are being met.

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
12	ensure that full medical assessments are undertaken for each young person and records kept. (Regulation 28 schedule 3)	28 July 2010

Recommendations

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

- ensure that the menu incorporates the full recommended daily intake of fruit and vegetables to provide a balanced diet (NMS10)
- ensure that the care plan includes details and the aims relating to the promotion of independence skills and records the progress being made (NMS2 & 6)