

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspection date	29/11/2010
Inspector	Mark Kersh
Type of inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	11/11/2009
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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 outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for the service.

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

The home is a local authority children's home for six young people of either sex, aged from 11 years old up to 17 years old.

The home is a purpose-built, detached property situated on a private residential estate. The accommodation is provided over two floors. On the first floor, there are individual bedrooms, of which one has been converted to be used as a gym, staff sleep-in accommodation and two bathrooms with toilet and shower facilities. On the ground floor there is a lounge, dining room, quiet room, art room, laundry, kitchen, toilet facilities and offices.

To the rear of the property there is an enclosed grassed garden with a patio area. To one side of the garden is the home's allotment. The home has good access to public transport links, nearby towns and cities. Six young people currently live in this home, of which two were present during this inspection.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

This was an unannounced full inspection. All key standards were inspected. This is a good service with some outstanding features. Young people's health is promoted very well by staff and they are provided with well-balanced meals that meet their religious and cultural needs. Young people are safeguarded by staff who care about them and empower them to make safe choices. Staff maintain good links with external agencies to promote safety, health and participation.

Staff actively encourage young people to maintain positive relationships with their families and welcome young people's friends into the home. Young people and staff share positive, relaxed relationships and they listen to each other. Staff provide young people with consistency and are committed to them throughout their time in the home and beyond. The staff team are experienced and qualified and work together well to ensure good standards in service delivery.

Three actions and one recommendation have been made, following this inspection, for the registered person to address.

Improvements since the last inspection

There are no actions resulting from the home's previous inspection. The two recommendations previously made have been complied with. These were in relation

to the records for food and restraints. Details are kept of food consumed by young people and of any behaviour resulting in restraint being used. These arrangements enable the management team to identify any patterns or trends.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Young people live in a multi-cultural home in which their individual dietary needs are very well met. Staff provide well balanced, home cooked meals for young people and young people actively contribute to weekly menus. There are alternative food choices within the menus and staff record what young people actually eat for monitoring purposes. Mealtimes are social occasions and create discussion focused around young people's daily events and evening activities. Staff promote integration and understanding of different cultures and this significantly enhances young people's knowledge of our diverse world. Young people take regular exercise and are involved in activities which promote a healthy lifestyle. The home has a fully equipped gym for young people to use, under staff supervision.

Young people's health needs are thoroughly assessed and well met through local health services. Clear health plans ensure staff are knowledgeable in relation to young people's individual health needs. There are excellent links to specialist health services and staff ensure young people receive professional assessments where needs are identified. Young people are registered with doctors, dentist and opticians and staff support them to attend appointments.

Medication is safely managed and a clearly auditable system is in place. Staff have a clear understanding in relation to any potential side effects medication may cause and routinely keep advice labels with the medication records. Medication is consistently administered by staff as prescribed and safely stored. All staff are trained in medication procedures and first aid which ensures young people's welfare is safeguarded.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Staff respect young people and have developed strong positive relationships because they listen well and take an interest in meeting their needs. Staff respect young people's privacy consistent with good parenting and the need to protect them. Young people can make and receive telephone calls in private and have access to computers for communication. All information is stored securely for confidentiality reasons and staff demonstrate sound judgement in sharing confidential information with other professionals.

Staff play a strong parenting role with the young people and are committed and

focused about their safety. The arrangements for child protection are managed effectively. Strong links are maintained with safeguarding agencies and concerns are promptly raised. Young people confirm they feel safe and know how to raise concerns with staff or through external agencies. Records of complaints are maintained, however some recorded complaints do not show the outcome of the investigation.

Young people say there are no current bullying issues in the home. Staff advocate strongly on young people's behalf and ensure any incidents inside or outside of the home are resolved to young people's satisfaction. There are clear plans in place to ensure that risks are thoroughly assessed and minimised. Staff actively pursue all leads in respect of young people being absent from the home without authority. Where concerns increase, staff call professional meetings to discuss strategies in order to ensure young people's safe return home. The arrangements for reporting significant events to appropriate authorities are well understood by staff, offering further protection to young people.

Staff work consistently to behaviour management plans and rewards feature far more than sanctions in enabling young people to develop socially acceptable behaviour. However, some sanctions imposed for inappropriate behaviour are excessive and unreasonable. Where restraint has occurred trained staff use safe restraint techniques in order to keep young people and themselves safe. Young people and staff confirm that positive relationships exist between them and between young people and their peers. All staff are trained in behaviour management strategies and they have a good understanding of young people's individual behaviours.

The home is safely managed and all health and safety checks including fire and evacuations are carried out in a timely fashion. The suitability of adults in the home is managed through safe recruitment processes which follow best practice guidelines and the safe management of visitors to the home.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Young people's diverse individual needs are met exceptionally well. Staff support young people very well and do not make assumptions about cultural or religious needs and their practice is impressive, in relation to the promotion of religion, race, culture and gender. Key working sessions work extremely well and reports show detailed discussions and goals to achieve. Young people have excellent access to information in relation to a wide range of social issues and have access to persons independent of the home for advice.

There is a strong commitment to promoting young people's educational and training needs. Staff actively discuss preferences with young people and support them to make applications to local colleges or training facilities. Young people's achievements

are celebrated and certificates are displayed within the home. Staff maintain positive links with other professionals within the facilities young people attend and staff promote the importance of young people's attendance, which is excellent.

Staff are enthusiastic and engage young people in activities to develop their skills. They are quick to identify individual interests and have been successful in supporting young people's aspirations. Recreation is clearly linked to developing healthy lifestyles. Excellent art and craft and reading resources are available in the home. A weekly budget is provided and this enables young people to pursue their hobbies in the community.

Young people enjoy their annual holiday away with staff. Young people are made aware of the celebrations and festivities of their own and other communities. For example, birthdays, name days, cultural and religious festivals.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

There are clear placement plans in place that are reviewed on a regular basis. Young people and staff are actively involved and show clear understanding about meeting identified needs. This remains a focus for all staff at the home. Young people are actively involved in their statutory reviews and feel confident to contribute and plan for their future.

Young people are at the forefront of practice at this home. Arrangements to consult with them are good. Feedback from such consultations is always acted upon. Plans are in place to consult with young people's families and other professionals about the service the home provides. Young people are fully involved in decision making about their lives and about how the home is run. Young people's meetings are held regularly and provide opportunities to share views and learn about each other, which promotes tolerance and cohesion in the home .

Arrangements for young people to sustain contact with their families and friends are agreed with placing social workers and are reviewed regularly. Contact arrangements take place as outlined within placement plans. Young people know their arrangements for contact and the home provides sufficient space to facilitate contact in privacy.

Admissions to the home are mostly planned. This allows young people the opportunity to visit and meet other young people and staff. In the event of emergency admissions, arrangements are in place for planning meetings to be convened within appropriate timescales. In both cases, the particular needs of young people are assessed for any likely impact they may have on the current resident group, and equally any likely impact the group may have on them. These arrangements enable the manager to feedback and give opinions to local authority managers on the suitability of any likely admission.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is outstanding.

Young people are supported by staff in obtaining excellent independent living skills. They are encouraged and shown how to cook, shop, plan and prepare their own meals. They are advised about health and safety issues and are shown how to complete household tasks; this helps young people prepare for their eventual independence. Young people have pathway plans completed for them to show them what support they will need to help them make the transition into adulthood.

The home is maintained to an excellent standard and offers young people a spacious, well equipped and pleasantly decorated environment. The home is located in a central position making it ideal for young people to access places of interest. For example, the home is close to sports centres, schools, cinemas and shopping centres.

Young people are provided with their own separate bedrooms, which they are free to personalise. They are provided with excellent facilities to study which supports them to complete their homework. Young people are provided with an arts room to pursue their artistic talents or hobbies. The home provides young people with good quality living accommodation and staff ensure the home is kept clean and repairs are undertaken promptly.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The children's guide makes clear the home's commitment to promoting equality and diversity. It includes information and advice for young people about various faiths and cultures. Young people receive fair and equal treatment within the home. They have comparable opportunities provided to them, so that every individual is able to maximise their true potential.

There is a clear Statement of Purpose in place that reflects practice and facilities in the home well. The young people's guide to the home is available and written in a format which is easily understood and colourful. Both these documents are readily available and updated to inform young people, their families and placing authorities of the services the home provides.

Effective management arrangements enable successful team building and this assists staff to share values which are conveyed in their practice. Staff are committed, focused and feel well supported to fulfil their roles. They receive regular supervision and have annual appraisals. This enables them to reflect on previous and current practice and to identify future training needs, all of which are focused on meeting the

needs of young people. The home exceeds the 80 per cent minimum level of staff holding a relevant qualification. All staff have completed their National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People.

A development plan is in place and this is clearly linked to the monitoring assessments carried out by the manager, which take place each month. Local councillors visit the home each month and report on their findings. However, some reports are brief and do not form an opinion of the standard of care provided at the home. The manager is highly motivated and has a system to chart and monitor all outcomes for young people. This ensures young people's care needs and progress is constantly being monitored and evaluated.

Young people's individual case files are clear, well organised and informative. This allows young people to have a good record of their history and how they are cared for according to their individual and ever changing needs.

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/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Std.	Action	Due date
16	ensure that a written record is made of any complaint, the action taken in response, and the outcome of the investigation (Regulation 24.5)	29/12/2010
22	ensure no measure of control, restraint or other discipline which is excessive or unreasonable shall be used at any time on children accommodated in a children's home (Regulation 17.1)	29/12/2010
32	interview, with their consent and in private, such of the children accommodated there, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home as appears necessary in order to form an opinion of the standard of care provided at the home. (Regulation 33.4.a)	29/12/2010

Recommendations

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

- ensure the opinions and views of the parents of children at the home are ascertained on a regular and frequent basis unless inappropriate. (NMS 8.6)

