

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	29 September 2009
Inspector	Monica Hargreaves
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	27 May 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 children's home is owned and managed by a charitable organisation that has several homes in the area. It provides medium to long-term care for up to three young people of either gender, aged from 11 to 17 years.

The house is a semi-detached property in a residential area. It has four bedrooms and a bathroom on the first floor and a lounge, dining room and kitchen on the ground floor. One of the four bedrooms is used by staff who sleep in. The staff office is in the basement and also doubles as a second staff sleep in room. The home has parking facilities at the front and there is an enclosed garden to the rear.

There was one young person living at the home at the time of the inspection, who was not present during the visit.

Summary

This was an unannounced interim inspection. All of the key standards in staying safe were considered and a number of key standards in being healthy, positive contribution and organisation were also considered in order to review recommendations that were made at the last inspection.

The home continues to provide a good standard of care and positive outcomes for young people. Young people are cared for safely. Staff develop positive relationships with them and manage difficult or challenging behaviour well. There are effective systems in place to identify and minimise potential risks and the environment is kept safe.

Recommendations made at this inspection relate to the completion of the manager's registration with Ofsted and to an issue of recording in placement plans.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

The majority of the recommendations made at the last inspection are met.

Staff record the outcome of formal reviews at the time of the meeting, so that person centred placement plans can be updated promptly to reflect any changes that are made to young people's care plans.

The diet of young people is monitored because staff keep clear records of the meals that young people actually eat. This helps staff to promote their good health.

The home has taken action to review and update the general risk assessment on bullying. This supports the individual risk assessments on young people that are in place and protects young people in the home.

The development plan has been reviewed and confirms the continuation of the home's current operation.

One recommendation has not been met. Although placement plans are very detailed and are kept up to date, there is no evidence that the plans have been agreed with young people. The recommendation is carried forward.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Due to the nature of this interim inspection, only one standard was considered. The judgement for this outcome area remains as at the last inspection.

Staff make sure that young people are given a balanced diet, to promote their good health. Young people are encouraged to learn to plan, shop for and cook their own meals and are given advice about the importance of healthy eating. This helps them to develop their knowledge and self-care skills. Staff take young people out to eat in local restaurants and there are regular themed food nights, that give young people the opportunity to learn about and try foods of other cultures. Staff keep records of the meals that young people eat, so that they can monitor their diet.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Young people are cared for safely in the home. Staff are trained to recognise the signs and symptoms of abuse and have a good understanding of the reporting procedures and of their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding young people. Staff are also trained in relation to issues of bullying. They undertake individual work with young people to make them aware of the impact of bullying and deal with any concerns promptly. There is evidence that bullying is generally not an issue in the home.

Staff ensure that the privacy of young people is properly respected. They keep information confidential and store it securely in locked facilities. Young people have access to a telephone that they can use in private and a key to their bedroom, so that they can keep their possessions safe.

There is clear evidence that young people know how to make a complaint and feel confident about doing so and that issues they raise are responded to promptly, in line with the organisation's procedures. There has been only one complaint from a young person since the last inspection. Staff respond appropriately to issues that are raised by people outside the home and again there is evidence that complaints are properly dealt with.

The home has a sound protocol for managing unauthorised absences. They keep in contact with young people by mobile phone when they are away from the home and report unauthorised absences in line with the procedure that has been agreed locally with the police. They share information with relevant agencies, so that there is close working to protect young people.

Staff provide positive role models for young people and work well with them to help them to learn to manage difficult situations appropriately and to behave in a socially acceptable way. The organisation ensures that all staff are trained to respond positively to challenging behaviour, including in the use of physical restraints. There is evidence that physical intervention is only ever used as a last resort and in the least restrictive way, which protects young people and ensures that they are looked after safely. Relationships between staff and young people are

good which helps young people to feel settled and enables them to feel that they can keep in touch with staff in the home after they move on.

Health and safety matters are well managed which helps to keep young people safe. Individual risk assessments on young people are completed as they move into the home. These are comprehensive and consider all areas of a young person's care and personal welfare. Assessment and management strategies are regularly reviewed, so that they continue to be appropriate to the ongoing and changing needs of young people. One of the senior members of staff takes a lead role in the oversight of health and safety issues generally and makes sure that other risk assessments, for example on the environment and on activities, are kept up to date. There is an appropriate schedule in place to make sure that equipment is checked and serviced. Evacuation drills take place at appropriate intervals, so that young people know what to do in the event of a fire or other emergency.

The organisation has effective systems in place to manage the recruitment and selection of staff. These include detailed checks to ensure that staff are thoroughly vetted and safe to work with young people. The identity of visitors is checked and the house itself is kept appropriately secure. These systems protect young people from unauthorised individuals gaining access to the home.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is not judged.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Due to the nature of this interim inspection, only two standards were considered. The judgement for this outcome area remains as at the last inspection.

Individual placement plans are developed in a person centred way. These are thorough documents that clearly identify how the assessed needs of young people are to be met and which member of staff will take responsibility for this. However, there is no written evidence on plans to show that these have been agreed with the young person.

Placement plans are monitored by the home and the progress and care of young people is formally reviewed, to ensure that information is accurate and up to date and that the placement is appropriate for the young person and meets their needs. Staff are fully involved in reviews. They provide detailed reports, support young people and take notes at review meetings, so that placement plans can be updated promptly.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is not judged.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Due to the nature of this interim inspection, only one standard was considered. The judgement for this outcome area remains as at the last inspection.

There is good management oversight of the work of the home, which ensures that the welfare of young people is promoted and that good standards are maintained. The home's manager undertakes regular checks on records and makes sure that the work of staff is monitored and supported. Regular checks are also undertaken by a senior person within the organisation, who visits the home every month and provides a detailed report of their findings. There is clear evidence that prompt action is taken on issues that are identified through this monitoring activity. The development plan has been reviewed and confirms the continuation of current operation of the home.

The organisation has appointed a new person to manage this home, who is suitably experienced and qualified. The manager confirmed that he has started the process of registration with Ofsted, but this has not yet been completed.

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
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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 person centred plans are signed by young people to evidence that they know and have agreed their content (NMS 2)
- ensure that the process of registration of the new manager is completed. (NMS 34)