

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	15 January 2010
Inspector	Caroline Wilson
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	21 September 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 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

There was an interim unannounced inspection that focused on assessing whether the actions set at the last inspection were met as well as looking at key standards in the area of staying safe.

The staff team have worked extremely hard over the past few months to ensure that they provide a service that safeguards and promotes the welfare of the young people who they support. Records and documentation is easier to locate and administration processes are kept up to date which ensure that staff are clear about how to implement young people's care plans. Staff received intensive training in safeguarding by a reputable child protection organisation to enable them to respond appropriately to allegations or suspicions of abuse. A lot of work has also gone into evidencing that young people are being properly prepared and supported in making a successful transition into adulthood and this is to a good standard. However, this has not been reflected in the overall judgement of the service. This is because not all the key standards have been assessed and not enough time has elapsed to ensure that the service has improved over a sustained period of time.

One young person was available to speak to the inspector about the service and they were happy with the level of care provided.

The overall quality rating is inadequate.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

There have been significant improvements since the last inspection. All the actions made have been met. This includes the up-to-date recording of systems which promote and safeguard the welfare of young people. In addition, staff now have sufficient time to share vital information relating to the care of young people and housekeeping issues during handover sessions, which are now incorporated into shift patterns.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Health care arrangements for young people are good and ensure that their needs are identified and services are provided to meet them. Health care plans identify any historical or current health care needs and outline how these will be met.

There have been improvements to the administration of medication. All young people are risk assessed to ensure that they are sufficiently responsible to self-administer medication. Written

records are kept of medication that has been prescribed and any persistent refusal is reported for the consideration of health and social care professionals. However, some of the recording is not consistent with guidance for the administration of medication and does not enable staff to accurately monitor whether a prescribed course has been completed or not.

Young people are encouraged to prepare food and where appropriate, may be assisted by staff. Records of what meals young people have actually eaten are kept to monitor whether young people are enjoying healthy and nutritious meals that meet their dietary needs. Remedial action is taken where concerns are noted.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is inadequate.

Checks are in place to ensure that there is careful vetting of staff to ensure that young people are prevented from being exposed to potential abusers. The recruitment process is excellent, and ensures that staff have the aptitude to competently safeguard and promote the welfare of young people. Although risks, where relevant, have been considered, written records of these are not available. Vetting procedures evidence that background checks have been undertaken to ensure that full and satisfactory information is available for staff. However, there was one instance where a full employment history was not available.

Young people are assisted to develop socially acceptable behaviour. Sanctions given are monitored by the Registered Manager, who is required to agree to them before they are administered. The recording of some of the sanctions that are given or proposed require further explanation as in their current format they appear punitive and unreasonable. Restraints records evidence that restraints only take place in instances to prevent injury to young people, others or likely serious damage to property. However, there is no format for staff to follow to ensure consistency in the recording of information.

Young people are aware of the complaints process and are confident in making a complaint should the need arise. Good policies and procedures are in place in respect of this.

Safeguarding procedures are in place and staff have recently attended training to ensure that they are knowledgeable about the procedures to follow should such an incident be brought to their attention. Processes are in place to ensure that staff have a full understanding of safeguarding matters.

Bullying is understood to be unacceptable by young people and staff and any reported instances are taken seriously. Practice guidelines are available to assist staff with the management of bullying.

The reporting systems for young people absent without authority have been updated in line with new legislation. Young people are reported missing in accordance with relevant guidance. Relevant parties are notified in instances where this occurs.

Young people live in a home that provides physical safety and security. Internal and external safety inspections are conducted within relevant timescales.

Young people's privacy is respected and is consistent with good parenting and their need for protection. Staff are sensitive to gender issues especially when dealing with those of the opposite sex.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people receive individualised support on a regular basis on a range of issues in line with their needs and wishes. Support is provided for young people for whom English is not their first language, which enables them to communicate their needs, wishes and concerns within the home.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is not judged.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Young people receive care which helps prepare and support them into adulthood. Young people and staff are working in partnership with placing authorities to ensure that pathway plans are available. This document, in conjunction with the home's own independent living skills programme, specifies the support and assistance that young people will need to enable them to have a successful transition into adulthood.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Staff rotas have time scheduled to ensure that handover sessions can be carried out without compromising the overall care of 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
27	ensure that full and satisfactory information is available in relation to all staff (Reg 26 (1))	28 February 2010
13	ensure that written records are kept of the administration of any medicine to any young person (Reg 21 (2) (c))	28 February 2010
22	ensure that records relating to sanctions are maintained and provide full and satisfactory information relating to each incident. (Reg 29 (1))	31 March 2010

Recommendations

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

- ensure that the restraints book has all the headings as set out by regulations. (NMS 22.9)