

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	26 April 2010
Inspector	Martha Nethaway
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	24 September 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

This home is registered to accommodate up to four young people of either gender from 14 to under 18 years of age. The majority of the young people participated in the inspection visit. The service is owned by a private company. The home is a semi-detached property situated in a residential suburb.

The purpose of the home is to offer young people a service that provides semi-independent living in a supported environment. Young people are supported to gradually develop sufficient practical independent living skills and emotional maturity to move on to a more independent setting.

Summary

This inspection was a full unannounced visit. The outcome groups relating to being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, positive contribution, economic well-being and organisation were assessed.

The overall quality rating is good. Young people's life skills and resources helps them to succeed with their independent living programme. Young people are taking advantage of resources and are succeeding because the programme focuses on personal development, independent life skills, education and vocational support. Staff are successful at assessing the effectiveness of support for young people. Staff are supportive, committed and well qualified to competently meet the needs of young people.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

There were no recommendations set at the last inspection visit.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people live in a healthy environment where good health is promoted.

Arrangements for health assessment and planning are good. This is because all young people have a personalised health plan which sets out their needs and how these will be met. The quality of these plans are good because staff are monitoring health needs and promote young people's health. Resources to promote health are good. All young people, as part of the home's admission procedure, are registered with the local doctor, dentist and optician. Young people receive help with dealing with smoking and alcohol and utilising local health services.

Young people are encouraged to improve their physical fitness. Young people are encouraged to walk regularly to the shops, school and college. Young people participate in physical activity and sport such as, swimming and ten pin bowling.

Young people enjoy healthy, nutritious meals that meet their dietary needs. Young people develop their understanding of a healthy diet. They acquire knowledge and skills to make

healthy choices. This is because young people do their own food shop which is planned and monitored by staff which encourages a healthy balanced diet while shopping. Young people are learning how to manage a budget and learning about food seasonality and availability. One social worker commented, 'Young people are provided with a healthy balanced diet and encouraged to purchase healthy meal options as part of their independent living programme.'

Young people's needs are met and their welfare is safeguarded by the home's policies and procedures for administering medicines and providing treatment. All staff attend in-house training related to managing medication safely where the home's policy and practice is reinforced. Young people benefit because staff know and understand how to give medicines safely so to maximise benefit and to avoid causing harm. Where it is possible, young people are encouraged to take responsibility for their own medicines such as, inhalers and a robust risk assessment is in place to monitor this effectively.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The system in place to promote the safety and welfare of young people is good. The home has in place effective policies and procedures that promote good quality care and support. These directly address areas related to staff recruitment, counteracting bullying, unauthorised absence, complaints, behaviour management and health and safety. Staff offer a dynamic approach so that young people are fully prepared for independent living.

Young people's right to privacy is protected. Developing their autonomy and increasing privacy as part of maturity is well understood by the staff. Staff manage confidential information and know when to act if there are concerns.

Young people are well informed about their right to complain about any aspect of their care and support. The home's records show a positive professional approach and that all complaints are resolved satisfactorily. Parents, carers and significant stakeholders are provided with clear information about how they can make a complaint to the home.

Young people's safety and welfare is well promoted. Staff commented, 'Our basis for safeguarding is to establish a home where young people wish to remain. However, we do provide guidance and support on issues of risk and safety ensuring our young people are equipped with knowledge to keep them safe.' Young people are additionally protected because staff have completed refresher training in child protection and safeguarding. In this instance this strengthens staff knowledge and understanding about changes with best practice and the latest guidance.

Young people clearly understand that bullying is not acceptable in the home. When incidents occur they are challenged to reflect on their behaviours and staff encourage more effective strategies of communication. Staff remain vigilant by ensuring risks are properly assessed and compatibility issues related to group living is kept under review.

Young people who are absent without authority are protected in accordance with written guidance and responded to positively on return which is good. Staff always explore all avenues for the safe return of young people. The home has comprehensive procedures which include clear timelines of when reports are made to other external agencies. Records show comparatively low incidents, taking into account young people's potential to go missing.

Young people's interactions with staff are largely positive. Young people gain confidence in regulating their own behaviours. This means that they develop into mature and confident adolescents. Young people's behaviours are positively managed. This is achieved through a clear system of reward which recognises their positive attitude and approach. As a consequence, young people's self-esteem and behaviour are enhanced by good quality guidance, care and support.

Young people's physical safety and security is well promoted. The home maintains good health and safety procedures that protect young people from harm. Staff manage risks safely. Documented risk assessments are reviewed as circumstances change. This means that staff take their health and safety obligations seriously. Young people are further protected because they have regular opportunities to practise fire evacuations so that they know what steps to take in the event of an emergency.

The home has a centralised recruitment system with a human resource team monitoring all aspects of the recruitment procedures. The company is experienced in working with the wider implications of safeguarding and how this impacts on recruitment. Young people are protected because the home has consistently robust procedures that are soundly implemented in practice.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

All young people are given individualised support planned with their needs and wishes and young people identified as having particular needs receive help, guidance and support when needed or requested. They benefit from the good quality surroundings provided by staff. Young people achieve personal and social development and enjoy their recreational time.

Young people are encouraged to attend and enjoy school, college, training and work. Young people commented, 'I am doing well at school.' Young people's attendance and punctuality is given a good priority by staff. Young people display real initiative and are proud of their achievement with their course work and targeted grades. This demonstrates that young people are making good progress in their learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Young people's admissions are well managed. There is a clear referral criteria used so that young people benefit from settled placements at the home. They are assessed and a tailored programme is implemented to properly address their needs. Young people benefit because the programme is structured to promote and develop strong life skills. For example, young people are securing timely access to a range of support services including education, housing and health. This ensures they are making adequate preparation for leaving the home where they are thinking ahead and planning in their lives.

Young people's needs are assessed effectively and the written placement plans outline how these needs will be met and implemented. This helps to improve individual outcomes for young people because they are encouraged to have some control over their lives. As a result, young people are fully involved in discussions about their needs and their future and how future plans can be influenced.

Young people's statutory reviews are taking place. Staff ensure that placement plans continue to be appropriate and that the needs of the young people are being met. For instance, care staff provide weekly meetings with young people to receive comments, concerns and feedback about their programme of support. The outcome of these meetings are formally shared with the social worker on a weekly basis. This means there are always opportunities to discuss young people's development and welfare.

Young people's contacts are clearly summarised in the placement plans and staff clearly adhere to the exact circumstances where contact takes place. Staff know the frequency, location and type of contact that has been agreed with the social worker. This is always set up to be in the best interests of the young person. Young people benefit because positive contact promotes their identity and self-esteem.

Young people have many opportunities to share their views, wishes and feelings about the support and care they receive. These include key worker meetings and daily contact with care staff. House meetings are held on a monthly basis where lively debates are had by young people and they represent their views well. Staff act upon discussions and records show a positive and open culture being nurtured.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Young people are actively encouraged to engage in pathway planning so that they are able to look to the future. This helps them develop a positive sense of direction. Young people benefit from good practical training to ensure that they have the help that they need. Specifically with future accommodation, education, employment, training and health. Staff dedicate their time to providing a range of opportunities for young people to expand their practical life skills. For example, budgeting, paying bills, cooking and managing their laundry. Young people are also encouraged to develop social networks so that they have informal supportive relationships with family members and friends. Young people receive direct support and guidance from the leaving care team including the personal advisors to young people. This ensures that young people have the support that they need. Staff commented, 'We provide and work through the after care programme to ensure young people are prepared for independence.'

Young people's accommodation is maintained to a good standard. They benefit from a place of security, warmth and a homely environment. Young people are able to personalise their bedrooms to reflect their individuality in terms of their choice and taste.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The home continues to be well managed and organised. The new Registered Manager has very positive relationships with staff and young people which allows consistency, good continuity and achieving positive results. Young people benefit from the very strong, committed care staff and are living in a home where they feel valued and supported. The home provides a good range of information including the Statement of Purpose which has been updated to reflect staff and management changes. Likewise, young people receive information that is user-friendly which adequately explains what the home can offer.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The home is firmly committed to equality and diversity which is incorporated with meeting young people's emotional and physical needs. Staff encourage young people to join and attend local clubs in the area. Staff ensure there are varied activities to suit their abilities. Young people benefit from the many opportunities that ensure they are safe and they fulfil their potential.

The deployment of staff is effectively managed to maximise the benefits of continuity of care and support for young people. The Registered Manager provides a very hands-on approach and uses the staffing resources at the home to best effect. Staff annual leave and sickness is covered by using supplementary staff already employed by the company. One social worker commented, ' There appears to be a strong team of carers with a good level of morale which offers a comfortable and calm atmosphere for young people.'

Staff are trained, supportive of each other and consistent with ensuring young people feel safe and happy. The company prioritise staff training which includes a comprehensive training programme for induction, mandatory courses and continual professional training. The majority of the team are qualified to National Vocational Qualification level 3. Staff are very proud of this achievement.

The home has a monthly visit to check the quality of the care being provided and assess and evaluate young people's experiences of living at the home. These visits are carried out by a senior representative of the company. Records show that monitoring of records and discussions with young people are taking place. Where there are shortfalls, the Registered Manager has taken corrective action.

Young people's needs, development and progress are recorded to reflect their individuality which is good.

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.