

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	4 August 2010
Inspector	Sue Winson
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	2 February 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 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

The children's home is owned and managed by a private company. The property is a three-storey house, situated close to transport networks, schools and other community facilities. The home provides care on a medium- to long- term basis. Clothing, support for education, activities and a holiday are also provided. All young people have single room accommodation.

Summary

This unannounced key inspection considered all key standards in every outcome area. Four young people were present during the inspection. It is an outstanding home where individualised care and high levels of support ensures positive outcomes for young people in all areas. Staff work in partnership with parents and other professionals to the benefit of the young people and ensure that services are provided to meet identified needs. The home is well managed in an open manner which encourages all staff to take responsibility for maintaining high standards and developing services. This respect for everyone's views and opinions is mirrored in the fact that young people are integral to decision making and are consulted and encouraged to express their opinions. Diversity and equality are promoted very effectively in all aspects of the service. There are robust quality assurance systems in place within the home and the company.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

No actions or recommendations were made at the last inspection. Continuing improvement is a focus in this home. Areas for further development have been identified and are being implemented.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Young people enjoy healthy and nutritious meals that are tailored to their dietary needs and preferences. They are involved in compiling weekly menus which include alternatives, and their individual diets are monitored. They are encouraged to help with shopping and preparation of meals and staff take opportunities as they arise to discuss healthy eating and food hygiene. There is sufficient dining space and meals are routinely taken at table as social occasions.

Young people's health needs are met and services are provided to meet them. Comprehensive health plans outline both physical and emotional needs and specify how they will be met. These plans are updated monthly in consultation with young people who are encouraged to sign and comment. The home is active in pursuing written information from placing authorities to inform the plans and where there are gaps, they obtain details from other sources. For example, the staff have a positive working relationship with the local looked after children's nurse who provides immunisation histories. All the young people are registered with doctors, dentists and opticians and the home ensures that they access specialist services. As part of independence planning young people are informed of health services in the area and encouraged to make their own appointments. Healthy living is promoted and young people are encouraged to take regular exercise and funding is available for them to join sports clubs and gyms. Staff are

innovative in engaging and educating young people about health issues, for example, a drugs and alcohol quiz was held for which young people received certificates.

The welfare of the young people is safeguarded by the home's policies and practices for administering first aid and providing treatment. Full records are maintained and regular stock checks are carried out. Staff receive training and annual competence assessments take place. Medicines are securely stored and dispensed.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Young people's privacy is respected and information is confidentially handled. Young people are encouraged to read records which relate to them and arrangements are in place which ensures they do not view information about others. They are able to see visitors, talk to staff and make telephone calls in private. Room searches are carried out only when necessary for safety reasons and young people are informed.

The home's policies and practices in respect of complaints, safeguarding, bullying and absence without authority promote young people's welfare and protect them. Central records are maintained by the manager for monitoring purposes and staff are trained and receive regular updates. There is a history of complaints being taken seriously, fully investigated and complainants being informed of the outcome in writing. Young people know of their right to complain and leaflets with contact numbers of a range of agencies are available to them. The welfare of young people is promoted effectively and appropriate responses to allegations have been made, in consultation with local authorities. All significant events are notified to appropriate people in a timely manner. Young people are protected from bullying. They are regularly reminded what constitutes bullying and staff remind them in group and individual sessions. As far as is possible young people are protected when missing from home. Staff follow procedures, try to keep in touch by mobile phone and will collect young people if they want to return. Meetings are called by the staff where there are concerns, to discuss strategies to keep them safe. Individual sessions take place with all the young people concerning keeping safe in the community. Safe caring practices in the home benefit the young people.

Positive behaviour management assists young people in taking responsibility for their actions. Positive relationships exist between them and the staff, who encourage, remind and assist at an early stage to prevent situations from escalating. Reward systems are effective and the young people like the opportunities to achieve their individual goals which are small in number but highly pertinent to the individual, and agreed with them at the start of each week. No physical interventions have been necessary for four years and sanctions are few, fair and reasonable. A consistent approach across the staff team benefits the young people.

The home provides physical safety and security. All the necessary checks have been carried out within the required timescales and regular fire drills and checks take place. Effective risk assessment and risk management strategies serve to safeguard the young people. These are wide ranging and comprehensive and are updated on a monthly basis.

There have been no new staff since the last inspection. The company has well established recruitment practices and vetting procedures which safeguard the young people. Visitors to the home sign in, are informed of the fire procedures and are appropriately monitored.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Young people receive high levels of individual support. Staff take opportunities as they arise to undertake unplanned individual work, at least once a day with each young person. Sessions are also planned in line with the aims outlined in placement plans and records include follow up actions. The staff are clearly skilled in engaging young people in innovative and flexible ways. The young people can, and do, approach staff for advice and guidance. Outside agencies and professionals come in to discuss issues with the young people and staff advocate on their behalf for services.

Education is actively promoted and the young people are supported and assisted to attend and achieve. There is a clear expectation that they will attend school or college or find work. Staff work in partnership with teachers and tutors to the benefit of the young people, and attend meetings and events. Young people have help with homework and a personal computer is available for their use. Community involvement is promoted and young people attend local events and are encouraged to join in activities locally and to make friends, who are welcomed in the home. Young people pursue their individual interests in addition to choosing outings and group activities.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Young people's needs are assessed and comprehensive written placement plans outline how they will be met. The home is persistent in requesting information from placing authorities to inform these plans. The placement plans are working documents which are adapted as young people's needs change. Outcomes for young people are constantly monitored, as is the effectiveness of plans and strategies. Young people are encouraged to contribute to their plans. Monthly reports demonstrate that young people are making progress. Statutory reviews and planning meetings, attended by the young people, monitor their care.

Constructive contact with friends and family is promoted and staff build and maintain positive relationships with parents to the benefit of the young people. They have supported young people to re-establish contact with family members and keep in regular contact with parents where possible. Where necessary staff take young people to visit families, sometimes over long distances.

Young people move into and leave the home in a planned and sensitive manner wherever possible. Many of the young people are placed in an emergency and the staff and resident group are sensitive to their feelings. The home ensures that planning meetings take place as soon as possible after admission and help young people familiarise themselves with the local area. When young people are moving on to independent living staff are sensitive to their concerns and offer both practical and emotional support once they have left. Several of them continue to visit the home.

Young people are fully involved in decisions about their lives and the way the home is run. They are asked for their views and opinions as part of everyday life and weekly young people's meetings allow for more formal group discussions and decision making. Young people whose first language is not English have been supported to express their views. Most of the records

in the home have space for young people to sign and comment. Young people say that it is more like living in a family than a home.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is outstanding.

Young people routinely receive care which prepares them for and supports them into adulthood. Plans are started at an early stage to ensure that young people can establish and build on life skills in a gradual way in line with their abilities. They have the opportunity to budget, shop and prepare meals. All have clothing allowances and the budget is flexible enough to ensure they have outfits for special occasions such as job interviews and family events. There is a balance between the young people's need for independence and safety issues. The staff work together with after care workers in line with pathway planning. When young people leave, the home prepares a pack for them, containing information they may need for the future. Young people have left the home to live independently in the local community.

The house is suitable for purpose and provides sufficient space and adequate facilities to meet the needs of the young people resident. It is well decorated in a homely style and young people have their own bedrooms which they are encouraged to personalise. There is sufficient dining space and rooms are available for young people to see visitors in private. A rolling programme of refurbishment ensures that high standards are maintained.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. Equal opportunities and respecting difference runs through the home's policies and practices and staff receive training. Young people are consulted and involved in decision-making at all levels. Photographs and mementos are kept for young people to take with them when they leave as a record of their life in the home. The staff group is diverse and reflects the local community.

The home has a Statement of Purpose, which is up to date and outlines the services provided and how it operates. The young people's guide contains full information and is written in appropriate language. There is facility for this to be provided in other languages when necessary.

There are sufficient staff who have the skills, qualifications and experience to meet the needs of the young people. Staff retention is high and the team work co-operatively to the benefit of the young people, with an evident commitment to helping young people achieve their potential. Any necessary staff cover is provided from the company's bank staff who are known to the young people and agency staff are not used. This ensures continuity of care for the young people is maintained at all times. There is time for handovers and good communication systems are well established which ensure that staff are informed of any changes which affect the young people. All staff are regularly supervised and well supported. They are positive about the management and leadership in the home. The company has a well established training programme and staff value the opportunities to increase their skills and knowledge.

The home is well managed, efficiently run and effectively monitored. The management team consists of the manager, deputy and team leaders who involve all staff in the improvement agenda. There is an ethos of open management which allows for reflective practice, constructive criticism and continuing professional development of all staff. Visits under Regulation 33 are

carried out monthly and comprehensive reports provided which contribute to the robust monitoring systems which ensures that records are up to date and young people's needs are consistently being met. Young people's files are well ordered, up to date and reflect their progress.

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

There are no recommendations.