

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Julian Parker
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Date of last inspection	28 January 2010
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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.

Summary

This was an unannounced interim inspection. The visit concentrated on the Every Child Matters outcome areas for being healthy, staying safe and organisation and followed up on the previous key inspection where recommendations were made. At the time of this visit two young people were living at the home, one of whom chose to contribute to the inspection process.

The overall quality rating for this setting is good. Young people receive good quality care, guidance and support. They are making sustained progress, especially in relation to managing their own challenging behaviours. The home is effectively managed and staff are well supported in their care of young people.

One recommendations has been raised as a result of this inspection concerning the improved recording of unauthorised absence.

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 improve the way in which medication was stored and to ensure that young people practised a building evacuation at night in case of fire. Both of these matters have been fully addressed which helps to confirm that young people are kept safe from different types of risk.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The home provides young people with varied meals that take account of their individual preference whilst emphasising healthy eating and the importance of a balanced diet. Staff always provide opportunities for young people to help plan and prepare meals and this practical involvement has helped develop their understanding and competence. Young people are introduced to self help skills including meal preparation as part of their daily routine. Menu planning is inclusive offering a diverse range of dishes including those from different cultures.

The health needs of young people are assessed prior to and during their placement at the home to ensure that they can be properly provided for. Young people have comprehensive health

plans and discrete records that indicate how relevant guidance, informed advice and practical support is offered and provided while taking into account each young person's age and level of understanding.

Young people are kept healthy by having regular access to a range of external services and professionals to help them with any specific emotional, social or medical needs. They are practically supported when they are unwell by staff who arrange general practitioner appointments and preventive routines such as optical and dental checks. They are encouraged to keep fit by accessing local recreational facilities.

Young people's health and welfare is promoted by the registered provider's policies, procedures, guidance and staff training. Staff receive training in the safe handling and administration of medication and first aid. Medicine is stored securely in lockable cabinets and accurately recorded when dispensed following national guidance. Good arrangements are in place for the treatment and recording of any accidents.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The home places importance on its duty for providing a safe, protective and homely environment for young people. Their right to privacy is practically addressed by staff ensuring high levels of administrative confidentiality, evidenced by young people being provided with their own bedrooms, bathing and WC facilities, by the protection of personal information and careful communication with parents and other professionals by staff.

The safeguarding of young people is well promoted by the registered provider's policies and procedures. These comply with regulatory requirements and good practice in areas of child protection that include countering bullying, managing behaviour effectively and dealing with the impact of unauthorised absence. The home uses statutory reporting systems to notify relevant authorities about significant events such as unauthorised absences. The format for recording such absences requires some minor amendment to confirm that young people have access to a person independent of the home on return.

Staff safeguard young people by accessing the guidance provided by the Local Safeguarding Children Board which includes how to recognise signs of abuse. Ongoing staff development and training is provided to ensure that staff are knowledgeable and competent to look after young people.

Staff take seriously all concerns or complaints young people may have. The complaint policy and contacts for children's advocates are simply summarised in the young persons' guide produced by the home. The Registered Manager monitors the complaints record to make sure that young people's rights and entitlements are upheld and that the process is responsive.

Staff base their management of behaviour on the active encouragement of acceptable behaviour and the provision of staffing levels adequate to safely meet the specific needs of young people. Staff are explicit with young people about what behavioural expectations are and by involving them in their own care planning. Young people are treated with respect and encouraged to take responsibility for their actions. Staff receive training in behaviour management that includes the safe and minimal application of physical restraint. Training is refreshed annually and any recorded incidents are evaluated by the home's manager. The views and opinions of young

people are always enlisted following incidents to improve the effectiveness of the process and importantly encourage young people to consider and amend their own behaviour.

The home assesses potential dangers to the care of young people by acting upon the range of risk assessments that relate to safety in the home and wider community. These include the risk from fire and hazards, from young people's behaviour and from participation in recreational outdoor activities. Risk assessments are reviewed regularly to take into account changes to routine, environment, patterns of behaviour and the home's staffing and occupancy levels.

The home has effective systems for monitoring all visitors. No stranger is allowed access with the resident young people and all visitors to the home are supervised by staff. 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 not judged.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is not judged.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is not judged.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The Statement of Purpose for the home includes all information required by Schedule 1 of the Children's Home Regulations, including details of the deployed staffing complement. Young people receive useful details about the home from the young person's guide.

Young people are looked after by a competent well motivated staff team who are thoroughly supported by the Registered Manager. Considerable importance is placed on regular staff supervision and team meetings to ensure the quality and consistency of the day-to-day care being provided. Staff develop their practice by reference to the registered providers policies, operating procedures and guidance which is enhanced by their access to personal development and training opportunities. Most staff have a vocational qualification confirming their ability.

The home has well established internal and independent quality monitoring systems that effectively evaluate all aspects of the care being offered. These systems confirm competent home management that safeguards the welfare, interests and differing needs of the young people living there. A development plan confirms the registered person's commitment by outlining the home's future objectives and aspirations.

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 promotion of positive images and aspects of other cultures is evident throughout the home.

Young people's individual case files are stored and arranged in a manner that are readily accessible to staff while maintaining confidentiality. Young people are made aware of the contents of their files and know that they can request access to them should they wish to.

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):

- record effectively how the home ensures that the young person has opportunity to talk with a person independent of the home on return from an unauthorised absence. (NMS 19.4)