

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	23 July 2009
Inspector	Thomas Webber
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	18 November 2008
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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. 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, five young people were accommodated.

This home continues to provide a good standard of care to young people which ensures that good outcomes are achieved for them. This is supported by positive comments made by young people and documentary evidence seen.

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 taken action to address two of the four recommendations made at the last inspection. These relate to establishing individual training records for staff and all staff are now trained in child protection. New formats have been established in respect to improving the recording of sanctions and restraints as well as fire training for staff, although these have yet to be implemented.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Staff encourage young people to eat healthily and a varied and satisfactory menu is established to reflect this. Young people's religious and cultural needs are also well catered for. Young people's views are sought as part of the compilation of the menus. Individual records are also maintained of food actually eaten and refused by them. However, these are still not always being sufficiently completed. Staff support young people in the preparation and cooking of some meals as part of developing their independence skills. Young people commented positively about the opportunities available to them and the quality and quantity of food provided.

Policy and practice guidelines are established for the safe storage and administration of medication. This refers to young people maintaining control over their own medication where this is deemed appropriate and based on a risk assessment. Safe medication storage practices are established in line with best practice.

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 are provided with their own bedrooms and staff knock before entering. Opportunities are available for young people to meet family members and visitors in private. Young people are also able to make and receive telephone calls in private. Young people's records are securely stored and information is confidentially handled by staff.

Clear policies and procedures are established for dealing with all complaints. Young people are made aware of this procedure which is referred to within the home's Young People's Guide. 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 three complaints. However, the recording system does not always clearly show whether young people are satisfied with the outcome and when the investigation is completed.

Young people live in an environment where their welfare is promoted and they are protected from abuse. Appropriate policies and procedures are in place in respect to child protection and includes access to the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures. All staff have received child protection training.

Appropriate policies, procedures and guidance are established in respect to the prevention of bullying. This is conveyed to the young people on admission and is suitably documented in the home's Young People's Guide. Currently bullying is not seen as an issue by staff and young people. However, any incidents of bullying are promptly addressed by staff on an individual or group basis.

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

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. Sanctions and physical intervention are used when necessary. Any negative behaviour is addressed on an individual and/or group basis. Staff are trained in the use of physical intervention and, in the main, suitable records are maintained of these. A new format is established for the recording of sanctions which will address the deficiency of the consequence and effectiveness.

The health and safety policy and practice guidelines within the home are robust to ensure that the staff and young people are appropriately safeguarded. Health and safety and fire risk assessments have been established which are regularly reviewed and updated as and when required. 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. However, a new format is being established for the recording of fire training undertaken by staff.

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. No new members of staff have been recruited since the last inspection, therefore, this standard was not assessed on this occasion.

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 good.

Young people are looked after by a staff team who are competent and trained to meet their needs. Staff are supported and encouraged to increase their knowledge and skill base by attending appropriate and specialist training. An up to date individual training record is now established for all staff. Significant improvements have been made to ensure that the minimum ratio of 80% of the staff team have achieved the National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in the Care of Children and Young People. This is now exceeded with all care staff having now achieved this qualification.

The manager is supported by two assistant unit managers which enable them to effectively monitor the day to day care provided to young people. The home is committed to providing sufficient staff on duty to meet the individual and collective needs of the young people by maintaining a minimum of two care staff on duty throughout the day and night. These staffing levels exclude those hours worked by the manager. 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 the young people. Young people commented positively about the care and support provided by the staff. Young people are appreciative of the clear boundaries established within the home, although sometimes it is felt that they are treated differently by staff.

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

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

- ensure that young people's individual records maintain an accurate record of meals eaten by them (NMS 10)
- ensure that a robust system is established for the recording of complaints. (NMS 16)