

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	4 January 2010
Inspector	Thomas Webber
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	31 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 for five young people, male and female, aged 11 to under 18 years who may be experiencing emotional and behavioural difficulties.

The home is a large detached 1960s property, situated in a quiet corner of a residential area adjacent to a community farm. Local bus routes located nearby provide easy access to the amenities 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, five 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 is endorsed by comments made by young people and various professionals involved with the home, together with observations and records 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 action identified at the last inspection has been complied with which relates to full written records being maintained of all physical interventions applied.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people benefit from eating a healthy diet. They are involved in the compilation of the menus which includes meals from different cultures. A varied and satisfactory menu is established which reflects the meals provided to young people. Opportunities are available for young people to be involved in the shopping, preparation and cooking of some meals with the support of staff as part of their independence skills training. Young people commented positively about the quality and quantity of food provided.

Young people live in an environment where their health care needs are met, having access to the various professional health care services. Some young people choose not to use these services, although staff will support and accompany them to appointments. Suitable records are also maintained of the health care provided. Various specialist input is provided to meet young people's specific needs. Signed medical consent forms are established for young people. Support, advice and information is readily available 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. Safe medication storage practices are maintained with all medication being kept secure in facilities in line with best practice. Suitable systems are established for the recording of medication received and administered.

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 also kept secure and staff understand the need to keep their information confidential while being clear about the limits of confidentiality.

Clear policies and procedures are established for dealing with any complaints, with young people being given clear information about this procedure. Young people are supported to raise any issues of concern openly and the process of making a complaint is clearly understood by them. No complaints have been received since the last inspection. Previous complaints received were addressed without delay and promptly responded to.

Young people live in a safe environment where their welfare is promoted and they are protected from abuse. Suitable child protection policies and procedures are established and staff continue to receive ongoing training in this area of practice.

Young people are protected from bullying and an anti-bullying policy is established which is conveyed to the young people on admission. Staff take action to challenge any incidents of bullying with the main focus being placed on its effects. Young people commented that bullying is not an area of concern.

A clear system is established for the responding, reporting and recording of any event where a young person goes absent without consent. Staff inform all relevant parties of any such incidents. Although the home has written guidance to protect young people who are absent without authority, some records detailing their return are not recorded in sufficient detail.

Young people are supported to develop socially acceptable behaviour through encouragement, reinforcement and positive behaviour incentives. Sanctions and the use of physical restraint are also used where necessary. Young people's inappropriate behaviour is challenged by staff who also support them to look at the effects of their behaviour on themselves and others and how they can improve it. All staff are trained in the use of physical intervention. Records of physical interventions are now being suitably recorded. 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 staff and young people are appropriately safeguarded. A tour of the premises identified no specific health and safety issues. The various fire safety records are suitably maintained. Fire evacuation procedures are not routinely being carried out by staff and all young people to ensure their safety in the event of a fire.

The authority has 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 individual needs. Young people are supported by a staff team who are strongly committed to supporting young people to develop and achieve in all aspects of their lives. Various other professional support is also provided to help young people where necessary. Various individual risk assessments are also established in respect to young people.

The education of young people is actively promoted to ensure their educational attainment. A reward incentive is also established to promote young people's attendance at school. Staff maintain close liaison with the young people's schools and attend any activities as part of celebrating their successes. Staff also support young people with their private study and suitable facilities are available to assist with this. Personal education plans are established for young people.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Young people are provided with care plans which identify their needs and who will meet them, including any specialist input. However, the care plans do not provide sufficient detail on how the needs of young people will be met on a day-to-day basis. Young people are encouraged and supported to attend and express their views at their statutory reviews which are held at the recommended intervals. Young people are also encouraged and supported to contribute to this process by completing their own pre-review report. All other relevant parties are also invited to attend young people's reviews.

Staff are committed to supporting young people to maintain the level of agreed contact between themselves and their family members according to their individual circumstances. Staff assist with transport and are also involved in supervised contact between young people and their families, where appropriate. Records of contact arrangements are suitably maintained. Opportunities are in place for young people to meet with their family members and other visitors as well as the making and receiving of telephone calls in private.

The home ensures that young people are admitted to and leave the home in a planned and sensitive manner. Most admissions are planned which enable young people to make a number of visits to the home prior to admission where they are provided with relevant information about the home. Families are involved in this process, depending on the young person's individual circumstances.

Young people are encouraged and supported to make decisions and contribute to and influence the way the home is run. This is achieved through young people's statutory reviews, key worker sessions, house meetings and on a day-to-day basis.

Young people live in a supportive environment where positive relationships were observed between the staff and young people. A friendly and relaxed atmosphere has been created where young people are supported to express their views about any issues. Staff carry out their duties in a caring manner and young people are relaxed and at ease in their company. Young people commented positively about the care and support provided to them.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

The home's design and location is suitable for its stated function. Young people live in a homely and welcoming environment which is maintained to a good standard, being clean, tidy and comfortable. It is also furnished and decorated to a good standard. Young people are provided with a good level of communal space to meet their individual and collective needs. A programme of redecoration continues to be undertaken to enhance young people's living environment.

Young people are provided with individual bedrooms which are personalised to their individual tastes. Locks are fitted to their bedroom doors as well as the communal bath, shower and toilet facilities to promote young people's privacy and dignity. 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 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 on request to all interested parties. 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-admission visits or on admission to the home, depending on the status of their admission.

Young people are looked after by a staff team who are themselves properly managed and supported in safeguarding and promoting 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, daily handover meetings and formal staff supervision and appraisals.

Young people are looked after by a staff team who are competent and trained to meet their needs. New staff are provided with an induction programme and staff are also supported and encouraged to increase their knowledge and expertise through attendance at appropriate training. The home continues to make good progress to ensure that young people are cared for by a fully trained workforce. The staff team have exceeded the 80% benchmark in 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 individual and collective needs of the young people. There are two care staff on duty in the mornings and three in the evenings. Two members of care staff also sleep in each night. The home ensures that there is always a female member of staff on duty to meet the particular needs of young people accommodated. Staff have a variety of experience in the care of young people and the home ensures that young people receive care from a stable staff team.

The authority ensures that the care and welfare of the young people is continually monitored with monthly unannounced visits being undertaken by the senior staff within the authority. Reports are produced outlining these visits and any action needed to improve the outcomes for young people. The home continues to be managed by a Registered Manager who is suitably

qualified and experienced. The manager is supported by three 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
26	ensure that fire drills and practices involve staff and all young people so that they are all aware of the procedure to be followed in case of fire (Regulation 32(1)(e))	31 March 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))	31 March 2010

Recommendations

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

- ensure that full written records are maintained in respect of young people who go absent without consent (NMS 19.6)
- ensure that clear written policies, procedures and guidance are established in the form of individual behaviour management plans for young people. (NMS 22.2)