

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Julian Mason
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Date of last inspection	8 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 home operates a service for up to five male young people. The home provides a specialist service to young people who have a range of complex needs and who can present significant risks to themselves and others. Young people have exclusive access to a registered school that is also managed by the organisation. The home is located close to several town centres with public transport facilities and local amenities close by.

Summary

This announced, full integrated inspection took place over one day by education and social care inspectors. The inspection covered all of the children's homes key National Minimum Standards. This forms part of the annual inspection programme to examine the standard of care and services provided to young people. At the time of inspection, five young people were accommodated in the home and two young people participated in some of the inspection process.

The overall judgement for this service is outstanding. Each young person is receiving a focused level of care and support that successfully promotes their personal, social and educational development. The Registered Manager and staff team are conscientious and committed to managing the home in a way that best suits the group of young people accommodated. Young people are able to make meaningful contributions to the running of the home because their views and opinions are valued.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

No requirements were made at the last inspection.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Young people are receiving an outstanding service that is clearly focused on their emotional wellbeing and health needs. Staff actively engage young people in a range of health related topics that supports them to learn about their own health and fitness. There are very effective and well established routines in the home to ensure this happens frequently. In addition, young people's good health is supported by the provision of a varied and balanced range of foods. Young people's awareness around diet and exercise is excellent because staff are committed to a programme of education which fits in with the home's wider approaches to promoting a healthy lifestyle.

Young people are accessing regular, high quality therapeutic support that matches their needs. Communication systems in the home are strong, this ensures that key information is used and shared to shape the delivery of therapy. Young people benefit from these arrangements because they experience a service that is focused on their needs.

Young people's health and safety is effectively promoted through the home's policies and procedures for the safe storage and administration medication. Administration records

demonstrate that staff are following individual prescription instructions. Staff are able to respond to accidents and unforeseen medical needs because they have access to first aid boxes and have been trained in basic first aid skills. Young people's health and safety is also being evaluated by managers who monitor accidents and injuries that occur in the home.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Young people are clearly benefiting from a service that has an outstanding focus on safeguarding and protection matters. Young people feel very safe in the home. Operational policies, procedures and staff guidance are used effectively to promote everybody's safety and welfare. Young people are frequently and consistently engaged by staff in how to keep themselves and others safe. Young people benefit from living in a home where there are excellent arrangements in place to ensure staff are trained and well informed about effective safeguarding practices. Young people are fully protected because staff recognise and understand their role in child protection and that they know what action to take if there are concerns.

A key success of the home is the way in which staff are able to engage with young people about matters that are significant to their safety and protection. Important areas are covered that are part of the home's approach to managing risks and raising young people's awareness. For example, individual and group work sessions are regularly delivered covering a wide range of subject areas like personal safety, behaviour, relationships, bullying and offending. These sessions are evaluated and assessed to ensure they are relevant and meaningful to each young person's circumstances and needs.

Young people live in a home where bullying is not allowed and where any form of unwanted behaviour is challenged. Staff provide regular and specific feedback to young people about their behaviour with a clear focus on setting fair and reasonable boundaries. Young people understand what is expected of them and they are rewarded for good behaviour. Very few formal sanctions or physical interventions are used and the home's philosophy is carried out in practice in terms of its behaviour management policy. Staff focus on the positives, young people are given many chances to adjust and improve inappropriate behaviours, staff are patient and listen to young people. Young people view these factors as making the home's behaviour management approach very fair.

When sanctions and physical interventions are used, records for these events are completed. Incidents of restraint are reflected well in written documents which allows the Registered Manager to properly evaluate the necessity for a young person to be held. The few sanctions that have been given are not recorded in the same detail so events are not evaluated as well.

Young people's privacy and confidentiality is respected and the home has very good systems in place for managing complaints. Each young person's right to complain is supported by the staff team. In addition, young people have access to an independent advocate who's 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 are discouraged from being away from the home without permission and staff use effective reporting systems to help reduce the possible risks associated with this kind of behaviour. The Registered Manager ensures that no new member of staff starts work in the home until all the necessary vetting checks have been completed. These circumstances make an excellent contribution to the home's wider approaches to safeguarding and protection.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Each young person is receiving outstanding levels of support because the Registered Manager and staff team provide a service that is very flexible and responsive to individual needs. The home provides a positive culture of engagement and dialogue where young people's needs are well known and risks are managed effectively. Young people also benefit from a planned and coordinated approach to meeting their needs. This means that teachers, therapists, key workers and other significant professionals work consistently and to an agreed programme to help achieve positive development and progress. The home's records reflect the diverse and individualised needs of each young person. Staff operate in a non-discriminatory way and understand the importance of promoting social inclusion and the need to challenge any form of discrimination. Young people feel valued and supported.

Young people receive excellent support from staff to help them through their education. Arrangements are well established with supportive routines that help with consistent attendance. Education is viewed positively and staff know what they need to do for each young person to ensure the right help is provided. As a consequence of this, young people receive practical and emotional support to do well.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Each young person has a placement plan which is used alongside other information to ensure the home's staff are fully informed about individual needs. The available information is of a good quality and details the support required resulting from assessments of individual needs and risks. Young people are fully involved in care planning processes and have regular time with staff to talk about their progress and any problems. In addition, young people have their say in more formal reviews of their care which involves other professionals and family members where appropriate.

Young people are provided with the right support when they move-in or leave the home. Staff are sensitive and aware of the need to listen to young people. This approach fits with the home's wider operation in terms of consultation and listening to young people. Excellent arrangements are in place that allow young people to express themselves in range of different ways. The home's records show that staff respond positively and the home's day-to-day operation is influenced by what young people have to say.

Young people are fully supported to stay in touch with their families. Records demonstrated that contact arrangements for young people are clearly defined including any restrictions or limitations. Young people are benefiting from a service that places a high importance on the promotion of appropriate family contact. Staff understand the value and meaning to young people of these arrangements and work hard to ensure contact is positive. Where this is not the case, staff proved excellent emotional support to try and counter difficult or upsetting experiences.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Young people are provided with a safe and comfortable home which is domestic in style and layout. The location of the property provides young people with a degree of privacy because it is set back from the main road and has its own front and rear gardens. The accommodation is maintained to a good standard and it is kept clean and tidy. Some recent decoration has improved the internal environment and new furnishings have added to young people's comfort. Young people are provided with individual bedrooms which are suitably maintained and personalised to their own tastes. Young people have access to sufficient levels of communal space which gives them choices regarding their recreational and leisure time. The home provides young people with sufficient bath, shower and toilet facilities with appropriate locks to ensure their privacy is maintained. Suitable laundry facilities are also provided to meet the needs of the home.

Young people are supported to develop their life and independent skills during their stay at the home. Staff use the home's existing domestic routines and arrangements to engage young people in areas that they need to learn about. Young people benefit from a staff approach that is practical and realistic and which incorporates learning through the day-to-day domestic circumstances of the home.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Young people live in a well managed home where staff are supported to work effectively in achieving outcomes outlined in individual plans of care. Information about the home's operation is clearly reflected in the statement of purpose. The young person's guide also provides the right information in a readable format that outlines what can be expected from the home.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. Young people are cared for by staff who belong to a diverse care team. Staff knowledge and awareness about each young person's needs is excellent. This is because there is a comprehensive range of information available to ensure each plan of care is individualised and unique. In addition, young people are provided with a caring and supportive environment where differences are understood and where everyone is treated fairly and with equal concern.

The home's operation is supported by staffing arrangements that are organised to meet young people's needs and to ensure there is continuity of care. Close attention is paid to reducing the impact staff shortages have on the home. This arrangement benefits young people because they are always cared for by staff who are familiar to them. Staff receive excellent day-to-day support from their peers as well as from managers. There are clear lines of accountability between shift teams and successful communication systems ensure that young people's needs are met and risks are managed effectively. Staff have access to a range of good quality training that is regularly updated. In addition, managers appraise staff performance every year and the team's development is further enhanced by frequent training sessions that relate to the specialist nature of the service. The majority of care staff hold the National Vocational Qualification, Level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People with some staff completing an additional Level 3 qualification in learning support.

The service has an annual cycle of quality assurance activities that produces a detailed range of information about the home's operation. This includes regular monitoring visits from an organisational representative as well as internal audits across the range of services being delivered. The Registered Manager is well informed about successes as well as areas that the

home needs to develop or strengthen. For instance, although the delivery of individual workshops is well established this is an area that has been identified for improvement.

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
22	ensure all records of sanctions include a full evaluation of their effectiveness (Regulation 17).	30 June 2009

Recommendations

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