

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Sonya Robinson
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Date of last inspection	4 March 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

The home has been operational for a number of years and is well established within the local area.

The home is an extended three bedroom end terraced house within a residential area, close to local shops, transport links and community resources. The home provides care and accommodation for two young people between the ages of 12 to 16 years.

Accommodation is provided over two floors, the ground floor includes a kitchen, lounge, dining room and young person's lounge. Young people have their own bedrooms which are located on the upper floor.

On the day of this visit, two young people were present and both participated in the inspection.

Summary

At this unannounced full inspection, all key standards were inspected. This is an outstanding service overall.

Young people benefit from a service which is able to meet their holistic and diverse needs in a positive and supportive manner. Young people are afforded a range of outstanding features and facilities that provide excellent opportunities that encourage and support young people fully with all aspects of their care and day to day living needs. The home works very well with other professionals to ensure that young people are provided with continuity of care and that their needs are regularly assessed, monitored and met.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

One good practice recommendation was made at the last inspection and this was to maintain adequate precautions to protect young people, staff and visitors against the risk of fire. This was in relation to the regular testing of the emergency lighting within the home. This has been undertaken and there are systems in place to ensure that these are now tested on a monthly basis.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Young people benefit from excellent health and care plans which identify and meet all their health needs exceptionally well.

Young people enjoy healthy and varied meals which meet their dietary needs. Staff understand what makes a healthy and balanced diet and encourage young people to develop healthy eating habits. Young people are actively encouraged to plan and choose what they have to eat, go shopping for food and cook meals.

Staff actively encourage young people to enjoy and participate in healthy activities and experiences. Young people have accurate records that reflect their health care needs both

inside the home and when out and about. This demonstrates an excellent commitment to providing young people with positive healthy and stimulating experiences, whilst adopting an organised and safe approach. The home has good links with specialist health and advisory services, to make sure that young people get suitable support. Where errors in the system occur the home are proactive in their response to ensure young people's needs and wishes are listened to, for example, young people being registered with a doctor near to the home. Staff deal with health issues sensitively and make sure young people get appropriate support and advice to promote healthy lifestyles.

The home has effective and robust systems for the safe handling and storage of medicines. Staff make sure that young people only have medication specifically prescribed for them and take it in line with the prescription instructions. Medication is securely stored in a suitable cupboard. Staff keep detailed records of any medicines stored in the home and the administration of medicines to young people.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Staff respect young people's privacy and confidentiality consistent with good parenting and the need to protect young people. Young people make and receive telephone calls in private and are given space and time to be alone when they wish.

The home makes sure that young people have access to information about their rights and how to deal with their concerns through the complaints procedure. Young people know how to make a complaint if they are unhappy and are supported to do so.

Staff fully understand about their roles and responsibilities to promote and safeguard young people's welfare. They are well trained in safeguarding young people including recognising the signs and symptoms of abuse. They provide a good level of supervision for young people based on their age to make sure they are safe in the home and in the community. Also, they give young people excellent advice about personal safety. Bullying is not an issue for young people.

The home actively takes steps to make sure that young people missing from home are protected. If young people go missing staff will try to find them and keep in touch by mobile telephone to encourage them to return and ensure they are safe. Staff are aware of and do not exceed the measures they can take to prevent a child leaving without permission under current legislation and government guidance.

Staff use very effective communication skills to encourage young people to develop socially acceptable behaviour. Records relating to sanctions show that they are fair and reasonable. The home places great emphasis on building positive relationships with young people and understanding young people's behaviour. Young people have clear and consistent boundaries and know what is expected of them and what is unacceptable.

Staff praise young people when they do well and reward them. They also reassure young people when they are upset and help them deal with their anxieties and frustrations in a positive way. Staff do not condone unacceptable behaviour and assist young people to learn to manage their behaviour and solve problems.

Young people live in a safe and secure environment. The vetting of visitors and people wishing to work at the home is very thorough to make sure young people are protected. In addition, staff carry out regular health and safety checks including fire safety systems to make sure that the home is a safe place to live.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Staff support and positively encourage young people to take part in wide range of leisure activities. They have multiple opportunities to develop confidence in their skills, enjoy their leisure time and try new things. Staff are very good at encouraging young people to take part in activities and try new experiences.

Education is actively promoted and plays an extremely important part in the lives of young people. Their educational needs are identified in written plans and there are very clear arrangements for meeting their needs. Staff see education as very important, supporting and encouraging young people to learn and study. Young people have access to books and educational materials to aid their learning.

Young people enjoy learning and are making outstanding progress. The home is very good at working with schools to support young people's learning and address problems affecting their education.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Young people have written placement plans fully identifying their needs and outlining the arrangements for meeting them. Staff put the plans into practice and keep very detailed records about young people's progress and experiences. Young people's placement plans are reviewed regularly to make sure that they are up to date and continue to meet their needs. Young people attend review meetings and feel that they are listened to and their views about their lives taken into account. The staff ensure that all young people have meaningful opportunities, which enable them to effectively contribute to the delivery of their care.

Young people see their families regularly to help them maintain relationships. Staff make sure that the arrangements for contact promote and safeguard young people's welfare.

Young people move into the home in a sensitive way. Staff are very good at helping young people settle in, making sure they know what is expected of them, what to do if they are worried, and their way around the local area. The home is good at gathering sufficient information about young people before they move in to ensure that the home is able to meet their needs and to assess their compatibility with other young people.

Young people are actively encouraged to make decisions about their lives and to influence the way the home is run. They are involved in many decisions about what food they eat, what they do in their spare time, how the home is decorated and the house rules. Staff and the provider actively seek young people's views about how well they feel they are looked after.

Young people enjoy very good relationships with staff based on honesty and respect. Staff are helpful and enjoy spending time with young people. They have clear professional and personal

boundaries with young people consistent with good child care and place great emphasis on being good role models.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Staff support young people to prepare for adult life by encouraging them to take more responsibility for themselves suitable to their age and understanding. Young people routinely learn skills through taking part in the running of the home, such as shopping, planning meals, cooking, using money and household tasks. Also, they are encouraged to develop their personal care, organisational and social skills.

Young people live in homely and comfortable accommodation. The home is decorated, furnished and maintained to a good standard. Young people have chosen the décor in their bedrooms and have enough personal space to meet their needs.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. Young people's rights are respected and are very actively promoted. The service demonstrates that the individual care needs of young people are identified and that direct work with young people is plentiful. Their care needs are routinely monitored through robust systems. This ensures that the individual care needs of young people are met.

The statement and purpose of the home sets out in detail, and accurately reflects, the service provided in the home. On the day of inspection a page of this document could not be located. Ofsted has received information during the writing of this report that this has been amended. The manager regularly reviews the content to make sure that it is up-to-date and provides parents and professionals with a clear description of the home and information about those working there. Young people have helped to develop a children's guide to the service. This has been written using photographic evidence of local amenities, allowing young people access to important information such as complaints and day-to-day arrangements within the home.

Staff employed at the home are provided with a high level of support and supervision to maintain professional practice and review their performance. Staff are fully motivated and have access to a wide range of training courses which demonstrates a commitment to meeting the individual needs of young people. The home benefits from a staff team who is enthusiastic in their approach, skilled and competent. The skills of the team complement and contribute to the outstanding care provided to young people.

Monthly monitoring visits are undertaken and reports contribute to the manager's evaluation of the service. There is slight omission of information on recent monitoring. However, there are robust systems in place to measure the home's performance and monitor its progress in delivering a quality service. Records are detailed and information gathered is utilised to enhance and inform practice, in areas such as effective communication, consultation and day-to-day management arrangements.

Young people have accessible care records that are clear and reflect the standard of care and support delivered to each young person. Systems within the home ensure that all records are well maintained and regularly monitored and reviewed.

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 children are provided with medical services, appropriate to the needs and wishes of each child (NMS 12)
- ensure that the homes statement of purpose is reviewed to reflect the current service provided (NMS 1)
- ensure that monthly audits undertaken by the representative of the home cover all aspects, as laid out in the National Minimum Standard (NMS 32).