

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Elisabeth Brunton
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	24 August 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 one of three care homes provided by the company. It is a three bedroom, mid-terrace property located in a residential area, close to public transport, shops and leisure facilities. The home is registered to provide accommodation for up to three young people aged from 11 to 17 years on admission. Young people occupy single bedrooms. Care provided by the home has an emphasis on supporting young people to develop skills for independent living and the younger age range have not recently been accommodated in the home. Two young people were resident in the home at the time of the inspection, one of whom participated in the inspection. The other young person was missing from the home.

Summary

There was an unannounced interim inspection. Most of the key standards under the outcome areas of being healthy, staying safe and organisation were inspected. The standard relating to accommodation was also looked at. Progress made in relation to the actions and recommendations set at the last inspection was particularly considered.

Young people receive satisfactory care in this home. They are well safeguarded, protected from bullying and their behaviour is responded to appropriately. The home is satisfactorily managed, staff working in the home are competent and staffing levels are generally satisfactory. Health care needs are met although this is not always fully evidenced. Young people are supported in preparing some of their own meals but their diets are not always sufficiently wholesome, nutritional or varied. Staff have been provided with training but some additional training is required. Some additional records are also needed.

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Five actions were set at the last inspection, one of which has been met and another partly met. Occupied bedrooms are now properly decorated, carpeted and furnished. Training has been provided for staff but some gaps remain, so this action has been re-set. A third action is no longer necessary and the remaining actions have not been met and are re-set. Of the four recommendations made at the last inspection, three have been met. Young people have not administered their own medication and the home's guide for young people is being revised, to include the necessary information.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Some young people buy their own food and prepare meals, with support and guidance from staff. The extent to which staff cook meals for young people is unclear but young people are satisfied with their meals. A record of meals cooked by young people and staff is maintained. However, this shows that young people are regularly eating convenience foods and may not be having sufficiently wholesome, nutritious or varied meals. The home does not have facilities for young people and staff to sit down and eat together and this could not easily be provided. Staff have not recently undertaken training in food hygiene.

Young people are satisfied with the support provided in looking after their health. Staff maintain that the necessary health care appointments are made for young people and that any health care concerns are followed up. However, this is not always evidenced through records maintained. Some information about young people's health care needs is provided by placing authorities. Plans for meeting these are briefly included in the home's placement plans and are reviewed as part of young people's statutory reviews. The home has clear rules about smoking and the use of alcohol and drugs and staff try to encourage young people to have healthy lifestyles. Staff are trained in first aid.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Young people's privacy is respected. Bedrooms are lockable and keys are made available to young people. Bathrooms and toilets have working locks. Mobile phones are provided, together with weekly allowances for calls, so young people are able to make calls in private. The office phone can also be used. Young people's bedrooms are regularly checked by staff, for health and safety reasons. Young people are made aware of this practice and the home's written guide for young people is being revised to include this information. Case files are stored securely and the confidentiality of information is safeguarded.

Young people know how to make a complaint and are confident that they would do so, if necessary. Written guidance is provided, which is being revised to include contact details for an independent advocate. No formal complaints from young people have been recorded during the past year. A recent complaint from neighbours was promptly dealt with.

Young people are safeguarded through staff awareness and communication. Staff try to support young people in staying safe outside the home. There have been no recent allegations against staff or safeguarding concerns reported. Updated safeguarding training for staff has now been arranged for the near future. Visitors to the home are carefully monitored.

Young people are protected from bullying by the prompt intervention of staff and supported through key work sessions. Young people are moved from the home where this is necessary for the protection of others.

Young people who go missing or are late returning to the home are properly safeguarded, in line with written procedures. Staff try to make contact with missing young people and to establish their whereabouts. Missing young people are promptly reported to the police, parents and placing authorities. Staff endeavour to encourage young people to stay in the home. Staff attend placing authorities review meetings for young people who go missing on a regular basis or for extended periods. The necessary records are maintained about young people going missing.

Young people are made aware of the rules and sanctions used in the home and regard them as fair. Staff respond effectively to young people's behaviour although training has not yet been provided. Situations are de-escalated, so there are few incidents and relatively little police involvement. Only acceptable sanctions are used. Deductions from young people's allowances to pay for damage to or removal of the home's property are infrequent and properly recorded. Pocket money and activities allowances are sometimes deferred or deducted in response to negative behaviour. This is evident from the record of allowances paid but is not recorded in

the sanctions log. A comprehensive record of sanctions imposed is therefore not provided. Restraint has not been used for several years.

Young people and staff are protected by the regular testing of fire safety equipment and regular fire drills. Day time staff have undertaken recent training in fire safety. However, staff employed to work at night have not yet been provided updated training, so young people are not fully safeguarded. The safety of the house is promoted through the necessary safety checks being carried out. However, temperature checks of fridge/freezers located in young people's bedrooms and where their food is stored, are still not regularly recorded. Staff are concerned that frequent checks would be an additional invasion of young people's privacy.

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 satisfactory.

Young people benefit from living in a home which is of adequate size and has well decorated and comfortably furnished communal rooms. Young people are satisfied with their bedrooms. Those bedrooms in use are adequately decorated, carpeted and furnished. Although the carpeting and some of the furniture in the recently vacated bedroom are in poor condition, staff are confident that this room will be refurbished before a young person moves into it. The paved rear garden is of adequate size but in need of some attention.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The home's young people's guide is being revised to include information identified as inaccurate or missing at the last inspection.

Young people benefit from a stable, permanent staff group, with any vacant shifts covered by bank staff. Relationships between young people and staff are positive and staff are competent and experienced. The current staffing arrangement of one residential worker on duty at a time, appears to be generally adequate for the age range of young people currently accommodated in the home. This is supplemented by managers and other staff attending meetings, undertaking shopping and other activities. Overlap of staffing between shifts allows for the exchange of information about young people's welfare and consequently promotes continuity of care. Given the staffing levels in this home, the support of managers or additional staffing can be necessary when incidents occur. This is not always provided sufficiently promptly although the police are alerted.

Most staff have undertaken some training in safeguarding, as part of their National Vocational Qualification training. As previously mentioned, updated training has now been arranged for all staff. Most staff have undertaken recent training in first aid and fire safety, although there are some gaps. Recent training in behaviour management and food hygiene has not yet been provided.

Young people benefit from living in a home which appears to be satisfactorily managed. The day-to-day management of the home is undertaken by the deputy manager, who is frequently present in the home and accessible to both staff and young people. The deputy manager is currently studying for a management qualification. Management roles and responsibilities appear to be clear to young people and staff. Regular monitoring visits to the home are carried out by a member of the company.

Comprehensive and well-organised case files are maintained for each young person. Case files include all the necessary information and are securely stored.

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
10	arrange for young people to be provided with food which is properly prepared, wholesome, nutritious and sufficiently varied (Regulation 13(1))	16 April 2010
10	promote and protect the health of young people accommodated in the home by evidencing health care appointments arranged and attended (Regulation 20 (1))	16 April 2010
22	ensure that the use of any measure of discipline in the home is recorded in a volume kept for the purpose (Regulation 17 (4))	16 April 2010
26	ensure that unnecessary risks to the health or safety of young people accommodated in the home are identified and, as far as possible, eliminated by monitoring the temperatures of refrigerators and freezers used to store young people's food (Regulation 23 (c))	16 April 2010
30	ensure that there are sufficient staff working in the home, so as to safeguard and promote the welfare of young people when incidents occur (Regulation 25(1)(b))	16 April 2010
31	provide staff with appropriate training. (Regulation 27(4))	31 May 2010

Recommendations

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

- ensure that gardens are well maintained and safe. (NMS 24.3)