

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC035220
Inspection date	18 September 2009
Inspector	Deborah White
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	20 May 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 children's home provides care and accommodation for up to three children, of either sex, aged 14 years to 17 years who are preparing to leave care.

The house is detached with an enclosed garden to the rear. The ground floor is made up of a lounge with satellite television, a dining room with a computer and a kitchen.

The first floor has bedrooms, the staff office and a bathroom. Each young person has their own bedroom.

There were no children present at the time of this inspection.

Summary

The purpose of this unannounced key inspection was to look at the key National Minimum Standards (NMS) and the actions and recommendations from the last visit.

All outcomes for children were looked at. Outcomes for being healthy; staying safe; enjoying and achieving; economic wellbeing and organisation are good and outcomes for positive contribution are satisfactory.

This home provides good outcomes for children who are moving towards independent living. Children are encouraged to develop useful skills and are supported to grow in confidence. Staying safe outcomes show children are kept safe and learn how to recognise risky situations. College attendance is good to promote achievement and the organisation at the home is effective.

Placement plans do not fully show effectiveness of placements and healthcare plans do not fully show all known health needs. Arrangements to respond to significant incidents are not fully evidenced and consultation with parents does not include asking their views about the home's operation.

There are no actions and five recommendations arising from this visit.

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 the registered person was required to improve risk assessments and placement plans.

Risk assessments clearly show hazards to children, staff and visitors, and how risks will be minimised to promote safety.

Placement plans are improved to show children's assessed needs and how these will be met on a day-to-day basis.

Recommendations to improve the countering bullying, and lone working, risk assessments are met and pathway plans are improved to show how children will be supported into adulthood.

A recommendation to improve healthcare plans is not met and will be raised again in this report.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are encouraged to take a healthy balanced diet. Staff guide and advise children, who prepare their own meals, how to shop on a budget and include healthy eating options in their menus. Weekly meals are arranged where staff and children prepare, and eat, a meal together as a social occasion.

Children's health needs are met. All children are registered with primary health services and are encouraged to attend health promotion visits. Records are kept, so staff can monitor children's health, and advice about growing up is given in regular key-worker sessions.

Healthcare plans include a range of needs but some significant, known, needs are not recorded adequately.

All staff have up-to-date training in the safe administration of medication and first-aid. Medication is stored in a locked cabinet and records are kept to monitor the stock balance of medicines brought into the home.

First-aid boxes are easily accessible and adequately stocked to safeguard children against accidental injury.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children's privacy is respected. Each child has their own bedroom that they can secure. Staff do not enter children's rooms unless invited to do so, and always knock before entering. All bathrooms and toilets have suitable locks in place. There is ample room for private meetings and children have access to a private telephone.

Children know how to complain and complaints are taken seriously. Children's welfare is safeguarded by good child protection procedures and staff knowing how to recognise and respond to possible abuse or neglect.

Children who go missing are protected. Risk assessments identify children who are vulnerable and good protocols with local police ensure missing children are looked for quickly.

There have been no incidents of bullying, since the last inspection, and countering bullying measures ensure children are not threatened or intimidated by their peers.

Behaviour is managed positively. Rewards systems, and restorative justice techniques, helps children develop socially acceptable behaviour and to understand the consequences of their actions.

There have been no restraints since the last inspection. Sanctions are used rarely but appropriately. Children know what the home's expectations are and consequences of unacceptable behaviour is written in the children's guide.

Health and safety management at the home is good. Regular audits and risk assessment ensures the environment is safe and secure. Fire safety measures are in place; including regular fire drills and all appliances are regularly checked and serviced.

Generic risk assessments are in place, and regularly checked, but there are no planned responses to foreseeable crises such as a major fire; serious allegation or major accident.

Careful selection and vetting of staff protects children from potential abusers. All safety checks are carried out, on new staff, and references are checked and verified.

Visitors to the home have their identification checked and sign the visitors book.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are supported in line with their needs and wishes. Regular key-worker sessions give children lots of one-to-one time, to talk about how they are feeling, and where necessary professional agencies are involved to offer specialist care and support.

Children are given advice and guidance about growing up and have access to information, and support networks, to help with any problems. Staff talk to children about the benefits of having an independent visitor, or advocate, to promote their rights. Where children partake in risky behaviour; risk assessments are in place to help reduce, or minimise known hazards.

Further education and employment opportunities are promoted to enable children to achieve. Staff are proactive in supporting children into the workforce, or college placements, and work well with providers to support children who do not have a lot of confidence.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Placement plans generally show children's assessed needs. Where other plans are referenced these are clearly identified and it is evident that arrangements have been reviewed and updated.

Children sign their plans, to signal their involvement and consent, and key-worker sessions show placement plans are discussed. There are one or two evaluative statements, within plans, but there are no full evaluations to show placements are effective.

Placement reviews are held regularly and children attend to give them a voice in their care. Contact arrangements are agreed, at reviews, and recorded in children's files. Staff facilitate contact visits and friends and family are welcome at the home.

Children new to the home are made welcome. The home's expectations are written in the children's guide and children are encouraged to bring personal possessions for comfort and familiarity.

Children are consulted about their care and how the home is managed. Regular key-worker sessions give children one-to-one time to talk about their feelings and children's meetings give children a voice in the operation of the home.

Parents are consulted about the care of their children but not about how the home is run. For example parents are not regularly asked what they think about staffing; the home's facilities or the home's furnishings and décor.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Children are very well supported to move into adulthood. Pathway plans show that identified needs are fully, and comprehensively, assessed and actions are in place to promote positive outcomes.

Children are helped to develop the skills they need to live independently. Support is given by staff, and a young person's advisor, and regular review meetings ensure leaving care plans are current and relevant.

Children live in a homely environment that meets their needs. The home is furnished and decorated to a high standard, and there is ample communal and private space. Children can personalise their bedrooms, to familiarise their private space, and any changes to communal areas are discussed in children's meetings.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children, parents and social workers are given good information about how it is to live at the home. The Statement of Purpose covers all the elements listed in Schedule 1; apart from the range of needs of the children the home is intended to meet.

The children's guide is child-friendly and clearly sets out the home's expectations. Information about how to complain, and Ofsted's contact details, are included and there is information about how to contact support networks.

Children are cared for by staff who have the right skills, knowledge and experience. The home has 100% of care staff with their Level 3 National Vocational Qualification and regular training updates ensures practice is up-to-date.

Staff are sufficient in number to meet the needs of the children living in the home. There is a lone-working risk assessment in place, to safeguard children; staff and visitors, and agreed on-call arrangements ensure staff feel supported.

There are systems in place to monitor the performance of the home. The registered person signs the home's records, to show they are checked, and where issues are identified actions are in place to improve outcomes for children.

Children's needs, development and progress are recorded to reflect their individuality. All records are stored securely to protect confidentiality.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Children's health needs are met and they are kept safe. Good college attendance promotes achievement and children are armed with useful skills to live independently. Children are regularly consulted and listened too.

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 each child has a clear written healthcare plan within their placement plan that covers all the elements listed in this standard (NMS 12.2)
- planned responses to a range of foreseeable crises as listed in this standard (NMS 26.4)
- ensure the placement plan sets out how the effectiveness of the placement is to be assessed in relation to each major element of the plan (NMS 2.1)
- ascertain, on a regular and frequent basis, the opinions and views of parents that include the elements listed in this standard (NMS 8.6)
- ensure the Statement of Purpose provides all the information required in Schedule 1 (NMS 1.1)