

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	8 December 2009
Inspector	Lindsey Blickem
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	5 June 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 children's home owned by a registered charity who provide a number of children's homes and a residential family centre. In addition, the organisation offers day and respite care to children with disabilities. The home provides long-term accommodation for four children, of either gender, aged between eight and under 18 years. The age difference between the youngest and oldest resident must be no more than five years.

Two semi-detached houses have been combined into one to make a large family house on the edge of a residential estate and next to, but set above, a busy main road. Ground floor accommodation comprises of two lounges, a dining area, kitchen, utility room, telephone kiosk, staff office and two toilets. The first floor accommodation is separated into two halves by a door. Each half comprises of two bedrooms, one self-contained staff sleep-in room and a bathroom.

The home is within walking distance of shops and public transport to the nearby city centre. There is a wide range of recreational opportunities within the immediate community and surrounding areas.

Summary

At this announced key inspection all key national minimum standards were inspected. The overall judgement is good with being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, positive contribution, economic wellbeing and organisation all rated good.

Young people are given good support to enjoy a healthy lifestyle which includes a healthy, well balanced diet. Young people have access to health services and professionals when needed. Young people are kept safe through good quality care, support and supervision. Their views are actively listened to by staff including if they have a concern or complaint. Staff are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities in relation to promoting young people's welfare and behaviour management strategies and simple, clear and successful. Education is valued by staff who ensure young people attend education regularly and provide good support with academic progress. Young people clearly enjoy living in the home and enjoy very positive relationships with staff. Information about young people is accessible and staff are therefore fully aware of how their needs should be met. The home is well maintained and comfortable ensuring that young people have good standard, homely accommodation. Staff are given good professional support and training opportunities which supports them in their role caring for young people.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

The manager was asked to make improvements to the administration of medication system, the statement of purpose and records in relation to the use of measures of control. Improvements have been made in all these areas ensuring that records accurately reflect the care given to young people thereby providing greater safety.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people are given good support with their health needs and the system for administering medication is safe and efficient. Records are well maintained and the format is clear, concise and enables staff to ensure all required details are recorded when medication is administered. Health records in relation to specific young people are also well maintained and are included within their placement plan. Relevant information is included about routine and specific health needs enabling staff to provide care in accordance with their identified needs.

Young people are provided with a well balanced and substantial diet. Menus are devised with young people's individual preferences accounted for and are reasonably varied given the specific needs of young people living in the home. Meals include vegetables and there is fresh fruit available at all times.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Young people's privacy is appropriately protected, each having their own bedroom which is respected as their own private space. They also benefit from having two lounges which provides greater opportunities to enjoy their own individual recreation.

There have been no formal complaints about the service for some considerable time and young people are fully aware of how to raise an issue or complaint, confident that it will be dealt with appropriately. Young people are generally very satisfied with the care they receive whilst living in the home and day to day issues are dealt with informally. There is an appropriate system in place should a young person wish to make a complaint which ensures issues they are dealt with openly and efficiently.

Staff are fully aware of their role and responsibilities in relation to the protection of young people and the majority of staff have received child protection training. Young people's welfare is protected within a caring and attentive culture which reflects family style living.

Young people have no issues or concerns in relation to bullying and describe their relationships with each other as positive. There is a good blend of young people living together which enables them to live together harmoniously. These positive relationships are reflected within the staff team who have a friendly and relaxed style which promotes a nurturing and caring environment.

There have been no incidents of young people missing from home for nearly two years which indicates that they are happy to be living where they are and with the care they receive.

Young people are supported to display positive behaviours through a successful behaviour management strategy. Formal sanctions are rarely administered and those that have been are reparative in nature and encourage young people to give back to the community they have taken from, for example cleaning or repaying for broken items. They can also lose privileges like television or gaming consoles for short periods of time. Despite all staff having received training in the use of physical restraint it has not been necessary for staff to physically restrain a young person for two years. Overall behaviour management strategies support and encourage young people to enjoy a positive home life.

Young people are protected from the risk of fire through regular fire alarm and emergency lighting tests. There are comprehensive risk assessments in place which are regularly reviewed and regular fire drills ensuring that young people know what to do in the event of a fire. Staff also receive fire training as part of their induction to ensure they are fully aware of their responsibilities.

Personnel records are held centrally at the company's head office and there is a system in place for the manager to check that all required recruitment checks are completed prior to a member of staff starting work in the home. This system ensures that staff are fully vetted prior to having unsupervised contact with young people.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Staff provide good support to young people on a day to day basis as well as with their longer term needs. The environment is very relaxed and resembles a family home in which young people feel well cared for. Education is a high priority and young people receive valuable support from staff in attending and achieving with their education and as a result experience good outcomes. Difficulties at school are well managed with staff helping and supporting young people by providing encouragement and help with school work as well as having effective communication with school. Young people who are off school for any reason are required to keep up with their studies by having structured education time within school hours.

Recreation and leisure is quite low key but appropriate to the wishes and interests of young people living in the home. Older children are able to pursue social relationships outside the home with support and guidance from staff to ensure they are engaging in positive activities. Staff led or organised activities are on offer regularly ensuring that young people enjoy their free time. Staff and young people also enjoy playing board games together in the home which is another example of how positive relationships are nurtured.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Placement plans provide a good assessment of young people's needs enabling staff to have access to up to date and relevant information. Plans include information in relation to health, education and contact arrangements and provide clear guidance on how young people's needs will be met whilst living in the home. Plans are regularly reviewed by keyworkers and the management team ensuring that information is kept up to date. Looked after children's review meeting minutes are also held on case files and plans are consistent with placing authority care plans.

Young people enjoy planned and supported contact with their families and details of arrangements are contained within placement plans. Staff assist with practical arrangements as well as providing supervision if required. Young people have access to a telephone at all reasonable times ensuring that they are able to maintain contact with significant others.

Young people are sensitively and appropriately supported when moving into the home. Admissions are well planned and include young people being able to visit the home in advance of living there. Written information is provided to young people prior to moving in ensuring that they are fully aware of the services and facilities available within the home.

Young people's views are taken seriously and have an active input in how the home is managed. Residents meetings are held regularly where views and opinions are actively sought. Staff and young people have positive relationships which enables views and opinions to be expressed informally and that day to day issues are addressed.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Young people enjoy living in a clean, tidy and well maintained home which is well decorated and furnished. The kitchen is currently being refurbished which will enhance the environment even more. Young people enjoy sufficient communal space which includes comfortable and attractive furniture as well as including games consoles, televisions and dvd players. The dining room is well furnished and enables staff and young people to sit together in a sociable and relaxed atmosphere. Young people have their own bedrooms which they are able to personalise and they have access to bathrooms which are well maintained and sufficient in number.

Young people are given good support with moving onto independent living which includes support with attending further education. Young people are sensitively encouraged to learn independence skills from an appropriate age which includes cooking, budgeting and shopping for themselves. They are also provided with freedom to socialise which is appropriate to their age with guidance and supervision from staff.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The statement of purpose contains all required information in relation to the services and facilities within the home. This document is available to parents, placing authorities and young people and provides an accurate description of the home. Young people also have access to a child friendly summary of the statement of purpose and is used to assist them to settle in when they are first admitted.

Young people are provided with good quality care by staff who are given good professional support, supervision and training opportunities. The management team ensure that all staff receive regular, formal supervision as well as informal support. Staff speak very highly of the training provided to them and believe that it helps to equip them in caring for young people. All staff are required to complete an induction programme when starting work in the home which includes completing a specific training programme, on-going training opportunities are accessible thereafter. The good quality care provided to young people is evident through the good outcomes they experience and this is testament to the skills, commitment and experience of the staff team.

Monthly visits on behalf of the responsible individual produce a detailed report on how the home is being managed and on the outcomes young people experience. This reporting process is a good quality assurance system which supports the manager in her role.

Case files contain all required information which is accessible to staff but otherwise securely held in the staff office. Information within case files evidences the progress young people make whilst living in the home.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Young people are given good quality care specific to their individual needs and placement planning includes identifying cultural or religious issues.

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.