

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Bill Drumm
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Date of last inspection	26 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 provides medium to long term accommodation to four young people of either sex, between the ages of 11 and 17 years.

The home is approximately three miles from the city centre. It is close to schools, local and community facilities and public transport routes.

The young people have their own single bedroom and access to a lounge, dining room and kitchen. To the rear of the building there is a yard with some outdoor play equipment and a barbecue.

Three young people were living at the home at the time of the inspection, one of whom contributed to the inspection process.

Summary

This was an unannounced key inspection of the home. All of the outcome areas for young people were inspected. The outcome areas for being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution, economic well being and organisation were found to be good. Overall this is a good service. Young people are encouraged to develop adult responsibilities and to take responsibility for their own actions. In addition, young people are actively supported and encouraged to attend or take part in education and training.

Each young person does not have an up to date healthcare plan. The management and administration of medication within the home was inspected and a number of discrepancies were noted. In addition, copies of all essential documentation relating to the placement of each young person were not in place. Members of staff have all undertaken training in mandatory areas. However, mandatory training is not up dated at regular intervals. The home is well decorated and tidy although the front of the building has loose electrical cables hanging from it.

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 last inspection the manager of the home has introduced a system, which helps to ensure that key workers actively pursue the pathway plans for any young people who are old enough to have them.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people living at the home enjoy a healthy and well-balanced diet and healthy eating is promoted. Members of staff ensure young people have easy access to fresh fruit and vegetables. Nutritious meals are provided and young people participate in the planning of menus. One young person spoken to at the time of the inspection said, 'I don't really help make meals, I'm not old enough, but I can make hot drinks and snacks if I want'. The home ensures that young people living there are able to follow the diet of their choice. The home also ensures that young

people are able to sample food from different countries and cultures. Young people are encouraged to take exercise and to stay healthy.

The healthcare needs of young people are promoted. However, a copy of each young person's health care plan was not available at the time of the inspection. Young people living at the home have their health care needs identified. Young people are supported and encouraged to attend meetings and appointments with healthcare professionals. Young people are registered with a local doctor, dentist and optician. Members of staff encourage and support young people to attend all relevant appointments. One member of staff spoken to at the time of the inspection said, 'we get specialist training when we need it, we once looked after someone who was diabetic and the nurse came to talk to us about the young person's condition and how to look after them properly'.

Young people living at the home are not fully protected by the home's medication administration systems. Policies and procedures relating to the safe handling and administration of medication are in place. All members of staff have undertaken training in the safe handling and administration of medication. An audit of the home's administration records was undertaken during the inspection and a small number of discrepancies were noted. In addition, the home does not have a specific controlled drugs register for recording the administration of controlled drugs. At the time of the inspection no young people living at the home were prescribed controlled drugs.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Young people living at the home are treated with dignity and respect. Members of staff are pleasant and friendly towards the young people living at the home. There are sufficient bathrooms and toilets to meet the needs of the young people living at the home. Only members of staff working at the home can gain access to toilets and bathrooms from the outside in an emergency. Each young person has their own bedroom. Young people are encouraged to personalise their bedrooms in a style of their own choice and to keep the rooms clean and tidy. The home has policies and procedures in place which explain what action members of staff should take when it is necessary to search a young person's bedroom. The room search records comply with national minimum standards. Personal information relating to each young person is stored securely to prevent unauthorised access. Young people are able to make personal telephone calls in private.

There are policies and procedures in place for dealing with complaints in an effective and timely manner. There have been two complaints made since the last inspection. Written records examined at the time of the inspection show that both complaints were thoroughly investigated, and the young person was satisfied with the outcome of the complaint investigation. Young people are offered the opportunity to talk to somebody independent from the home if they feel their complaints or concerns are not being listened to. The young people's guide provides information to young people about the complaints process. Young people were observed at the time of the inspection to speak freely with all members of staff and to make their needs known. One young person spoken to at the time of the inspection said, 'I can talk to anyone if I want to'.

Young people living at the home are protected from exploitation and abuse. A copy of the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures are available in the home. There has been no

child protection referrals made since the last inspection. The home also has its own child protection guidance. All members of staff working at the home, including domestic staff, have undertaken training in child protection.

Young people are protected from being targeted by bullies. The home has policies and procedures in place with regard to countering bullying and there have been no recorded incidents of bullying since the last inspection. The young people's guide to the home includes information for young people about what action they should take if they feel they are being targeted by bullies. One member of staff spoken to at the time of the inspection said, 'key workers regularly talk to the young people in private. They're encouraged to talk openly and to let staff know if they feel as though they're being bullied'.

The home has policies and procedures in place with regard to what action members of staff should take if a young person is absent without authority. Procedures comply with national minimum standards. There have been a number of occasions since the last inspection when a young person has been absent without authority. However, members of staff actively encourage young people not to run away from the home or to be absent without authority and to keep themselves safe.

The home has policies and procedures in place relating to the safe holding or restraint of young people, and members of staff have received appropriate training. Restraint records are retained within a separate bound and numbered book used specifically for that purpose. The manager and staff make every effort to promote socially acceptable behaviour by offering support and encouragement to young people. The home also has policies and procedures in place relating to the sanctions that can be used to help young people improve their behaviour.

Young people are protected from fire and other hazards within the home. There are good systems in place to ensure that young people, members of staff and visitors to the home are kept safe and free from hazards. Fire drills are carried out at regular intervals and includes those undertaken at night. The home's insurance certificate clearly states that the home has current public and employee liability insurance up to a minimum value.

The home has a stable, staff team and there are good recruitment and selection processes in place. Safety checks are carried out to ensure the suitability of each applicant. Each member of staff has provided references from previous employers or those that know them. Visitors to the home are asked to clearly identify themselves on their arrival and to sign the visitors book.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The progress of each young person is monitored. Young people living at the home receive individual help and support when they need it or when they request it. Each young person has their own key worker. Meetings between key workers and young people take place at regular intervals. One young person spoken with at the time of the inspection said, 'we have key workers but you can talk to anyone if you want'.

All the young people living at the home are encouraged and supported to attend school or training. Where this is not possible, young people are encouraged to undertake educational activities within the home. Young people living at the home are actively encouraged and supported to develop their own hobbies and interests. One young person spoken with at the

time of the inspection said, 'I like playing rugby, there's a club just down the road and I think I'd like to go there'.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Not all essential paperwork relating to the placement of each young person was present at the home at the time of the inspection. Evidence was available to show that the manager had requested this a number of times from the responsible social worker. Members of staff undertake individual risk assessments using the information available to them and devise individual care plans following admissions.

The needs of young people living at the home are regularly reviewed. The manager and members of staff regularly attend review meetings with partner agencies, changing needs are highlighted and appropriate actions are taken.

Where appropriate, young people are supported and encouraged to maintain regular contact with their friends and families.

The admission procedure for the home includes, where appropriate and where possible, arrangements for the young people to visit before a placement is agreed. Members of staff try to make young people feel welcome and to understand what it will be like to live there.

Young people are encouraged and supported to make decisions about their lives and to influence how the home is run. Young people are encouraged to raise issues which affect their lives. Meetings between young people and members of staff take place at regular intervals.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Members of staff encourage young people to take responsibility for their actions. Young people are encouraged to participate in all activities within the home and to develop independence skills. No young people living at the home have formal pathway plans, as they are not old enough.

Young people enjoy homely accommodation that is decorated and furnished to a high standard. Members of staff help to maintain the building and to keep it clean and tidy. Young people living at the home are encouraged to personalise their bedrooms and they are encouraged to keep their home clean and tidy. However, the external appearance of the home could be improved. There are a number of loose electrical wires hanging loose at the front of the building.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Members of staff support and enable young people to participate in community based activities on an equal basis and to develop their own identity. The statement of purpose accurately describes what young people can expect from living at the home.

Young people are looked after by members of staff who are supported and properly managed. All members of staff receive regular, formal supervision. The manager also makes herself

available to talk with members of staff should they need to do so. Staff meetings are held at regular intervals. One member of staff spoken to at the time of the inspection said, 'I feel well supported, I get supervision regularly and if I feel I need more then I can just ask for it'.

Young people receive the care and services they need from competent staff. All members of staff are trained to a minimum National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People or are registered onto that particular course of study. There are clear arrangements in place for members of staff to deputise in the absence of the manager.

Members of staff are sufficient in number, experience and qualification to meet the needs of the young people living at the home. The home's rotas ensure that, where possible, there is a mix of both male and female staff on duty. Staff sickness and holidays are covered by existing staff members being flexible in their work patterns. Consistency of care is provided to young people.

Young people are looked after by staff who are trained and competent to meet their needs. A record of all training received by members of staff is maintained within the home. Most mandatory training is updated at regular intervals, however, some staff training has not been kept up-to-date.

The care of young people living at the home is monitored regularly. A system is in place, to ensure performance is monitored and any patterns or issues requiring action are highlighted.

The needs of young people are recorded, to reflect their individuality and daily records are maintained. Information relating to the care that young people receive is stored securely. Young people and their parents are able to access this information within the home if they request it.

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

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

- ensure that each young person has a clear and up to date health plan (NMS 12.2)
- review the home's policies and procedures for the safe handling and administration of medication (NMS 13)
- ensure that all essential documentation relating to the placement of young people at the home is received at the time of the young person's admission to the home (NMS 2)
- improve the external appearance at the front of the home (NMS 24)
- consider introducing a formal schedule of refresher training within the home to ensure that the knowledge and skills of members of staff remain up to date and relevant. (NMS 31)