

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC035220
Inspection date	24 May 2010
Inspector	Dennis Bradley
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	18 September 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.

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.

Summary

At this full inspection all the key standards were inspected. The inspection also looked at the progress the service has made with the recommendations made at the last inspection. These related to the home's records and policies and the arrangements for consulting parents about the service. The inspection was unannounced. Both young people currently living at the home were present during the inspection.

There was evidence of positive relationships between the staff and young people who use the service. There are good arrangements for protecting and promoting the health of the young people. The home provides a safe setting for the young people. Staff are good at consulting the young people and involving them in decisions about their stay at the home. The home supports the education and achievement of the young people. There are good opportunities for staff to take part in relevant training. Staffing levels provide appropriate opportunities for staff to carry out one-to-one work with the young people to help meet their assessed needs. The individual needs of young people are recognised and there are plans in place to address them. Staff are good at supporting young people who are preparing to leave care. The promotion of equality and diversity is good throughout the standards inspected. There are good arrangements in place for the internal monitoring of the care and welfare of the young people. The arrangements for consulting parents about how the home is run are not fully satisfactory.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Following the last inspection the registered person was asked to ensure that: each child has an appropriate healthcare plan; placement plans set out how the effectiveness of the placement is to be assessed; there are written plans responding to a range of foreseeable crises; the home's Statement of Purpose includes all the required information. Action has been taken to address these recommendations and this should help make sure young people's welfare is promoted. The registered person was also asked to ensure that there are appropriate arrangements in place for consulting parents about how the home is being run. This recommendation has not been met and will be repeated.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The young people benefit from being cared for by staff who actively promote their health and well-being. The young people also have good access to sources of advice and support on health and personal care issues appropriate to their needs and wishes. Staff are good at monitoring the health of the young people and they take appropriate action where necessary. Staff have a good understanding of a range of health care needs and some have received more specialised training.

Staff encourage the young people to eat healthy meals and give them appropriate choices regarding the food they eat. They are aware of the different dietary preferences and needs of the young people. Young people can help with food shopping and the planning and preparing meals. Staff also provide appropriate support and guidance to young people who are responsible for preparing their own meals. All of the staff have received appropriate training in food hygiene.

There are appropriate arrangements for storing, administering and monitoring the young people's medication. These help protect their health and meet their health care needs. All the staff have had training in safety with medicines and first aid.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Young people's privacy is promoted. They all have their own bedrooms to which they have appropriate access. Doors to bathrooms and toilets have appropriate locks. Staff make sure information about young people is handled confidentially and stored securely.

There are clear procedures for managing complaints appropriately and ensuring young people are listened to. Staff make sure the young people are aware of who they can go to if they have any complaints or concerns and that these are addressed seriously and without delay.

The home has appropriate procedures for safeguarding young people from abuse. There are suitable arrangements for making sure that staff receive child protection training. This helps staff protect young people from abuse and ensure they respond appropriately to any allegation or suspicion of abuse.

Staff work hard to create an atmosphere where bullying is known to be unacceptable. The home has a clear anti-bullying policy and suitable risk assessments are in place. Staff try to help the young people to develop an understanding and tolerance of each others diverse needs. There have been no bullying incidents since the last inspection.

Staff take appropriate action when young people go missing or are absent from the home without permission. There are suitable policies and procedures to help make sure this happens.

Staff encourage and support the young people to develop and maintain socially acceptable behaviour. They give positive messages to young people to reinforce acceptable behaviour. When staff use sanctions these are generally relevant and reasonable. There have been no incidents involving the use of restraint since the last inspection. There are clear procedures and guidance for staff regarding how they should manage the behaviour of young people. All of the staff have had training in positive behaviour management.

There are good systems in place to keep the young people and adults safe from the risk of fire and other potential hazards. For example, there are good arrangements for carrying out regular

checks of equipment such as fire alarms and staff carry out a range of risk assessments, including individual risk assessments for each young person.

The council takes appropriate action to help make sure the home only employs suitable people. It carries out a range of checks on new staff before they start working at the home. This includes a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) disclosure check. There are suitable arrangements for monitoring and managing visitors to the home. These help ensure they do not have inappropriate access to young people.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people benefit from having care plans and risk assessments based on their individually assessed needs. Staffing levels provide good opportunities for staff to give the young people support and assistance to meet their individual needs and wishes. Staff are knowledgeable about the individual needs of the young people and the implications this has for their care. There was evidence of positive interactions between staff and the young people.

Staff are good at supporting and encouraging young people's education and achievement. They have developed links with a range of educational and training services. This means that they can support young people to access opportunities which meet their needs, wishes and abilities.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The young people benefit from having placement plans that set out how the home will meet their assessed needs. Staff encourage the young people to read and sign these plans and they update them regularly. There are good arrangements for reviewing the care and progress made by the young people. These include holding regular statutory reviews and completing weekly reports for each young person's social worker. Staff support the young people to contribute to their statutory reviews and they have regular contact with the young people's parents or carers.

Staff are good at supporting young people to maintain appropriate and constructive contact with their families and friends. They make sure the young people's placement plans include a clear record of the current agreed arrangements. Staff support and facilitate contact where appropriate.

There are clear procedures covering how staff should support young people when they move into, and out of, the home. For example, each young person receives written information about the home. Young people are also encouraged to bring appropriate personal possessions with them when they move into the home so that, for example, they can personalise their rooms.

Staff are good at talking to young people about how the home is run and helping them to make decisions on matters that affect them. Staff take the views and opinions of the young people seriously and where possible and appropriate act upon them. Staff also consult parents and carers about the care of their children but not about how the home is run. For example, they are not asked for their views about staffing levels or the standard of the accommodation.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

There are good arrangements in place for preparing young people for leaving care. Staff are good at assisting young people to prepare for adulthood. For example, they encourage and support young people to develop the knowledge and skills they will need to move into independent or semi-independent living.

The young people benefit from living in comfortable and homely accommodation. The general standard of repair, décor and furnishing is good. Each young person has their own bedroom and they can personalise this if they wish.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The home has a Statement of Purpose that provides clear information about how it operates. There is also a young people's guide that provides a useful introduction to the home as well as important information such as how to complain or contact an independent advocate.

There are good arrangements for providing staff with training in caring for children and young people. All of the care staff have a suitable qualification confirming they have the competencies needed to care for young people. Apart from core training such as emergency first aid and positive behaviour management, staff can also access training that covers the specific needs of young people.

Staffing levels are good and enable staff to spend time meeting the individual needs of the young people. Whenever it is possible there is a mix of male and female staff on duty. Good on-call arrangements help make sure staff feel well supported.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The young people receive an individual service designed to meet their personal needs and preferences. Staff have a good knowledge of the young people and try to make sure their needs are being met at all times.

There are good arrangements for the internal monitoring of the home and the care and welfare of the young people. For example, the Registered Manager monitors and signs the home's records each month to identify any patterns or issues that may need addressing.

Young people's case files are properly kept and the records of their needs, development and progress reflect each young person's individuality.

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):

- ascertain, on a regular and frequent basis, the opinions and views of parents that include the elements listed in this standard. (NMS 8.6)