

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	1 October 2009
Inspector	David Martin
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	20 January 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 support for four young people of either sex between the ages of 11 and 17 years. Young people are accommodated in single bedrooms on the upper floor and there are three communal rooms and office accommodation downstairs. The home is a detached property located close to public transport and local amenities.

Summary

This unannounced key inspection was carried out to assess the home's performance against all key standards and to assess outcomes for young people. In addition, a check was made of progress the home has made in relation to meeting actions and recommendations contained in the last inspection report.

The home actively meets the health and educational needs of young people. It is a safe environment and young people are protected from harm. Young people's views are valued and the staff encourage them to make a positive contribution to the way in which the home is run.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last inspection the home has made sure that it has obtained personal education plans for each young person. This ensures that the home can support young people to access education.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people are provided with healthy, nutritious meals. The young people plan the menus with guidance from staff. There is written information promoting healthy eating and about making healthy choices. Mealtimes are sociable occasions and the young people like the food. Young people benefit from the home's positive approach to healthy eating.

Each young person has a health care plan which identifies medical needs and how they will be met. All young people are registered with primary healthcare providers and receive specialist advice as required. This includes support from the drugs and alcohol advisory service and sexual health guidance. The staff actively promote healthy life choices and value health education.

Medicines are stored securely and there are good systems in place to ensure that they are administered safely. The records are well maintained and provide an accurate account of medication held in the home. Staff have completed a range of health care training courses including first aid. This ensures that they can respond effectively when young people have accidents.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Young people's privacy and dignity is respected. Bedrooms and bathrooms are lockable and there is access to a private telephone. Young people are required to be appropriately dressed when they are in communal areas of the home.

Records are held securely in the home's offices. The staff have completed training on issues of confidentiality which ensures that information about young people is protected.

The young people have clear information about raising their concerns. Where possible the home attempts to resolve issues before they reach the stage of formal complaint. The staff are trained in safeguarding. There have been no safeguarding issues in the home in the period since the last inspection. The home successfully promotes an anti-bullying culture. The home does not regularly encounter young people going missing. These steps help protect young people from harm.

The home actively promotes good, socially acceptable behaviour. Staff have been trained in using safe methods of physical intervention and techniques for managing confrontation. There is minimal use of sanctions.

The premises are maintained in good order throughout. The fire risk assessment is out of date but all other fire safety checks are carried out to ensure that the building is safe.

New staff are employed following a robust selection process and thorough vetting. This ensures that staff are suitable to work with young people and contributes to their overall safety and well being.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Each young person has an individual case file and care plan which sets out how their needs will be met. The plans are kept up to date and reviewed by key workers and the young people themselves. Key workers have responsibility for liaising with parents, schools and social workers. The individuality of young people is recognised and care and support is tailored accordingly.

The home actively promotes the education of young people. The staff support the young people to and from school and make sure they are prepared for the school day. There are personal education plans in place and the staff are proactive in liaising with schools. Young people are expected to complete homework and have a study area in their bedrooms.

The home encourages young people to be involved in activities in the local community. The staff ensure that the young people's leisure time is enjoyable and they are involved in planning activities in key worker sessions and young peoples' house meetings. The young people use their free time constructively and have informal opportunities to learn and widen their experience.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

There are detailed records for each young person setting out their needs and the support and guidance they require. This ensures that care is given consistently. There are regular reviews of the arrangements, taking into account progress and achievements and planning for the

future. The young people also make direct contributions to monthly reviews with key workers. Young people are assisted to express their views either in writing or verbally.

There are appropriate arrangements for young people to maintain contact with family and friends. The home complies with any limitations on contact, ensuring that it takes place safely.

Young people are admitted to and discharged from the home in a planned way. The staff acknowledge that the experience of being admitted to the home may be traumatic, and thus ensure that the process is managed sensitively and positively. Young people are consulted on the day to day running of the home and can make contributions to the menu and activities. There are house meetings every week. Young people's opinions are valued.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Young people are assisted to gain practical skills that will assist them to live independently. They are encouraged to participate in the preparation of meals and to do their own laundry. The home has developed a plan for each young person which identifies the support and guidance that they need to help them make the transition into adulthood.

The premises are maintained in good decorative order. Communal rooms are comfortably furnished and spacious. The young people live in a homely environment which is safe.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The young people's files reflect their individuality and some of the staff have completed equality training. There is an equality and diversity file containing a range of information about different cultures and religions. The children's guide to the home and the minutes of young people's meetings make brief references to equality and diversity issues.

The statement of purpose has been reviewed and is up to date and accurate. It sets out the arrangements for the way in which the home is run. There is a children's guide to the home which explains what it is like to live in the home. This ensures that young people are aware of the service they can expect from the home.

The home has a competent, experienced staff team. All staff have childcare qualifications and access to ongoing training which ensures that their practice is up to date. They receive monthly supervision and have regular staff meetings. There are always sufficient staff on duty to ensure that young people have access to support and guidance.

The home is subject to regular monitoring visits. However, the reports issued after each visit do not evaluate the quality of the work in the home. The reports do not currently make an effective contribution to the overall quality assurance processes in the home.

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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Recommendations

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

- ensure that the fire risk assessment is up to date (NMS 26)
- ensure that the young people's guide to the home and the minutes of young people's meetings reflect the home's commitment to equality and diversity (NMS 1)
- ensure that Regulation 33 monitoring visits evaluate the quality of the work carried out in the home (NMS33)