

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Thomas Webber
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Date of last inspection	10/06/2010
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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

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

The overall quality rating is good.

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

This unannounced, key inspection took place over one day. The inspection covered all of the key standards for children's homes. 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. Two of the three present were seen and participated in the inspection process.

The home continues to provide a good standard of care to young people which ensures that satisfactory to good outcomes are achieved for them. This is endorsed by comments made by young people, observations made and records seen.

Improvements since the last inspection

Four recommendations were made at the last inspection. These relate to some aspects of the home's administration and to improve the frequency of staff supervision. The Registered Manager has successfully addressed these deficiencies with the exception of staff supervision.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people are encouraged to eat a healthy and varied diet. They are also encouraged to contribute to the planning of the menus. Young people are provided with the opportunities to eat a range of meals from different cultures and any particular religious and cultural needs are well catered for. Opportunities are readily

available for young people to be involved in the preparation and cooking of some meals with the support of staff. Young people can also make their own drinks and snacks. Young people commented very positively about the quantity and quality of meals provided.

Young people live in an environment where their health care needs are met. Young people are registered with the local general practitioner, dentist and opticians. Staff fully support young people to access the various health care services and suitable records are maintained of these appointments. Specialist services are also provided to meet the specific needs of young people. Support and advice is provided to young people on a range of other health care issues.

The home ensures that the welfare of young people in relation to medication is safeguarded. Appropriate guidance and systems are established for the safe storage, receipt, administration and the disposal of unwanted medication. Staff receive training in the safe administration of medication and tend to administer any medication to young people. 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.

Staff actively promote the rights of young people by ensuring that their privacy and dignity is respected. Young people's information is kept secure and staff understand the need to keep their information confidential as well as being clear about the limits of maintaining confidentiality.

Clear policies and procedures are established for dealing with complaints and young people are provided with information about this process. Young people are well aware of how to complain and staff support them to raise any concerns openly. Since the last inspection, the home has received no complaints about the care and services provided. Previous records show that all complaints are addressed without delay.

The safety and welfare of young people are promoted and protected. A copy of the Local Safeguarding Children Board's procedures are established and are readily available to staff. All staff have received safeguarding training. They also receive regular refresher training. There has been one safeguarding referral made since the last inspection. Prompt action was taken to address this referral.

Measures are taken to protect young people from bullying. An anti-bullying policy is established which is conveyed to young people. Staff take positive action to minimise and address any incidents of bullying which is periodically raised at young people's meetings. Young people do not currently see bullying as a major area of concern. Suitable records are maintained of all incidents of bullying.

A clear system is established for the reporting and recording of any event where young people go absent without authority. There are individual risk assessments for

young people and clear protocols are established with the local police. Staff respond appropriately to any absence to ensure that young people are safely returned at the earliest opportunity. Comprehensive records are now maintained which detail the reasons for young people's absences and any action taken in the light of those reasons.

Young people are assisted to develop socially acceptable behaviour through praise, encouragement and reinforcement of the home's expectations. Sanctions and restraints are also used where necessary with staff being trained in the use of physical intervention. Appropriate records of sanctions and restraints are being maintained. Physical intervention and separate individual behaviour management plans are established for young people. These provide staff with guidance on how to consistently manage young people's challenging behaviour. As a result of some changes within the group of young people accommodated a much calmer atmosphere has been created within the home.

Health and safety policy and procedures are established to ensure that the staff and young people are appropriately safeguarded. No specific health and safety issues were identified during a tour of the premises. Young people and staff regularly practise fire evacuation procedures to ensure that they are all appropriately safeguarded. The various fire records maintained are kept accurate and up-to-date.

Robust staff recruitment practices are established to ensure the protection of young people. New staff do not commence employment in the home until all the relevant checks are carried out.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The staff team demonstrate a strong commitment to ensure that young people receive the level of care and support to meet their individual needs. These are outlined in their respective care plans and include young people's specific cultural and religious requirements. Specialist services are also provided to meet the specific needs of young people. Young people are fully supported by their key workers through regular sessions that focus and reflect upon individual aspirations as well as any difficulties. However, young people receive care and support from all members of staff.

Staff fully promote the education of young people to ensure that they attain their educational potential. Young people attend various educational placements which are tailored to meet their individual needs. A positive incentive system is used to encourage good attendance at school. Young people's attendance varies depending on their individual circumstances, with some being very good. All successes are fully celebrated by the staff. Staff attend young people's school reviews as well as parents' evenings and other special events. Good communication and liaison is maintained between the home and young people's educational placements. Young people are also provided with suitable facilities to engage in private study.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Care plans are established for young people which are based on their assessed needs. These together with other associated documents provide staff with suitable guidance on how to care for them on a daily basis. These plans are subject to regular review which ensures that they remain relevant to young people's current needs. Young people are supported and encouraged to attend and contribute to their statutory reviews. These are held at the required intervals and involve all other relevant parties.

Staff are very committed to maintaining the level of agreed contact between young people and their families according to their individual circumstances. Effective systems are established to ensure young people's families and social workers are kept informed regarding the well-being and progress made by them. Suitable arrangements are in place to enable young people to make and receive telephone calls as well as to meet with visitors in private.

The home operates a culture of consultation where young people are encouraged to contribute to and influence the way the home is run. This is achieved through regular young people's meetings and key worker sessions. These forums provide young people with the opportunities to raise and discuss any issues openly. Young people also make decisions about their lives on a daily basis. Young people's questionnaires are established which enables them to comment on the care and services provided. However, the feedback does not form part of the home's overall quality assurance reporting system.

Young people live in a caring and supportive environment where positive and relaxed relationships exist between the staff and young people. A friendly and relaxed atmosphere has been created where young people can freely express their views about a range of issues. Staff carry out their duties in a caring and respectful manner where young people are relaxed and at ease in their company. Young people commented positively about the care and support provided and their overall experience at living at the home.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is satisfactory.

The design and location of the home is suitable for its stated function. However, it is only maintained to an adequate standard. Some parts of the home give the appearance of being unkempt with a lack of pride and ownership being taken by young people and staff in relation to their living environment.

The home provides young people with sufficient communal space to meet their individual and collective needs. Young people are also provided with their own

bedrooms which they have personalised to their individual tastes. Young people's bedroom doors are fitted with appropriate locks. However, young people are not provided with keys to these locks and have to ask staff to unlock the doors for them. The home also provides young people with sufficient bath, shower and toilet facilities and the doors are fitted with suitable locks to promote the privacy and dignity of young people. Suitable laundry facilities are provided to meet the needs of the home.

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 individual needs of young people.

A clear Statement of Purpose is established which describes the level of service young people can expect to receive and how they will be cared for. Copies of this document are available on request. A young people's guide is also produced which provides young people with information they need to know about the home. However, these documents do not refer to or reflect the reasons for the alarms fitted to young people's bedroom doors and the use of key fob access to doors on the ground floor.

Young people are looked after by a staff team who are themselves properly managed and supported in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of young people. Daily handover meetings and regular staff meetings are well established. These ensure that staff are kept up to date regarding any issues relating to the home and young people. However, formal, individual staff supervision is still not provided at the recommended intervals which monitor the development and ongoing performance of staff.

Young people are looked after by a staff team who are trained and competent to meet their needs. Most (92%) of the staff team have achieved the National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in the Care of Children and Young People. New staff are provided with an induction programme. Staff are supported to develop their knowledge and expertise by undertaking a range of both mandatory and more specialist training.

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 with three on in the evenings. These staffing levels are increased or decreased depending on the numbers and needs and risk factors of the young people accommodated at any given time. The hours worked by the manager are additional to these staffing levels. Two staff sleep-in each night. Young people continue to be cared for by a very stable staff team who have a variety of experience in working with young people. Staff undertake a multi-purpose role in carrying out most aspects of care for young people.

The authority ensures that the care and welfare of young people is continually monitored through monthly unannounced visits. Reports are produced outlining the nature of these visits and any action needed to improve the outcomes for young people. However, the views of young people seen, as part of these visits, are not routinely recorded.

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/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
24	ensure that all parts of the home are suitably furnished, equipped and kept clean and reasonably maintained including young people's bedrooms (Regulation 31(2)(c)&(e) and (8)(a))	30/04/2011
1	ensure that the home's Statement of Purpose and young people's guide are revised with particular reference to the use of bedroom door alarms and the key fob access to the external doors. (Regulation 5(a))	18/04/2011

Recommendations

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

- ensure that feedback from young people in relation to the care and services provided forms part of the home's overall quality assurance reporting system (NMS 8.5)
- ensure that the practice of physical restrictions on normal movement within the home by young people without recourse to staff is reviewed (NMS 23.5)
- ensure that all staff receive at least one-to-one supervision from a senior member of staff each month (NMS 28.2)
- ensure that the persons carrying out the monitoring visits to the home interview young people to ascertain their views and record these in the monitoring report. (NMS 32.2)

