

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Caroline Wilson
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Date of last inspection	15 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 service caters for young people between the ages of 15 and 18 who are in the process of preparing for independence. The service can cater for up to a maximum of four young people, each having their own bedrooms and sharing the other facilities of the house. The aim of the unit is to provide a resource that recognises the placement difficulties encountered by young looked after children close to school leaving age. The unit supports the young people in their development of age-appropriate behaviour. The house is situated in a residential area and is close to good transport links and local amenities.

Summary

This unannounced inspection looked at all the key standards of the Children's Homes Regulations 2001.

On the day of the inspection, I found that a number of improvements had been made to the care that young people were receiving. Young people too, were overall happy about the way that care was being provided to them. Systems in the home have been improved to make it easier for staff to record the progress of young people's development.

Young people are looked after by qualified, skilled and competent people. Staff view young people positively and are committed to helping them and meeting their needs. They have a detailed understanding of individual young people's needs and work really hard to find out how best to support them. Staff have been particularly effective at building positive relationships with young people based on respect and honesty. They are, as a result, able to encourage young people to develop socially acceptable behaviour and overcome difficulties they may face.

Young people feel safe and supported. Staff ensure that young people's health is actively promoted and improves through encouraging healthy lifestyles. Staff work very hard to ensure young people are protected from harm and get the help they need.

Although the recording of young people's experiences and progress is good, the records do not show a clear and detailed evaluation of planning in relation to young people's health. In addition, delays in registering young people with primary health care practitioners may lead to some young people not getting medical attention in a timely fashion.

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Improvements have been made to the recording of sanctions and medication. These are now compliant with regulations. In addition, the recruitment systems are more robust and full and satisfactory information is available for staff.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Arrangements to ensure that young people live in a healthy environment that identifies and meets their health needs are inconsistently applied. For example, the home are very good at

ensuring that appointments are made to meet the physical, social and emotional needs of young people. Also, the home is good at ensuring that they have the relevant background information for young people to help meet these needs. However, there have been delays in some young people being registered with primary health care services which has led to delays in some young people receiving medical attention. Written health care plans identify young people's health needs, but there is a lack of clarity on what needs have been met and on health care planning for the future.

Young people are being prepared to live independently and as such, shop for and prepare their own meals. Support in these tasks is provided, where relevant. Staff have a clear understanding of what makes a healthy and balanced diet and encourage young people to develop healthy eating habits. Menus are monitored in instances where young people do not eat healthy but not as a matter of routine to ensure that all young people are eating meals which are nutritious and meet their dietary needs.

Young people's health needs are promoted by the home's procedures and staff application of procedures relating to the administration of medication. Staff have a good understanding of the home's procedures in relation to the recording of young people's medication. Written records ensure that information, such as the dosage, times and what the medication is, is clearly recorded. Staff are suitably trained in the administration of first aid so that they can provide primary health care in the event of a medical emergency.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Safeguarding processes are robust. Good procedures are in place that are in accordance with relevant legislation. Safeguarding is a rolling agenda item during team meetings to ensure that staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities in promoting the welfare of young people.

Young people who are absent without authority are protected in line with local reporting procedures in relation to this. Relevant professionals are notified of any young people who are absent, in order that necessary attempts can be made to return them to safety. Young people are treated positively on their return.

Young people know how to make a complaint but not all feel comfortable in doing so as they are not confident that their complaints will be taken seriously. There are no recorded complaints since the last inspection.

Young people's privacy is respected; staff do not enter young people's rooms unless they are invited. Young people are able to make calls in private to family and professionals using the office telephone.

Good policies and procedures are in place which enable staff to effectively manage any incidents of bullying. Sufficient numbers of staff are on duty at any one time and staff demonstrate that they are aware of the common characteristics of young people who bully and those who may be bullied. This enables them to swiftly intervene to ensure the well-being of young people placed. Young people have not experienced bullying and get on well together.

Good systems are in place to encourage young people to develop socially acceptable behaviour. Sanctions are fair and relate to the rule that has been broken. Young people's behaviour is very

good and as a result punishments, such as sanctions, are used very rarely. Young people feel that the rules and the sanctions that are set out are fair and a deterrent to breaking the house rules. Staff keep accurate records of any sanctions used with young people.

Young people live in a safe environment. They are protected by a range of health and safety procedures and risk assessments. Staff carry out regular health and safety checks, including fire drills and weekly fire alarm checks. Gas safety and electrical installation checks are undertaken in accordance with relevant timescales. This ensures that young people live in a home that provides physical safety and security.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people are encouraged to engage in some form of educational placement and are supported by staff in doing so. The home work closely in partnership with social work and educational professionals to find educational placements which meet young people's individual needs.

Young people receive individualised support when they need it. Young people enjoy good relationships with their key workers and receive regular, informal key work sessions which they feel that is of benefit to them. Key work sessions address a range of young people's needs in accordance with their care plans and the five outcome groups. This ensures that young people are supported in achieving positive outcomes in all areas of their development.

Young people are encouraged to take part in a wide range of activities in the community. This includes going to the gym on a regular basis. Documentation in relation to young people's involvement in leisure activities does not support the level of activities that they are engaged in. Opportunities to engage in leisure activities within the home are minimal. Young people find the lack of activities within the home frustrating. They like living in the home and have good relationships with staff and each other. However, they feel that they will have no choice to spend their time outside of the home as a way of alleviating the boredom that they sometimes feel.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The home encourages young people to have regular contact with their families and friends. Staff actively facilitate and support young people seeing their families. Young people have clear arrangements for contact with their families to help them maintain and build positive relationships. Staff ensure young people have suitable regular contact and that the arrangements promote and safeguard young people's welfare.

The home's placement plans are well written and provide a good understanding of the young person and their needs. This plan is written in conjunction with the placing authority's plan. Assessments undertaken by staff clearly set out risk factors for each young person and how the staff will support young people in addressing these.

Young people's placements are reviewed regularly to make sure that they continue to meet their needs. Staff work very closely with young people, placing authorities and other professionals to monitor their progress, taking into account any changes in their lives and to

identify the best way to support young people. Staff help young people understand decisions made about their lives.

Young people are not regularly consulted on a range of issues that affect their everyday life on a group basis, as residents' meetings do not always take place for a variety of reasons. Young people do have the opportunity to have their say about the way that the home is run during key work sessions.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Staff encourage young people to develop the skills they need for adult life suitable to their age and understanding. They routinely learn skills, such as cooking, going to the shops, tidying their bedrooms and managing money. This results in them developing a wide range of life skills to support them in the future. In addition, staff encourage them to develop their personal, organisational and social skills, such as personal hygiene and getting themselves ready for school.

Young people live in a comfortable and homely environment that meets their needs. The house is clean, decorated and furnished to a good standard. Young people like the accommodation and have personalised the home to reflect their interests and individual tastes. For example, young people have decorated their rooms with posters of their favourite music stars.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The home cares for young people from diverse backgrounds, which are reflected within the staff team. The home works effectively with young people regarding their identity and individuality.

The home has good systems in place to review the quality of care provided in order to ensure that the home is operating in accordance with its Statement of Purpose. The reports that are written identify areas for improvement and steps are taken to address any issues that are raised.

The home's written records provide a comprehensive picture of individual young people's needs, development and progress. Young people's records contain up-to-date information about them, including the relevant documents from placing authorities.

Young people are looked after by a competent staff team who have experience and qualifications in caring for young people. The number of staff on duty meets the needs of young people and is sufficient to accompany young people on activities, visits and appointments as well as managing the office. Staff have an opportunity during supervision sessions to reflect on young people's progress and how best to support them. Staff receive one-to-one supervision within the recommended timescales to ensure they are suitably supported and guided in promoting and safeguarding young people's welfare.

Young people, their parents and social workers know what support they can expect from the home and how they will be looked after. This information is set out in the home's Statement of Purpose. The children's guide is written in a way that is more easily understood by young people.

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
12	ensure that each young person is registered with a General Practitioner (Regulation 20(2)(a))	30 August 2010
10	ensure that a record is kept of menus served for all young people (Regulation 28(1) Schedule 4(10))	31 October 2010
12	ensure that written health care plans are kept up-to-date. (Regulation 28(1))	31 October 2010

Recommendations

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

- ensure that resident's meetings are regularly undertaken. (NMS 8)