

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	21 July 2009
Inspector	Nicola McEvinney
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	5 February 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 provides care and accommodation for five young people, male and female between the ages of 15 and 17 years. The home provides medium to long term care for young people who are being prepared towards independence. It is a detached house located on a housing estate within easy reach of the city centre and within easy access to local community and leisure facilities.

Summary

The purpose of the unannounced key inspection was to check that the core national minimum standards and the recommendation made at the last inspection have been met.

There are some outstanding features to this home. In particular, the care plans are a meaningful working document that clearly sets out the needs of the young people and demonstrates how these needs are to be met. These plans are regularly reviewed and updated.

The home has produced a leaving care manual which includes a range of skills young people need to acquire to be able to live independently. Staff work with the young people to acquire these skills making a smoother transition to independence.

Staff take pride in ensuring the environment is well maintained, pleasantly decorated, providing a homely environment for the young people.

This is a well managed home with a committed staff team who have a clear understanding of the young people's needs.

The Registered Manager was asked to provide a telephone for the young people to enable them to make and receive calls in private.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

There were two sanctions since the last inspection, two young people involved in the same incident. They were encouraged to write a comment following the incident and both thought they had been treated fairly.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

As this is a preparation for independence home, the young people are allocated a budget from which they shop for and prepare their own meals. Staff work with the young people to encourage them to prepare healthy and nutritious meals but some young people choose to eat ready meals. Each young person has a leaving care folder with simple meal plans and recipes to help them devise their menus. The home also has theme nights when staff and young people will prepare meals from different faiths and cultures. The home has organised a group, who specialise in healthy eating, to come and talk to the young people to raise their awareness.

Care plans are produced in line with the Every Child Matters outcomes and the young people's health needs are clearly set out and demonstrate how they are to be met. Staff actively discourage young people from smoking and smoking cessation tools are available in the home or from the doctor. All appointments with health care professionals are recorded.

Although none of the young people are taking prescribed medication the records for non-prescribed medication are in good order. Each young person has an agreement to enable them to self-administer their own medication. All staff have attended first aid training and a number are qualified in first aid, ensuring that young people's accidents are attended to appropriately.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Young people's records are kept securely in a locked cabinet. There is not a telephone for young people to have free access to. Although young people may use the office telephone, these calls are not taken in private.

There are no complaints recorded in the complaints log. Relationships between staff and young people are based on mutual respect. Concerns raised by young people are dealt with sensitively. The home has good relations with neighbours.

Care plans identify how staff can work with the young people to keep themselves safe. All staff have received child protection training at Level 1 and 2. Established staff have received refresher training to ensure that they are updated.

There are only three young people currently living at the home and there are no bullying concerns. The home has recently acquired an anti-bullying DVD which they intend to watch with the young people. Any disagreements are quickly talked through to ensure these do not escalate.

There is clear guidance to staff to ensure they know what action to take when a young person fails to return to the home. Staff ensure they are aware of what the individual is wearing when they leave the home to ensure that a good description can be given to police if they are reported missing. Staff discuss with young people and their friends, the importance of ensuring they return to the home at night.

Young people's files contain details of how young people normally present, with triggers to unwanted behaviours and strategies in dealing with these behaviours. This ensures a consistent approach in managing behaviours. Each young person has an Individual Crisis Management Plan that also advises staff on how young people are best managed to encourage them to maintain self control. All staff have attended control and restraint training although there have not been any restraints used at the home for a number of years. Staff rely upon the de-escalation techniques that this training has shown them when dealing with young people in crisis. The home has clear house rules and expectations which are fair and reasonable. There were two sanctions recorded since the last inspection, these were appropriate.

Fire records are in good order, all fire fighting equipment is checked regularly and drills are held as appropriate, including at night to ensure all staff and young people know what action to take in the event of a fire. The fire officer has also attended the home to speak to the young

people on fire risks, for example, not to leave hair straighteners on. Young people are encouraged to hand in matches and lighters before retiring. The home has a health and safety file to advise staff on appropriate action to take in the event of a range of foreseeable crises. All portable electrical items are (PAT) tested and the gas appliances are serviced annually.

There are robust systems in place for the recruitment of staff ensuring only suitable people are employed.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Staff complete with the young people a Care Assessment Planning Tool (CAPT) which helps identify the individual needs of the young person. Care plans give good detail of what services young people access to help meet these needs. For example, the Looked After Children Nurse gives advice and support on sexual health. Some individuals have sexual health screening. Drug and alcohol projects are accessed to help young people address these issues. The Youth Offending Service (YOS) works with some individuals to address their offending behaviour. An individual from the children and adolescent mental health service (CAMHS) attends fortnightly staff meetings to support and advise the staff team on managing the young people. The home also provides a list of useful contacts that the young people may wish to access. These lists are individual to the young people taking into account their particular circumstances. Key workers spend time with their young person and staff work with young people to help them develop their social skills.

Staff are proactive in encouraging young people to have a daytime occupation. For those young people who have left school efforts are made to try and access further education and training or employment. Some young people have done extremely well in school and are going onto sixth form college to do A levels. Personal Education Plans are in place.

The young people are of an age where they organise their own activities. Although the home does support young people in accessing these. Some young people, for example, do Thai boxing and competes in this sport. The local authority have a card that young people are given to access a number of sporting and entertainment facilities in the city. The young people are going on holiday during the summer to an activity centre. Young people are encouraged to attend a number of the cultural events that are happening in the city over the summer months .

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Care plans are set out under the Every Child Matters outcomes. These are excellent care plans, individual to each young person and incorporates an equality and diversity aspect. This ensures that the individuals needs are recognised and strategies are identified to ensure that this need is met. All necessary Looked After Children documents are on file and completed. As well as the care plan the home produces a daily routine for each young person that outlines what the young person does each day.

Care plans are reviewed very regularly, for example, an individual who was admitted recently has had their plan reviewed four times in the space of a month to take into account new information. Child care reviews are held as appropriate, young people are encouraged to attend

to ensure their views are heard. Staff in attendance take contemporaneous notes to ensure that decisions made at the review may be promptly implemented.

The daily living plans indicate when young people have contact with significant others. The plan also clearly identifies the type of contact young people have with siblings, for example, the frequency of letter box contact. All contacts are recorded.

Young people are moved on to independence or supported living in a planned and structured way. Ongoing support is given to individuals and the home has regular visitors from ex-residents. Admissions to the home are well planned with visits and introductions.

During introductions and admission to the home young people are informed of what the home has to offer them. Young people are also advised what is expected from them and a contract is signed, this helps to instil some responsibility in the young person. Monthly residents meetings are organised, an agenda is set but recently young people have chosen not to attend. However, staff speak to each young person about the agenda items to ensure that they are aware of what is going on and to encourage them to express their opinion.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is outstanding.

The home has developed a leaving care manual and from this each young person has their own leaving care file. Staff endeavour to work with the young people on their independence skills. Key work sessions are booked with each individual to work on a task. For example, staff have purchased a plug and cable to teach young people how to wire a plug and change a fuse. Sewing skills are taught. Young people are also encouraged and supported with budgeting skills. If young people fail to attend their session staff will rebook this. All young people do their own laundry but staff support them in ensuring they know how to iron. The daily care plan indicates the individuals wash day.

The leaving care file also advises young people about choosing their new property and what questions they should ask. What they need to know about their new property, for example, where is the stop tap?

All areas of the home are extremely well maintained and decorated to a high standard creating a homely environment. Any damage to the fabric of the house is promptly repaired. There are pictures, ornaments and plants around the home which adds to the ambience of the home.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

There is a comprehensive Statement of Purpose and children's guide clearly outlining what services can be expected from living at the home.

All staff have attained National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) at Level 3 or equivalent or are undertaking this qualification, ensuring that there are competent people looking after the young people. There are good training opportunities for staff. The registered manager has devised a matrix to enable her to have an overview of what training staff have attended and what training is required. There are clear arrangements for staff to deputise in the registered

manager's absence. The home has had police trainees on placement at the home. This helps build positive relationships between the police and young people.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding.

Rotas demonstrate that there is adequate staff on duty to meet the needs of the young people.

The registered manager exercises effective leadership, there are good monitoring systems in place to ensure that the home is run efficiently. All the homes records are signed by the registered manager and she monitors the young people's files ensuring plans are regularly reviewed in line with changing needs.

Young people's files contain all the required information, they are well organised and easy to follow.

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
9	ensure young people have access to a telephone on which to make and receive telephone calls in private (Regulation 15(4)(a)).	1 October 2009

Recommendations

There are no recommendations.