

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	25 June 2009
Inspector	Trevor Hall
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	11 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

This children's home is split on two sites, the main house accommodating three young people whilst its satellite unit can accommodate one additional young person, giving a total for the registration of four young people aged between eight and 17 years of age.

Both the main house and the satellite are located in a small village near the outskirts of a small market town. Accommodation is provided on a domestic scale in well-appointed detached family houses affording the young people individual bedrooms and ample communal space.

Both houses enjoy easy access to a range of recreational, social and sporting activities and there are regular bus services available within the nearby market town, enabling the young people, where appropriate, to develop their self-reliance and independency skills.

Summary

The inspection was an unannounced full inspection, the home's last full inspection, was undertaken on 09 July 2008, when no actions and two recommendation were raised, the home on this occasion was judged to be good. A further interim inspection took place on 11 December 2008 when one recommendation was raised and the home was again judged to be good. This inspection took place over two days and included visits to both the main house and its satellite unit. The home's Registered Manager was available throughout this visit, as were several staff members for various times during the inspection. Both the main home's current residents were present at various times during the inspection, both took a full and active part, willingly discussing their opinions of the care they receive. The inspection looked at all key standards and several non-key standards and raised no new actions or recommendations. This home is very well managed because young people benefit from living in an environment that is centred on meeting their individual needs. Young people living here receive good individual support and their education and health is encouraged and appropriately promoted. Whilst the home is judged to be outstanding in several areas, the overall judgement for the home on this inspection is good.

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 home's last inspection, the regime of regular staff supervision has been returned to the frequencies and durations indicated in the National Minimum Standards (NMS). All staff that are still undertaking their probationary employment period are receiving the enhance frequencies indicated within the NMS.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people, both in the main house and the satellite unit are provided with the necessary support and guidance to ensure their good health and wellbeing is maintained. Young people benefit from comprehensive support which encourages them to develop a positive approach to diet and how to improve their health. A range of varied meals are available and young people can contribute their preferences on a weekly basis. Young people were enthusiastic about the

food available, they commented that, 'we eat well, there is lots of choice and nobody makes you eat what you do not like'. Young people are supported to help with shopping, preparing meals and cooking. Meals are a social occasion. Cultural and religious needs are catered for as necessary and difference is celebrated.

Young people have their good health promoted and they live in a healthy environment. Appropriate support from medical professionals is provided and a high level of liaison takes place between staff and these professionals to ensure young people's health needs are fully met. Most staff have up-to-date training in basic first aid, administration of medication and food hygiene. The home has appropriate consents in place that allow staff to give permission for emergency treatment if needed. A healthy and active lifestyle is promoted and young people are encouraged to improve their physical health and develop social skills through hobbies and activities. Young people, where appropriate, benefit from a comprehensive therapeutic programme which is tailored to meet their individual and often complex emotional needs. Young people confirmed that staff support them with medical appointments and that health issues are dealt with promptly.

Young people's welfare is safeguarded by robust policies and procedures for administering medication. Medication is securely stored and regular medication checks are undertaken. Records accurately reflect medication stored in the home.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Young people's privacy is respected and information is confidentially handled. Staff have clear guidance about entering young people's bedrooms which are regarded as their private space. Young people confirmed that staff knock on bedroom doors before entering and that their privacy is ensured. Young people's records are securely stored in the office and staff receive training relating to privacy and confidentiality as part of their induction.

Young people are provided with a home that is safe. There is a good awareness of young people's needs and the home's records reflect important information that is used to continually assess any risks.

Young people are aware of the complaints procedure and feel confident that complaints will be addressed effectively. The young people's guide to the home gives comprehensive information about who to contact in external organisations if they wish to complain to them. A complaint from a young person was fully investigated with a written response provided for the complainant who was satisfied with the outcome.

Young people are protected from bullying by the vigilance of staff who are guided by clear policies and robust training. Young people did not identify bullying as a problem at the time of the visit but they felt that it would be dealt with by staff effectively should it occur. New staff are trained in safeguarding procedures during induction and staff demonstrated a thorough understanding of how to respond to allegations or disclosures or abuse. Young people said they feel safe at the home. Young people who abscond are protected by robust protocols in place. Where absconding occurs staff follow appropriate reporting procedures and young people are supported to return to the home.

Young people benefit from a structured routine which supports them to develop socially acceptable behaviour. Clear expectations of behaviour are outlined during the admission process. Staff are skilled at dealing with challenging behaviours and their training enables them to effectively divert young people towards alternative ways of responding. Physical intervention is used only as a last resort. There has been some challenging behaviour at this home since the last visit and staff feel they have been effectively trained and supported to appropriately respond to this. Young people are offered plenty of individual opportunity to reflect on aspects of their behaviour which can be improved and identify for themselves strategies to make positive changes. Sanctions are used sparingly. Young people feel they are treated fairly. Staff use incentives and rewards to support young people to achieve their goals.

Young people benefit from effective risk management overall. Staff are aware of particular triggers and situations where risks may occur. Regular fire and other safety checks are conducted by staff. Young people are fully aware of the fire procedure and participate in fire drills.

Staff personnel files were not available on the inspection date, as they are held centrally at the parents organisation's Head office. These files were, however, examined on 23 June 2009. The owning organisation has clearly defined recruitment process which protects young people by ensuring that all of the NMS requirements are met, prior to any staff member being deployed into any of their homes. A written record of this process is maintained for inspection and is followed in respect of all staff currently employed.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people receive good individual support that is consistent with their needs. Key workers are responsible for ensuring everyday requirements are being met and that social workers and other professionals are kept informed about progress and developments. Staff are able to focus on the different needs of each young person because there are individual plans of care that detail the aims of each placement and the actions associated with successful outcomes. Staff understand the importance of acknowledging young people's differences so that needs relating to areas such as ethnicity, religion, gender and disability can be identified and met, placement plans identify any religious ethnic or cultural needs. Staff are fully aware of known and potential risks because this information is communicated effectively.

Staff actively promote the social inclusion of young people in the home's daily routines and events. Young people are supported to access and attend various community based activities and venues according to their own choices and preferences. Staff are keenly supporting young people to develop their own interests and hobbies because significant attention is being paid to this area of personal development and growth. Young people are supported to access specialist external services to ensure all their identified needs are being met. The Registered Manager reviews and updates assessments so staff are informed about what they can do to reduce potential risks to young people.

Staff are successfully supporting young people to attend their school placements. Educational arrangements and routines are based on individual needs and circumstances. Staff are able to be flexible in their support to young people from those who are studying for their GCSE's to young people who are trying to re-establish a pattern of school or college attendance. Staff are encouraging and positive about education which helps to build young people's confidence. Young people living in this home either attend local colleges, mainstream education or the

organisations own education facility. Not every young person currently covered by this registration has a properly constituted Personal Education Plan (PEP) and an agreed education placement, however, clear evidence exists that demonstrates that the home has made every effort to mitigate against the damaging effects of this delay. The home supports and facilitates young people in accessing appropriate advocacy services and external support system where it is felt that a young person has a legitimate complaint, either against their placing authority or the home itself.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Young people are fully supported to make a positive contribution to their placement and future plans whilst living at these homes. Staff demonstrate that they value the views and opinions of young people. They are involved in all aspects of their care and are given every opportunity to contribute to their own care planning and arrangements. Staff actively and formally seek the views of young people at an individual and group level and respond in a way that values their opinions.

Young people benefit from comprehensive assessments of their health, social, emotional and behavioural needs. Before admission young people are visited by staff and provided with extensive information about the home and the placement. Young people's care and health plans clearly identify aims and goals for the placement. Progress is monitored with young people on a daily basis. Staff write monthly reports which are shared with the young people and these inform more comprehensive reports for the statutory review meetings. Young people are supported to prepare for and attend their reviews.

Close attention is paid to ensuring that the home's records fully represent young people's current needs. Young people are involved in their care planning and have regular opportunities to discuss their needs with staff. Staff are successful at engaging with young people and are focused on achieving the stated aims and objectives of individual plans. The Registered Manager is proactive with young people's placing social workers and is robust in identifying shortfalls in service provision which the placing authority is responsible for.

Young people's records demonstrate that staff are flexible and innovative in their approaches to managing young people's behaviours and in promoting positive outcomes. Case files confirm that the young people's progress is reviewed within the statutory time periods. Staff attend regular in-house meetings to record and update each young person's general progress during the interim period. Monthly reports are completed by key workers and the home prepares chronological reports to keep placing authorities informed. Placement plans include summarised health and education plan details.

Young people are supported to maintain contact with families and friends where appropriate. Family members are encouraged to visit the home. Family contact is risk assessed and robust arrangements clearly recorded. Staff will facilitate contact with young people's families by providing transport where required.

Young people are given good support when they arrive and leave the home and these routines are based around individual needs and circumstances. Staff understand that moving home can be very difficult for some young people and this awareness is used to provide support and

reassurance in these circumstances. Young people are encouraged to bring their own possessions into the home so they can personalise their own bedrooms.

Staff use a range of ways to consult with young people in the home. Young people have the opportunity to express their views and opinions in young people's meetings as well as through individual sessions with their key worker. Young people regularly meet with the Registered Manager as part of the consultation processes to ensure the head of the home is directly informed about their views and opinions. Staff are good at consulting with young people about the routines and daily living arrangements of the home. Young people state that staff are good at listening and taking on board their feedback. Staff are active in ensuring that young people are aware that they can speak to independent agencies and professionals outside of the home.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Young people receive adequate allowances to cover personal requisites and clothing and are well informed about their entitlements because the home has good arrangements and systems in place to manage allowances, personal needs and pocket money.

Young people living in home's covered by this registration benefit from environments that are spacious and comfortable. Both homes are subject to an ongoing process of redecoration and refurbishment with repairs and maintenance being addressed in order of importance. Staff work to a schedule of domestic routines to ensure the home is clean and tidy. Young people are able to personalise their bedrooms and they are satisfied with the accommodation provided.

Young people are helped to plan for independence and staff encourage and support them to learn life skills they will need when they leave the home. Staff provide lots of practical opportunities for young people so they experience routines that relate to being responsible and independent. The home sometimes does this in the absence of an agreed local authority plan but this is not treated as a barrier to providing young people with the help they need.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Both the homes covered by this registration are outstandingly well managed which contributes significantly to the positive impact on the care and support young people receive. The Registered Manager provides good day-to-day support to individual shifts and as a result they are well informed about daily routines, events and the progress of each young person.

Staff know and understand the stated aims and objectives of the service which is consistent with the home's Statement of Purpose. The commitment from staff is a strength of these homes and most absences are covered from the existing team, or cover staff, who are already known by the young people to ensure their continuity of care. Young people are well informed about what the homes do because staff take time to explain and describe their services and how they can be influenced to suit individual needs.

Both the homes covered by this registration provide a good range of information about their stated aims and purpose. Young people are given a handbook that is in an appropriate format to help them learn about what the homes provide. The number of staff on duty is always enough to meet the needs of young people which supports their welfare and protection. The organisation

that runs these homes has an induction, core training programme and support system in place that helps to provide staff with the necessary skills and knowledge to support and care for young people.

There is first class leadership and management support because the Registered Manager is dedicated, skilled and experienced and provides strong and effective leadership to the staff team and young people. The Registered Manager is actively involved in the day-to-day operation of both homes and has clear expectations that the staff team will achieve the best possible outcomes for all young people in their care. Young people are receiving excellent support because all of the staff team are qualified and suitably experienced. Most of the staff are qualified to National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People.

Good emphasis is given to staff training and development which is focused on areas relating to young people's needs. Staff receive regular one-to-one supervision from the home's manager, this enables staff to appropriately share problems and enables the home's manager to promote consistency. Good management systems are in place to share information between different shift teams. Young people are being nurtured and comprehensively supported because their needs are being met and risks are managed in a preventative way.

Young people are provided with excellent levels of supervision and support because staff manage their time effectively and are deployed in a way that meets their needs. The staff rotas are flexible to meet the changing needs and circumstances of young people. There are clear and accountable systems in place for staff to deputise in the absence of the manager.

Good systems are in place to monitor the service and daily lives of young people currently living in both of the homes covered by this registration. The organisation has established a pattern of management monitoring and reporting procedures, which is effectively implemented by the home's Registered Manager. The organisation conducts monthly review meetings to look at welfare issues within their homes. Findings are reported back to the company. Records seen demonstrate that the content of these reports reflect an accurate picture of life for young people resident here. These reports are available to staff.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. All of the home's recording systems take account of potential needs in relation to a young person's diversity such as identity, race, culture and religion. The home provides an environment where the value of equality and diversity is understood, promoted and celebrated.

The Registered Manager is actively monitoring and evaluating the practice standards of staff and the quality of services being provided. Managers take an active role in the evaluation of the service and the impact each home is having on the care of young people. The manager has access to feedback from placing authorities, parents and young people. Areas for improvement are quickly identified or anticipated and positive steps are agreed and implemented to overcome any difficulties and to carefully plan the development of the service.

Young people's care files are very well organised to include all of the information detailed in Schedule 3 of the Children's Homes Regulations 2001. Confidential or third party information is kept in a separate section of the care file to enable the home to respond, in a timely manner, to any request made by a young person to read their care file.

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
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Recommendations

There are no recommendations.