

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	15 February 2010
Inspector	Sandra Jacobs-Walls
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	11 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 home provides long term residential placements to five young people of either sex aged between 14 years and 18 years old and offers an outreach support service to young people 16 years old and upwards who have moved on to independent accommodation. The home provides services which prepare young people to achieve self sufficiency, self reliance and develop independence.

In recent months the service has been temporarily closed for renovation. The provider indicates that the service in the near future, will focus on offering services to females only, in particular, young mothers or those who are pregnant upon admission.

The home has easy access to all local amenities including a local shopping centre and has excellent transport links. The service provider is also the Registered Manager for the home.

At the time of the inspection, the home had recently re-opened following a period of temporary closure and no young people were in placement.

Summary

The home currently is not providing services to young people. Our inspection methodology relies on evidence found at the time of the inspection and this essentially includes users' views about the service. As this evidence is not available when there are no young people present we have completed a proportional inspection; the purpose of which is to decide that should an admission be made the service would be able to work to a satisfactory standard. There are therefore only two possible overall judgement outcomes for this inspection; satisfactory or inadequate. The inspection focussed on assessing the home against key national minimum standards in three outcome areas only, being healthy, staying safe and organisation.

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

The previous inspection resulted in no requirements or recommendations. Since the last inspection, the home has been temporarily closed for building renovation and review of the overall service provision. All young people's bedrooms are now fitted with en-suite facilities which ensures young people's privacy when washing. The provider is currently recruiting additional staff including a deputy manager to assist with the home's management. The provider indicates an intention in the near future to amend the home's registration conditions to offer services exclusively to young women and young mothers.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff of the home are primarily responsible for the preparation and cooking of meals and staff encourage young people to participate in this activity. There are plans in place for staff to convene weekly meetings with young people to plan meals for the week, to ensure young people have meals that they enjoy. Staff support young people participating in the home's semi-independent programme to prepare and cook meals for themselves. The home's initial

referral form and assessment process encourages the placing authority to identify young people's known dietary needs. The home's self assessment document allows young people to state for themselves their culinary likes and dislikes. Staff of the home have a good track record in ensuring culturally appropriate foods are provided and that meals meet any religious requirements.

Staff of the home are due to complete food hygiene refresher courses and there are plans in place for nutritional specialists to periodically speak with young people about healthy eating. The home's kitchen area is well equipped, clean and hygienic.

Staff of the home are committed to promoting healthy lifestyles of young people in placement at the home. This ethos is supported by clear written guidance to staff that outline the importance of good health care. Staff routinely encourage young people to register with key primary care services such as GP, dental and opticians promptly upon admission to the home. Staff know to follow up with the placing authority any delay in the completion of statutory medicals. There is clear written guidance available to staff and young people about the use of alcohol, smoking and the misuse of substances on the home's premises.

Young people have access to specialist health care services if needed. These include sexual health clinics and local alcohol and substance misuse services. Staff have good working relationships with these local services and periodically will invite specialist workers to meet with young people for advice and support.

Staff encourage young people to have healthy sleep patterns and as a result, effort is taken to ensure young people's bed times are well established. The home's risk assessment documents include risks of a health care nature such as self harm and mental health support needs. Some staff are due to complete first aid training to ensure young people receive safe emergency treatment on site if required.

Staff have access to sound policies that relate to the administration of medication. Staff store all medication received into the home in a locked cabinet in the staff office and staff are aware of medication recording systems.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Young people's privacy is respected and their information is handled confidentially. Staff have access to good written guidance with regard to respecting young people's privacy and the provider monitors staff practices in this regard. Young people's case files are kept secure in locked cabinets in the staff office and all electronically held information is password protected. Each young person has their own private bedroom. Completion of the home's recent renovations has resulted in young people now having access to en suite facilities. Young people now enjoy complete privacy when washing.

Young people and staff benefit from the home's comprehensive complaints policies. Young people can access this information through the home's handbook for young people. Details of the host local authority's Children Right Officer, national child advocacy groups and the contact details of Ofsted are all publicised in available literature. The service has received no complaints since the last inspection. The provider intends to convene weekly residents' meeting to solicit

the general views of young people and to give them an opportunity to express any dissatisfaction with services provided.

Staff promote the welfare of young people living in the home and protect them from harm or abuse. Young people benefit from the home's comprehensive child protection policies which are well known to the staff group. Staff have access to good ongoing child protection and safeguarding training as the provider is an experienced child protection trainer and has good links with external training resources. Staff of the home share a well established and good working relationship with the host local authority and this contributes to the promotion of young people's welfare. There have been no incidents of a child protection nature at the home for a significant length of time.

Staff of the home protect young people from bullying as the home has a 'zero tolerance' policy and ethos with regard to bullying. Young people understand the home's ethos as this is well publicised in the handbook. As a result, bullying within the home is rare.

Staff have access to written guidance in relation to young people who are absent from the home without permission. Young people are familiar with these protocols. The staff group and the local community police team share an effective working relationship which acts to support the safe return of young people deemed to be 'missing' from placement.

Young people benefit from the home's sound behavioural management policies. Staff support young people to sustain acceptable behaviour and young people are awarded incentives. Staff address young people's unacceptable behaviour by imposing sanctions. Staff maintain a centralised log of imposed sanctions and these are regularly monitored.

The home's premises provides young people with physical safety and security. Young people benefit from detailed health and safety procedures and there are sound fire precautions in place. Staff routinely check key fire equipment to ensure they are in good working order. Since the home's temporary closure, the provider has taken additional security measures to ensure the safety of young people and staff. These include the installation of sensors that are strategically placed around the home's premises. An alarm system alerts staff to movement in key areas of the home such as the front and back door and the staff office. This is particularly useful in gauging movement around the building during the night.

The home's provider is responsible for the recruitment of all new staff. Young people benefit from sound recruitment policies that ensure the vetting of potential staff members is robust. Previous inspections have noted that the home's recruitment practices are sound and in accordance with the national minimum standards. No new staff have been appointed to the home since the last inspection, although the provider is currently recruiting additional staff for the home. This standard is therefore not assessed during this inspection.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is not judged.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is not judged.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is not judged.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The home has a comprehensive statement of purpose document in place that clearly outlines the service's goals and aims, what services are provided and how the home operates. The document is compliant with the children's homes regulations. The home's young people's handbook is a summary of the statement of purpose and offers young people information about the home that is written in age appropriate language, is creative and geared towards the use of potential residents.

The staff group of the home is well established, some having worked for the service for a number of years. The provider is currently recruiting a deputy manager and additional staff. The existing staff group are well qualified and are experienced child care workers. Newly recruited staff participate in an induction programme which includes child protection training. Individual staff supervision is regular and the provider keenly monitors the performance of staff. It is the provider's intention to introduce staff to coaching sessions to further enhance and develop their professional and personal skills.

Staff enjoy good training opportunities, the provider is a qualified social worker and social care trainer. Staff have good access to both internal and external training. Team meetings are also used as forums for training and service provision development.

There are good systems in place to monitor the performance of the home against its statement of purpose. The provider employs an independent consultant who conducts the home's monthly monitoring visits. Subsequent reports are detailed and highlight identified issues. The home's policies and procedures that relate to the management of the service are well designed to meet regulatory requirements. However as there are no young people resident at the time of the inspection, the impact of these policies and procedures can not be fully tested.

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

There are no recommendations.