

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	27 July 2010
Inspector	Sean White
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	27 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

This home is a three bedroom, semi-detached house with gardens at the front and rear. There is a lounge, kitchen, dining room and three upstairs bedrooms and a bathroom with separate toilet. The home is situated on a main road and there are nearby links to public transport. The purpose of the home is to offer long-term care for two young people.

Summary

This was an unannounced, key inspection; all National Minimum Standards were inspected. There were no children present during the visit, the manager was on leave.

This is a home that has a highly-motivated and committed approach to caring for young people. There is a clear and focused commitment to meeting health needs and encouraging healthy lifestyles; positive outcomes demonstrate the benefits to young people's development.

A dedicated and highly-motivated staff team work with great enthusiasm to ensure that young people are safe and have their needs addressed in a way that promotes their individuality. Care planning and close scrutiny of development and changing needs ensures that young people's lives are fulfilling and have purpose.

Young people are very involved in the planning of their lives and futures. They enjoy fulfilling social and recreational activities, and are encouraged and enabled to pursue interests and develop skills.

The long-established staff team bring a dynamic approach to their duties and responsibilities and their efforts are clearly aimed at providing young people with the most satisfying care. The way the home is managed and organised shows an outstanding commitment to promoting young people's well-being and future welfare.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

This is a home that has a clear and focused approach to meeting the health needs of young people. The staff have a clear understanding of the importance of encouraging and maintaining a healthy lifestyle. They engage with young people in a positive and active way to promote a sensible approach to being healthy in all aspects of their lives and the benefits of this for their future wellbeing.

There have been significant positive outcomes in respect of promoting healthy eating that has enabled young people to become more confident in their emotional health and body image. Young people have a very responsible attitude to maintaining good health through the administration of medication and engaging with health services.

The recording of health needs, interventions and outcomes is particularly good and ensures that there is a full understanding throughout the staff team of the needs of the young people.

This is an outstanding approach to caring for young people's health needs that has clearly demonstrated positive outcomes.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

The approach of this home to safeguarding young people is of a very high standard. Staff demonstrate a strong commitment and motivation to meeting young people's needs. They show an enthusiastic and conscientious attitude that is demonstrably focused on their dedication to enabling young people to live fulfilling lives free from abuse and exploitation. Risks to their well-being are clearly outlined in case records and staff apply themselves to ensuring those risks are minimised in young people's daily lives and activities.

Young people enjoy levels of privacy suitable for their levels of understanding and which promote their safety. They are encouraged and enabled to have private time when they need or wish it, with safeguards in place, negotiated with placing authorities, to protect them from, for instance, internet abuse. Their confidential information is secured and protected in an efficiently managed administrative system.

The encouragement of acceptable behaviour and responsible lifestyles are encouraged more through established relationships between staff and young people than through systems, and it is this that reaps the best outcomes. There are, nevertheless, reward strategies in place that enhance this approach, which enables young people to understand the consequences of unacceptable behaviour. Where necessary specialist resources are commissioned or sourced to help young people understand their situations and re-establish their equilibrium.

The home has an open and honest approach that enables young people to raise concerns and complaints in a confident way. They are clearly recorded with outcomes and acknowledgement from the young people that they have been dealt with fairly. In reality there have been very few in recent times. Similarly, bullying has not been a feature in this home for some considerable time; young people having close and protective relationships with each other. Young people being absent is managed in a caring and responsible way, although this is also an area that has not featured significantly.

The premises are well maintained; records demonstrate a responsible and active approach to ensuring the premises pose no risks to the young people's safety. Security is undertaken sensitively to ensure that young people are safe from intruders or unwelcome guests.

There has been very little staff turnover in recent years and no workers have joined the organisation to work at this home since the last audit of personnel files, which showed a robust approach to staff recruitment and selection.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

The home demonstrates a strong motivation to enabling and encouraging young people to have interesting and fulfilling lives. Individual support is provided through a well-established

key-worker system; staff demonstrate significant commitment and good practice in pursuing their responsibilities in this area, which enables young people to have continuous support based on their needs at any one time. Effective communication across the staff team ensures that all workers are up to date with events and needs, and young people have confidence in speaking with, or eliciting support from, whoever is available.

Education, and its benefits for the development and well-being of young people, is a strong aspect of this home's approach. There have been significant improvement in young people's attainments and this has had a positive effect on their development and prospects. Education and training has been arranged and encouraged to meet individual needs and circumstances, with great care being taken to enable young people to achieve to the best of their abilities. Staff work closely with educational, training and employing agencies.

Social and recreational activities are provided, supported and encouraged. This includes supporting young people with particular skills and interests to pursue them enthusiastically, including financial encouragement. Young people have access to a range of interesting and enjoyable activities and social pursuits, but are also encouraged to have a stable and fulfilling social network of friends. The approach to social life and activity is clearly non-institutional and is based on a normalisation of young people's lifestyles.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

The young people's needs are clearly expressed in detailed placement plans. These reflect and enhance the identified needs as outlined by placing authorities and are individually tailored to demonstrate the particular needs of individual young people. Detailed, contemporaneous case recording is informed by the plans, which ensures that there is a continuous monitoring of needs and outcomes. Staff are fully aware of, and up to date with, information regarding each young person.

Statutory reviews occur at required intervals and any changes, or proposed changes, to plans are exhaustively analysed and this ensures that the most suitable strategies are put in place. Young people are fully involved in planning and reviewing their circumstances, and their wishes and contributions are taken seriously. Workers in the home advocate tirelessly for the young people's best interests to be met whenever plans are reviewed or changes considered.

The home works well with placing authority social workers and parents and people with parental responsibility to effect realistic and meaningful contact. Contact arrangements that are in place do not compromise young people's safety or place unnecessary risks to their well-being.

Young people are given many opportunities to participate in the running of the home and there is evidence to demonstrate that they make a significant contribution to the way it is run. There is an inclusive atmosphere that encourages young people to be involved in decision making both in relation to themselves, and to the running of the home.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is outstanding.

Workers demonstrate an active and enthusiastic approach to understanding the developing needs of young people and their move towards independence and adulthood. Considerable

efforts are made to encourage young people to understand the issues they will face and put in place practical strategies to enable them to move forward. Pathway planning and close working with other agencies provides a comprehensive package of support and guidance that young people can understand and commit to.

Individuality is promoted by the staff and this enables young people to be confident about their choices. There are generous allowances for clothing and personal requisites that young people are encouraged to spend wisely.

The home is a three-bedroom, semi-detached house that is indistinguishable from other properties in the neighbourhood. It is domestic in style, well furnished and decorated, and provides plenty of space for young people to relax in, watch television and other day-to-day activities. The young people are proud of their home and are very happy that it is not identifiable as a children's home.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

This is an exceedingly well managed children's home that operates in a way that places the needs of children and young people at the forefront of its activities.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. The approach to understanding the individual needs of people is enthusiastic and knowledgeable, and there is an express commitment to challenging discrimination in both policy and practice. Training, staff development and practice forums explicitly address equality and diversity and young people are enabled and encouraged to understand and respect difference through a range of means. Staff are energised and excited in their exploration and promotion of equality.

Workers demonstrated a highly competent approach to understanding their roles and responsibilities and they are managed and supported in developing their skills and expertise continuously. There is a higher than required level of staff with National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ). There are excellent opportunities for training, supervision is regular and often, and there is a clear motivation for staff to share knowledge and expertise with colleagues.

The home is generously staffed and this ensures that the demands of the duty system are always met and young people have the availability of sufficient workers to care for them. Senior workers have been awarded NVQ at level 3 in management.

The operations and functions of the home are very well monitored by both the manager and the registered organisation. Monitoring is recorded clearly and actions taken to address any issues raised. There is a clear and continuous commitment to improvement and the workers are highly motivated to raise standards at any opportunity.

The administration and organisation of the home is of an excellent and efficient standard. Record keeping is conscientiously managed and undertaken with the developing needs of the young people in mind. Administrative systems are clear and enable workers to manage paperwork and records efficiently and tidily. Records are secure and confidentiality is maintained at all times.

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.