

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	10 December 2009
Inspector	Thomas Webber
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	23 July 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 care and accommodation to five young people of either sex aged 12 to 16 years. The home is an 'admissions' unit where the intention is to move young people into more suitable accommodation such as return to their parental home, identified foster placement, preparation for independent living or a settled care residential children's unit.

The home is a detached property situated in an urban area of a city centre. Public transport is easily available to enable young people to access the facilities of the city centre.

Summary

This unannounced, key inspection took place over one day. The inspection covered all of the children's homes key standards. This forms part of the annual inspection programme to examine the standard of care and services provided to young people. At the time of inspection, four young people were accommodated.

The home continues to provide a good standard of care to young people which ensures that good outcomes are achieved for them.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

The home has addressed one of the two recommendations made at the last inspection. This related to the establishment of a robust system for the recording of complaints. The recommendation relating to the accurate recording of meals eaten by young people is still not being undertaken.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Staff encourage young people to eat healthily and a varied and satisfactory menu is established which reflects this. Young people's views are sought as part of the compilation of these menus. Individual records are also maintained which records meals offered, eaten and refused by young people. However, these are still not always recorded in sufficient detail. Opportunities are available for young people to be involved in the preparation and cooking of some meals as part of their independence skills training with the support of staff. Young people's religious and cultural needs are also catered for.

Young people live in an environment where their health care needs are met. Young people have access to various professional health care services such as doctors, dentists and opticians. Young people are encouraged and supported to make and attend their health care appointments either on their own or with the support of staff. Suitable records are maintained of these visits. Various specialist input is also provided to meet young people's specific needs. Signed medical consent forms are established for young people. Young people can readily access a range of material and advice in relation to other health care issues.

Appropriate policies, procedures, systems and guidance are established for the safe storage and administration of medication. Most staff have received medication training. Medicines prescribed to young people are normally administered by staff. However, young people can maintain control over their own medication where this is deemed appropriate and based on a risk assessment.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The rights of young people are actively promoted to ensure that their privacy and dignity is respected. Young people's records are kept secure and staff understand the need to keep their information confidential whilst being clear about the limits of confidentiality.

Clear policies and procedures are established for dealing with all complaints. Young people are made aware of this procedure on admission. Staff support young people to raise any issues of concern openly and the process of making a complaint is clearly understood by them. Since the last inspection, the home has received one complaint which was promptly investigated and satisfactorily resolved.

Young people live in an environment where their welfare is promoted and they are protected from abuse. Appropriate policies and procedures are established in respect to child protection with all staff having received appropriate training. A system is established to ensure that staff receive regular ongoing refresher training in this area of practise.

An anti-bullying policy is established which is conveyed to young people on admission. Staff acknowledge that some bullying has occurred including racial bullying. Suitable protocols are established to address this with all incidents being promptly challenged and recorded by staff.

A clear system is established for the reporting and recording of any event where a young person goes absent without authority.

Staff assist young people to develop socially acceptable behaviour through encouragement and reinforcement of the home's boundaries and expectations. Positive behaviour incentives are also used to address specific aspects of young people's behaviour. All negative behaviour is challenged and addressed with additional resources being utilised to assist with this. Sanctions and physical intervention are also used with staff being trained in the use of physical intervention. Detailed records are not being maintained of all sanctions and physical interventions. Although physical intervention plans are established for young people, detailed individual behaviour management plans are not established to provide staff with clear guidance on how to effectively manage challenging behaviour.

The health and safety policy and practice guidelines within the home are robust to ensure that the staff and young people are appropriately safeguarded. A tour of the premises identified no specific health and safety issues. Young people and staff regularly practise fire evacuation procedures and the various fire safety records are being suitably maintained.

The authority has established robust staff recruitment practices for the careful selection and vetting of all new staff to ensure the protection of young people. New staff do not commence employment in the home until all the relevant checks have been carried out.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people receive the level of support based on their specific needs by a committed staff team. The cultural and religious needs of individual young people are also well supported and catered for with appropriate staff being recruited to assist in this. Specialist support is also provided to meet the specific needs of young people. Detailed key worker reports are completed in respect to young people.

Educational placements are established for all young people. Staff actively promote and support young people to maintain these. Young people's attendance is linked to a positive behaviour modification plan where young people can earn additional money, although attendance can be spasmodic. Staff ensure that they attend young people's educational reviews including personal education planning meetings. Suitable facilities are provided to young people for private study.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Care plans are established for young people which are regularly reviewed. However, these do not provide sufficient detail on how staff meet their day to day care needs. Young people's placements are routinely reviewed and they are given every opportunity to attend these either for the whole or part of their review, depending on their particular circumstances. All other relevant parties are also invited to attend young people's statutory reviews.

Staff are committed to supporting young people to maintain the level of agreed contact between themselves and family members according to their individual circumstances. Opportunities are available for young people to meet with any visitors such as social workers and advocates in private. Young people also have access to a landline phone where they can make and receive telephone calls in private. Reasonable privacy is maintained when using this facility. Young people can also use the home's cordless phone if necessary.

Young people are encouraged to contribute to and influence the way the home is run. This is achieved through their key worker sessions, regular house meetings and being encouraged and supported to raise and discuss issues on a day to day basis. Young people's questionnaires have been recently introduced as part of the home's quality assurance system, which provides them with the opportunity to comment on the care and services provided.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

The home is maintained to a good standard being clean, tidy and comfortable. It is also furnished and decorated to a good standard. The home provides young people with sufficient communal space to meet their individual and collective needs. Young people are provided with their own bedrooms which they can personalise to their individual tastes. The home also provides young people with sufficient bath, shower and toilet facilities and the doors are fitted with suitable locks to promote young people's privacy and dignity.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Diversity and equality are promoted well in all aspects of the service. Policies and procedures relating to equal opportunities are well established. The home promotes diversity and tolerance taking into account the cultural and individual needs of young people.

A clear Statement of Purpose is established which describes the level of service provided to young people. Copies of this document are readily available to interested parties on request. A young people's guide is also produced which provides young people with information they need to know about the home. A copy of this document is provided to young people as part of their pre-visit or on admission to the home.

Young people are looked after by a staff team who are themselves properly managed and supported in safeguarding and promoting the young people's welfare. Various forums are established to ensure that staff are kept up to date with regard to any issues pertaining to the home and young people. These include regular staff meetings and daily handover meetings. Formal individual supervision is provided to staff, although not all staff receive this at the recommended intervals.

Young people are looked after by a staff team who are competent and trained to meet their needs. An induction programme is provided to all new staff. Although an up to date individual training record has still not been established for all staff, staff are supported to increase their knowledge and expertise by attending a range of training courses. 92% of the staff team have also achieved the National Vocational Qualification at Level 3 in the Care of Children and Young People.

The home is committed to providing sufficient staff on duty to meet the young people's individual and collective needs. A minimum of three care staff are on duty during the mornings and four on in the evenings. The staffing levels have been increased since the last inspection due to the needs and disruption of young people being accommodated and to maintain safe levels of staffing. Two staff also sleep in each night. Young people are cared for by a stable staff team who have a variety of experience. Staff undertake a multi-purpose role in carrying out most aspects of care to young people.

The authority ensures that the care and welfare of young people is continually monitored through monthly unannounced visits undertaken by various team managers within the authority. Reports are produced outlining the visits and any action needed to improve the outcomes for young people.

The home is managed by a Registered Manager who is suitably qualified and has considerable experience in the care of young people. The manager is supported by two assistant unit managers which enables them to effectively monitor the day to day care provided to 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
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22	ensure that within 24 hours of the use of any measure of control, restraint or discipline, a full written record is maintained with reference to all sanctions and physical interventions (Regulation 17(4))	11 January 2010
2	ensure that a written plan is established for all young people which demonstrates how, on a day to day basis, they will be cared for. (Regulation 12(1)(a))	28 February 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 record of menus demonstrates provision of a suitable and varied diet with particular reference to maintaining detailed records of meals offered, eaten and refused by young people (NMS 10.4)
- ensure that clear written policies, procedures and guidance are established in the form of individual behaviour management plans for young people (NMS 22.2)
- ensure that all staff receive formal individual supervision at the recommended intervals (NMS 28.2)
- ensure that all staff have an up to date personal development plan. (NMS 31.4)