

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	28 January 2010
Inspector	Jackie Callaghan
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Date of last inspection	27 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 is a two bedded children's home providing services for children in crisis between 10 and 18 years of age. The Statement of Purpose for the home indicates that it offers 'intensive and focused support' to children who may have been previously referred to secure accommodation. The home is rurally located on the outskirts of a small village. The home is in a remote location so staff transport is a key feature of how young people access community facilities and services.

Accommodation is provided in a large farmhouse-style home affording young people individual bedrooms and ample communal space. Education is provided on site by a tutor. Life and social skills development are encouraged and supported by care staff in the home. There are currently two young people living at the home who contributed to this report.

Summary

This full visit is part of an integrated single inspection aligned with the education inspection. The visit concentrated on the key national minimum standards. The overall judgement in this report is based on the standards inspected within the relevant Every Child Matters outcome groups.

The overall quality rating for this setting is good. Young people continue to receive good quality care, guidance and support. They are making sustained progress, especially in relation to managing their own challenging behaviours. Young people are happy and they show trust with the adults around them. Two recommendations have been raised as a result of this inspection, in the being healthy and staying safe outcome groups. The home had proactively made the necessary improvements before this inspection had finished. They now intend to fully embed these improvements into their everyday practice.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, the home was asked to ensure all staff receive supervision in line with national minimum standards. Staff, including the Registered Manager have regular recorded supervision for at least one and a half hours. This means that young people are supported by staff whose practice is continually being developed.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Menus take into account the nutritional requirements of young people in accordance with national guidelines. For example, five portions of fruit and vegetables are offered and healthy snacks are always available. Any religious or cultural needs are incorporated into menus which are flexible and appropriate to personal choice and preferences.

Young people live in a healthy environment where their health and intimate care needs are identified and well promoted. Young people's health needs are systematically recorded within

their individual health plan. Staff's practice is to comprehensive address all young people's social, medical and health related needs.

Staff are committed to promoting a healthy lifestyle and work closely with health professionals. However, the administration of controlled drugs at the beginning of the inspection did not fully meet recommended pharmaceutical guidance. A controlled drugs register is now used as an audit tool by detailing the actual countdown of medication each time the tablets are given, and a second internal medication cabinet now stores these medicines appropriately. This demonstrates that the home is proactive about ensuring that young people's welfare is fully safeguarded.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Staff maintain an appropriate balance between adequately supervising young people and respecting their wish for privacy at all times. There is an effective system in place to record any concerns made known by young people. The Registered Manager monitors the complaints record to make sure that young people's rights and entitlements are upheld and that the process is effective.

Young people are well protected by the home's systems, policies and staff practice. This provides a safe and very secure environment that young people enjoy. Staff are vigilant and mindful of the impact bullying can have on young people and explore this subject base directly with young people to better develop their understanding. Staff ensure that the whereabouts of young people is consistently monitored in order to keep them safe. Close supervision and support is a prominent feature of the way in which the home manages the risks and vulnerabilities of each young person. As a result, incidents of young people leaving the home without permission are decreasing.

Young people's behaviour and need is often expressed through crisis-driven displays of negative behaviour. The home manages this risk through high levels of staffing and the promotion of praise. Staff view young people positively and there is a very friendly, happy atmosphere in the home. The management of health and safety at the home is good which helps to protect young people and staff from the risk of harm or injury. At the beginning of the inspection the home had not undertaken a night-time fire evacuation for some considerable time. This was undertaken before the inspection finished.

There are clear procedures for the recruitment of staff which are supported by practices that are robust. As a result, young people's welfare is actively safeguarded.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Staff provide young people with a nurturing and supportive environment. This includes structure and stability as staff actively demonstrate an appropriate awareness of individual young people's needs. Staff work unwaveringly to enable young people to reach their full potential and to get the best out of life.

The home provides a young-person-centred approach to all aspects of the service's operation. There is a real strength in the close, constructive and professional relationships which exist

between education and care staff. Young people are successfully supported to learn about and respect different lifestyles and cultures. One young person commented that, 'Staff help me understand other people's needs.' Consequently, young people have a positive awareness of gender and diversity both within the home and the wider community.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Each young person has an individual care plan and an allocated designated key worker. The care plan evaluates all aspects of daily living including a profile of their identity. Staff provide encouragement and practical support resulting in positive outcomes for young people.

Young people's reviews are taking place and their progress is being monitored. This includes the statutory reviews which are within the specified timeframes. These meetings are independently chaired and young people are encouraged to attend. Young people are able to maintain appropriate contact. Staff recognise the long term benefits of positive contact being maintained to the overall outcomes for young people.

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 bedrooms.

Staff successfully work in partnership with young people to ensure that their views, wishes and feelings are taken into account throughout the care planning process. The young people are actively encouraged to make suggestions regarding the service. They do this in one-to-one sessions with their key worker or through young people's meetings.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is satisfactory.

Young people receive care which helps them prepare for adulthood. They are always encouraged to take the lead in developing their care and pathway plans. Young people are given good opportunities to learn new skills and try out new activities. This includes accessing community activities and resources which help to increase young people's self esteem. As a result, young people are making good progress and increasing their self confidence as they learn to integrate with their peers and members of the public.

Young people reside and learn in a fully inclusive environment which inspires them to respect and value their own needs and the differing needs of others. They enjoy homely accommodation which is decorated, furnished and maintained to a satisfactory standard.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

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 the home and most absences are covered from the existing team, or sessional staff. These additional staff members are known to the young people and this ensures their continuity of care.

The number of staff on duty is always enough to meet the needs of young people, which supports their welfare and protection. The staff induction, core training programme and support systems in place provide staff with the necessary skills and knowledge to support and care for young people. The overwhelming majority of staff are qualified to National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People.

The home's management team provide appropriate direction and leadership which results in a motivated and committed staff team. Staff feel valued and one staff member comments that, 'I feel well supported and really enjoy working here.' All staff receive regular supervision. There are clear and accountable systems in place for staff to deputise in the absence of the manager.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Young people benefit from living in a home where staff are committed to providing individualised care and support. Staff fully understand the need to promote social inclusion and to challenge any form of discrimination.

The Registered Manager actively monitors and evaluates the practice standards of staff and the quality of services being provided. Young people's information, required by law in records, is confidentially maintained. Young people's development and progress are recorded to reflect and celebrate their individuality.

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 Children's 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

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

- develop the storage and administration of controlled drugs so they are kept securely and administered in line with written guidance (NMS 13.10)
- ensure fire drill evacuations are held at night. (NMS 26.8).