

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	11 August 2010
Inspector	Seka Graovac
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	27 November 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 provider is a registered childcare charity and housing association. Its motto is being passionate about positive outcomes. The home offers periods of planned care to children and young people from 12 to 16 years old. The placements last between 3 and 18 months, depending on individual needs. The home also caters for emergency admissions for children and young people from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. It aims to create a caring, structured and stimulating environment that is responsive to the individual needs of children and young people. The home focuses on meeting the individual needs of young people within a positive group living experience.

This is an inner city service. It is situated close to many recreational and leisure facilities, local youth clubs, libraries and various places of worship, all within a community of diverse cultures.

At the time of the inspection, four young people were placed in the home. One young person was missing from the placement. The inspector met with three young people and spoke in private with two of them. Their views contributed to the inspection.

Summary

This was an unannounced key inspection. The main aim of the visit was to assess the quality of the service in line with the national minimum standards, the associated legislation and the Every Child Matters outcomes.

The main inspection finding is that this is a good service with some outstanding features. Following the Registered Manager's departure earlier this year, good interim management arrangements have been put in place. A very stable and competent staff team provides consistently good or at times, outstanding support to young people. The home works in a very close and effective partnership with the other agencies involved in promoting positive outcomes for young people. The opportunities for young people to contribute, to achieve and to enjoy various activities have been judged as outstanding.

However, this inspection also identified some weaknesses in the service provision. The home is required to review the use of financial penalties in aiding young people's constructive behaviour. It is recommended that the home reviews the arrangements for keeping medication records. Arrangements for the availability of food and drink at night should also be reviewed.

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 previous inspection that was carried out in November 2009, the overall quality of the service was rated as outstanding. No actions were raised. Ofsted recommended that the home records in writing any risk assessments carried out in relation to the home's premises and grounds. This has been done. Records that clearly demonstrate the risk assessment process are in place.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The home has excellent links with the health care services and the Multi Agency Liaison Team in the area. This effective partnership contributes significantly to the promotion of young people's good health. Various health care professionals visit the home and young people on a regular basis. Young people receive comprehensive information and appropriate encouragement to develop healthy lifestyles. They benefit from having detailed in-house individual health care plans that are effectively implemented. Any health related needs are appropriately identified and met.

There is a comprehensive procedure for dealing with young people's medication safely. This procedure protects young people well. However, there are some minor gaps in the medication related record keeping. For example, when a staff member had to dispose of a tablet because it was dropped on the floor. This was recorded only in the daily log. As the medication records have not been updated, it meant that they did not match the actual count of tablets held in the home. The arrangements in place for the provision of first aid in the home are good.

The home provides healthy nutritious meals that meet young people's dietary needs. Young people are appropriately encouraged to get involved in the choosing and planning of meals. However, the young people report not always enjoying food. There are on-going issues about the availability of food and drinks at night. The home is working with young people to resolve these issues.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The organisation's robust procedure for recruiting staff, positively contributes to the effectiveness of the protection of young people who live in this home. Staff receive regular training and have access to clear guidance that follows good safeguarding practice. Staff are competent and effective in safeguarding and promoting children's welfare.

The home has excellent links and works in close partnership with the other agencies concerned with protection and safeguarding of children. Those agencies include the Local Safeguarding Children Board, the police and the specialist team for 'Children Abused Through Sexual Exploitation'.

The young people report being safe in the home. Good arrangements for providing young people with a suitable degree of privacy are in place. Young people's files are securely kept and sensitive information is sensitively handled. Appropriate health and safety arrangements are in place to ensure that the environment remains physically safe and secure. The young people know that staff would unreservedly challenge any kind of bullying or intimidation. They are also aware of the house rules and what happens if they do not return home at the agreed time. Staff effectively encourage young people to develop positive and constructive behaviours. Sanctions are used to discourage inappropriate behaviour. However, the home sometimes uses inappropriate financial measures, such as withholding young people's pocket money until they have tidied their bedroom. Young people are appropriately enabled to follow a clear complaints procedure if they are dissatisfied with any aspect of the service.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Young people receive highly individualised support in line with their detailed placement plans. There is a highly effective key-working system with individual meetings taking place on a regular basis. The team is committed to creating an open atmosphere in which young people feel comfortable to approach any staff member with their concerns. The comprehensive young people's plans include records of the assessments of any significant risks. The home appropriately supports young people to take controlled risks within the developed safeguarding strategies.

Staff consistently emphasise the importance of education to young people. The home works in effective partnership with other professionals to ensure that young people receive appropriate support. This enables young people to achieve educational attainments. The young people's files contain a wealth of written information in this respect, including personal education plans, school reports and certificates of achievement.

The home provides an excellent range of individual and group activities. This includes regular day trips to places of interest and a summer holiday abroad. This has a positive impact on young people's confidence and development of their social skills.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

The placing authority's initial detailed assessment of a young person's needs is further enhanced by the home's exceptionally comprehensive in-house assessment process. The home continually monitors young people's needs and appropriately share the relevant information with the other professionals involved in young people's care.

The home is committed to caring for young people within the family support framework. This aims to add a further value to the service offered. Staff consistently encourage young people to maintain and develop constructive relationships with their families and friends. The home works in close collaboration with the placing authority to ensure that the young people and their families are enabled to contribute to the decisions made. Good communication and a formal review process ensure that young people remain appropriately placed in this home or that appropriate arrangements are made for them to move on.

Young people are given a very good range of opportunities to influence the service. The home's in-house consultation processes include regular key-working sessions and regular young person's meetings. Young people can also get involved in the organisation's initiatives, such as newsletters and the Service Users' Participation Group. The monitoring visits that are carried out by the organisation always include young people's views on the quality of the service. The young people have also recently had an opportunity to produce a short documentary film about the home, sharing their experience and views with the wider audience.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

The home is spacious and comfortably furnished. The communal areas consist of a sitting room, recreational/ education room, kitchen/ dining room and a large garden at the back of the house. The washing and toileting facilities are shared. These facilities have been recently refurbished. However, the work that was carried out, caused a number of leaks and subsequent problems with the building and the water installations. The home has resolved the issues and the much needed re-decoration is in progress.

The environment is clean and tidy. Staff consistently encourage young people to take responsibility for tidying their bedrooms and to carry out small chores around the house. Staff appropriately support young people to develop independent living skills. The home has excellent links with the leaving care team. The management meets regularly with this team. This is in addition to the regular statutory reviews, where the arrangements and plans for the young person's future are also discussed. The home and the placing authority have effectively helped a number of young people to move onto independent living, having received good support in this setting.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The home's clear Statement of Purpose and young people's guide are regularly updated. This ensures that the information provided to the stakeholders accurately reflects the service provision. The most recent change is that the Registered Manager left in April 2010. A new manager has been appointed with the appropriate qualifications and experience. This person leads a strong management team that includes a deputy manager and three team leaders. The interim arrangements are good, but no application to register a manager for the service has been received by Ofsted.

There is a very stable and sufficiently large staff team that provides continuity of good support to young people. Young people are looked after by appropriately qualified, competent and caring staff members. Appropriate arrangements are in place for staff to receive good support, training, supervision and appraisal of their performance.

Clear and comprehensive records which accurately reflect young people's individuality are kept. The provider effectively monitors these records and the conduct of the home on a regular monthly basis. The monitoring arrangements are good.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Staff receive relevant training in this field. Staff are able to consistently follow good anti-discriminatory practice in their work. Young people are effectively supported to learn about, understand and respect different cultures, traditions and beliefs.

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
22	ensure that no imposition of any financial penalty, other than a requirement for the payment of a reasonable sum by way of reparation is used as a disciplinary measure on children (Regulation 17 (5)(g))	11 September 2010

34	ensure that Ofsted receives an application to register a manager for this service by the target date. (CSA 2000 Part 2, Regulations 8 & 11, 1-(a)(b))	11 November 2010
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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):

- review the arrangements for young people's access to food and drink at night (NMS 10)
- review the arrangements for keeping medication records. (NMS 13)