

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Janet Manders
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	17 December 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 a medium to long stay children's home which takes mainly planned admissions, but is able to take young people in an emergency where necessary. The home can accommodate up to five young people between the ages of eight and 16. However, there may be no more than six years between the oldest and youngest resident.

The home uses a structured programme of activities through the day, which is designed to have both an educative as well as a personal development element. This programme is designed so that the young people can gain both new experiences and a sense of achievement. Staff work closely with the young people to develop professional and constructive relationships within which, the implications of their behaviour can be discussed and examined on an individual and group basis. These relationships, in partnership with the placing authority, relevant professionals, the young person and family forms a significant part of the work with the young people placed at the home and helps to produce a professional assessment of current and future needs. Recommendations are made in regular reviews and in reports for treatment and intervention programmes, which also identify and comment upon the needs that will require attention if they are to stay long term at the home or for any future placement.

Summary

This was an unannounced full inspection, which looked at key standards of the Children's Homes National Minimum Standards (NMS). The inspection focused on areas related to health needs, keeping young people safe, education and how individual support is provided. The inspection also concentrated on how the home consults with young people, plans for their care and how staffing and management arrangements support the operation of the service.

Overall, the home provides a good standard of care for young people. Staff work hard to keep young people safe and work well with other agencies to ensure that young people's needs are met. Young people have the opportunity to experience different activities and events to develop their self-esteem. Young people receive good support regarding their education and are encouraged to contribute to the planning of their care and the running of the home. However, not all staff have received first aid training, consequently not all shifts have a qualified first aider. This has the potential of negatively impacting on young people's health as young people may not be able to receive appropriate treatment in a timely fashion. The home also does not undertake detailed assessments of the impact of young people being admitted to the home on the existing group of residents.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

The manager and staff have worked hard to address issues raised after the last inspection that took place in December 2008, with three of the four required actions being fully met. Improvements have been made in the recording of case records, including child protection records, with all records being clearly signed so that it is possible to identify who has completed the records. The rotten window frames have been replaced with new suitable windows. The fourth action has not been fully met as assessments do not contain sufficient information

regarding the impact on the admission of a new young person and their behaviour on the other residents at the home.

The two recommendations regarding keeping a record of room searches and positive measure of control have been fully met. This ensures that there is accurate records of young people's stay at the home and provides information for the monitoring of the home.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people are receiving a good service that is focused on their emotional wellbeing and health needs. Staff actively encourage young people to lead a healthy life. Staff are supported in this because the company has developed clear guidance regarding promoting and safeguarding young people's health.

The home employs a cook who promotes healthy eating and provides nutritious meals that meet young people's dietary, ethnic and religious needs. Young people have opportunities to plan, shop for and assist with the preparation of meals.

The health and care needs of young people are identified and updated regularly. A health plan for each young person details how their specific and general health issues are to be addressed. All young people are registered with the required health professionals when they are admitted to the home. Young people are referred to other specialist agencies where this is required. Staff record and monitor young people's health appointments, accidents and illnesses and where appropriate take action, to ensure that their health needs are met. Staff provide young people with information, during key worker sessions, about healthy lifestyles.

Young people's health and safety is promoted through the home's policies and procedures for the safe storage and administration medication, including the use of homely remedies. The files for the young people contain signed medical consent forms from the person with parental responsibility for vaccinations, preventative inoculations and include the administration of household medication and first aid. Administration records demonstrate that staff are following individual prescription instructions. However, staff do not always accurately record the medication they have administered. This has the potential to be detrimental to young people's health. Additionally, not all staff are able to respond to accidents and unforeseen medical needs because they have not been trained in basic first aid skills.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Young people are kept safe by a committed staff team who are supported in their work by clear policies and procedures. Young people's privacy and confidentiality is respected by all staff. Staff are sensitive to the needs of young people and knock on young people's doors unless they believe the young person is at risk of immediate harm. Information held in respect of young people is stored in lockable facilities which are only accessible to staff. There is guidance regarding the circumstances under which room searches can be carried out and a log of room searches is maintained.

The home has very good systems in place for managing complaints. Young people know how to complain and feel that they are listened to and taken seriously. Each young person's right

to complain is supported by the staff team. In addition, young people have access to an independent advocate whose contact details are well advertised. This is an excellent example of the organisation's overall policy to promote young people's rights and entitlements.

Young people's welfare is protected by good staff awareness of safeguarding, anti-bullying and unauthorised absence procedures. The home has clear procedures for responding to child protection concerns and all staff have initial training in child protection, which is regularly updated. Appropriate action is taken by the home when safeguarding issues arise and the Local Safeguarding Children Board is notified of all incidents. The home notifies Ofsted of all such events as required. Young people are clear that bullying is unacceptable and confirm that staff take action where bullying behaviour is evident and where it is reported by young people. The home has an anti-bullying policy which makes it very clear that bullying, intimidation, racial or sexual harassment is not tolerated and encourages young people to raise any concerns they have about bullying. Staff take appropriate action to deal with young people who have exhibited bullying behaviour. Unauthorised absences are well recorded with staff having clear protocols about informing the appropriate authorities.

Young people are assisted to develop appropriate behaviour through the encouragement of acceptable behaviour and constructive staff responses to inappropriate behaviour. A placing social worker stated that the 'Manager and staff take the time to get to know the young people and build-up trusting relationships to best meet the young people's needs. Young people are treated as individuals and are offered plenty of praise and encouragement'. Staff endeavour to de-escalate situations and deal with incidents in a calm manner and encourage the young people to display appropriate behaviours and move forward using positive rewards.

Staff are pro-active in taking steps to ensure that young people, staff and visitors are safe from fire and other hazards in the home. Frequent checks are undertaken on fire equipment, emergency lighting and fire drills are regularly undertaken. The home undertakes comprehensive risk assessments in relation to all aspects of the safety of the premises and grounds, including a fire risk assessment. Risk assessments are also undertaken regarding the potential behaviour of young people and their activities.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people are supported by a well-informed team who work together to identify and meet young people's needs. Each young person is allocated a key worker who is responsible for coordinating tasks identified in the young person's placement plan. The key worker meets regularly with the young person to discuss any issues that are relevant to the young person. External services are requested as necessary to meet the needs of individual young people.

Records take account of potential needs in relation to a young person's diversity such as identity, race, culture and religion. Staff actively promote the social inclusion of young people in the home's routines and activities. Staff also support young people to access and attend various community-based activities and venues.

The home actively promotes young people's education. The home is registered as a school, with a dedicated school room, staffed by a qualified teacher and can provide education on site for up to five young people. This enables young people to receive individualised education. A

recent monitoring inspection of the school found that the education provision had made satisfactory progress in meeting the recommendations of the previous inspection.

A number of young people are not currently engaged with their education. However, staff provide support to young people and encourage them to return to mainstream education where possible. Some young people have recently been supported to undertake their GCSE examinations. Staff are clear regarding their responsibilities in encouraging young people's educational achievement and are supported in this by clear policies and procedures. This assists young people to receive appropriate support to enable them to meet their educational potential.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Young people are encouraged to be actively involved in the planning of their care and the running of the home. Staff are well informed about young people's needs so that they are able to provide appropriate individualised care.

Young people's needs are assessed and recorded in individual placement plans to ensure that requirements and support are identified and addressed. Young people are allocated a key worker, who meets with each young person on a regular basis to discuss issues identified in the placement plan. This gives young people the opportunity to build a positive relationship with staff, which enables them to focus on their needs and their care plan. In addition, all staff are aware of the young people's needs so that they can assist in meeting them. Young people's placement plans are reviewed on a regular basis and staff updated as to any changes.

Staff demonstrate that they value the views and opinions of young people because they involve young people in all aspects of their care. For example, young people are supported to attend LAC review meetings with staff to discuss their needs. Young people are encouraged and supported to make decisions about their lives and to influence the way the home is run. All young people are assisted to communicate their views in discussion with their key carers and during Young People's meetings.

Young people are able to maintain good relationships with family and friends because staff support and help facilitate visits. Young people's contact arrangements are consistent with their agreed plans and young people confirmed that staff support them to stay in touch with significant people in a way that is agreed and with which they are happy.

A risk assessment is completed before any young person is admitted to the home. This assessment considers the impact of the placement on the young person. However, the assessment records kept in the home do not show that the impact on the young people already living there is fully taken into account.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Young people are appropriately supported to prepare for leaving the home whether this is to return home, to alternative carers or to move into independent living. Young people are provided with a plan agreed by the placing authorities which gives focus to preparing young people to appropriately leave the home.

Young people enjoy homely accommodation which is decorated, furnished and maintained to a satisfactory standard providing adequate facilities for their use. The design, layout and use of the accommodation allow young people to receive individual care and privacy. The manager is currently re-arranging the use of rooms to increase the opportunity for young people to use their leisure time constructively. All young people have single bedrooms where they keep their personal belongings and are able to exercise choice in personalising their own rooms. A programme of maintenance and repair is ongoing with adequate systems in place to recognise and address maintenance issues that require rectifying as a priority. Evidence demonstrates that the organisation continues to appropriately invest in the home.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The home is well managed and organised to enable young person to be the focus of the care provided by staff.

Young people, parents, staff and placing authorities have access to a Statement of Purpose and Young People's guide, which outlines the principles, practice and the services that they can expect from the home. The Statement of Purpose has been updated recently to reflect recent changes in staffing.

There is a clear staffing structure with clear lines of accountability in the home. The deputy manager was successfully appointed as manager in May 2009 and is currently undertaking registration with Ofsted. The home has clear deputising arrangements and there is a formal on-call system if additional support is needed.

Staff are well supported in their work with young people as they receive regular supervision and team meetings which discuss how the staff team meet the needs of young people to ensure consistency of provision. Staff are supported by senior members of staff who are sufficiently experienced and competent to lead the shift. Staffing is sufficient in number and competence to ensure that young people's needs are adequately addressed. There is a good mix of gender and background within the staff team to promote young people's identity and well-being. Staff training is effective and well coordinated to ensure that staff acquire necessary skills and maintain statutory competences. The number of staff achieving the National Vocational Qualification Level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People exceeds requirements.

The manager has developed a clear process to monitor the quality of care being provided by the home. Young people's feedback contributes to this process and helps to positively influence the operation of the home.

The home's records are of a good standard and provide a comprehensive record of young people's time at the home. This can assist with future placement planning. Young people's needs, development and progress are recorded to reflect their individuality.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The young people living at the home receive an individual service, based upon their identified need. All staff display a good knowledge of the young people they are working with, including their cultural background. Young people's individual histories and needs are assessed and recorded. Staff are committed in practice to promoting equality and reaffirming diversity through positive experiences.

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
13	ensure that at all times, at least one person on duty has a suitable first aid qualification (Regulation 20 2e)	13 October 2009
5	ensure the home is conducted so as to promote and make proper provision for the welfare of children accommodated there, with specific reference to undertaking an impact assessment as to the effect of the admission of any young person to the home on the existing group of residents (Regulation 11).	13 July 2009

Recommendations

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

- maintain an accurate written record of all medication administered within the home (NMS 13.2).