

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	10 June 2010
Inspector	Thomas Webber
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	10 December 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, interim inspection took place over one day. The inspection covered some of the key standards for children's homes, with specific reference to the actions and recommendations identified at the last key inspection. 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. This was confirmed by young people spoken to, records seen and observations made.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection two actions and four recommendations were identified. The actions related to the recording of sanctions and physical interventions, and care plans. Both actions have been complied with, although further improvements need to be made to the care plans. Two recommendations relating to individual management plans and up-to-date personal development plans for staff have been addressed. However, the recommendations relating to individual records of food eaten by young people and formal supervision for staff still require attention.

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. Although individual records are maintained which record meals offered, eaten and refused by young people, 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 commented very positively about the quality and quantity of food provided.

Young people live in an environment where their health care needs are met. Young people confirmed that appropriate arrangements are in place. Young people are supported to access various health care services such as doctors, dentists and opticians. Young people can readily access a range of material and advice in relation to other health care issues.

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 are respected. Young people confirmed this. Young people's records are kept secure and staff understand the need to keep young people's information confidential while 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 four complaints. Although the complaints are promptly dealt with, the recording does not provide sufficient information to include the action taken and the outcome.

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 of 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 practice.

An anti-bullying policy is established which is conveyed to young people on admission. Staff acknowledge that some bullying has occurred and extra staff were deployed to minimise this. Suitable protocols are established to address this with all incidents being promptly challenged and recorded by staff. Currently young people do not see bullying as an area of concern.

A clear system is established for the reporting and recording of any event where a young person goes absent without consent. However, absences by young people without consent are not always being appropriately recorded. A new format is now in place to address these deficiencies. Every effort is made to return young people to the home at the earliest opportunity to ensure their protection.

Staff assist young people to develop socially acceptable behaviour through reinforcement of the home's boundaries and expectations. Positive behaviour incentives together with sanctions and physical intervention are also used to address specific aspects of young people's behaviour. All staff are trained in the use of physical intervention. Physical intervention and separate individual behaviour management plans are established for young people which provide staff with guidance on how to manage young people's challenging behaviour. The behaviour of young people has been particularly difficult and stressful for staff to manage over the past few months with a number of staff being assaulted. Additional resources were utilised to assist with this. This situation has now improved and all negative behaviour is challenged and addressed appropriately.

The home has robust health and safety policy and practice guidelines to ensure that the staff and young people are appropriately safeguarded. Young people and staff regularly practise fire evacuation procedures and the various fire safety records are accurate and up to date.

The authority has established robust staff recruitment practices 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 not judged.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Care plans are established for young people which are regularly reviewed. However, although these now provide more detail they still do not provide sufficient detail on how staff meet their day-to-day care needs.

Young people commented very positively about the care and support provided by the staff. They related their experiences of living at the home as being very good. Young people feel confident that staff would do their best to deal with any concerns that they raise. Positive and relaxed relationships were observed between the young people and staff, and young people were at ease in their company.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is not judged.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

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. However, formal individual supervision is still not being provided to all staff at the recommended intervals.

Young people are looked after by a staff team who are competent and trained to meet their needs. Individual staff training records are now up to date with staff being supported to increase their knowledge and expertise by attending a range of training courses. Ninety two percent 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 two care staff are on duty during the mornings and three on in the evenings. Two staff continue to sleep-in each night. Additional staff were previously employed to manage the needs and disruptive behaviour of young people accommodated. However, these numbers have now been reduced due to the change of young people accommodated. Young people continue to be 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 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
16	ensure that a comprehensive written record is made of any complaint, the action taken in response and the outcome of the investigation. (Regulation 24(5))	21 June 2010

Recommendations

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

- ensure that all individual records detail meals offered, eaten and refused by young people (NMS 10.4)
- ensure that detailed records are maintained when young people go absent without consent (NMS 19.6)
- ensure that young people's written care plans are further developed to demonstrate how staff meet their day-to-day care needs (NMS 2.2)
- ensure that all staff receive at least one-to-one supervision from a senior member of staff each month. (NMS 28.2)