

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	20 January 2010
Inspector	Gavin Thomas
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	15 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 large Victorian house is within close proximity to a nearby town with good rail links and other local amenities. This is a six bedded home which is owned and managed by a local authority. The service is registered for six boys or girls. The service usually accommodates up to five boys or girls and the sixth admission would be at the manager's discretion. This ensures a balance in meeting the needs of existing young people and those referred to the service for potential placements.

Young people enjoy taking part in a wide range of activities in a homely environment. They are also active in taking part in community-based activities and projects.

This home provides medium to long-term care. The principles and values of this service are set out in the Statement of Purpose.

Summary

This unannounced interim inspection focused mainly on the appropriateness and effectiveness of safeguarding strategies. Provisions and resources for enabling young people to pursue hobbies and interests were also assessed. Young people's safety is paramount in all aspects of this service, taking into suitability of placements, staffing and the environment. Young people and staff have established very positive relationships which enables them to work through situations which are often challenging and demanding. Young people are very much 'at home'. While being supported for all types of reasons and circumstances surrounding their placements, they are also encouraged to explore new challenges, achieve a good education and have fun. The staffing ratios are indicative of the high levels of support and supervision young people receive. As a result, there is also a reduction in the types of behaviours young people often exhibit by means of expressing their emotions following admission.

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 previous inspection.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is not judged.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Young people's privacy is maximised by ensuring that appropriate staffing arrangements are in place at all times for supervising intimate care tasks. Young people are considerate of each others privacy and dignity including the use of bathrooms and other communal facilities. Effective processes are in place for the storage and safeguarding of confidential information. This is enhanced by ensuring that staff are appropriately trained and have access to a range of policies and procedures on confidentiality.

Opportunities for enabling young people to discuss or express their views and wishes are transparent and well-managed. This is supported by an established complaints procedure which is included in key documentation such as the children's guide and Statement of Purpose. In addition to speaking to staff, young people may also contact professionals and organisations independent to the home if they have any concerns or are unhappy. Records indicate that young people are consulted during the course of Regulation 33 visits and complaints records are monitored. The last recorded complaint was made in December 2008.

Young people benefit immensely from the quality of work undertaken to promote and ensure their safety and protection. This includes prompt and effective working relationships with external agencies such as schools and health professionals. Planning is also meticulous to ensure a balanced approach in meeting the needs of all young people. Staff demonstrate efficiency and persistence when supporting young people through very complex and sensitive issues. Staff say that team work is effective and exceptional in difficult situations. Staff are kept abreast of safeguarding strategies through regular training and opportunities to reflect on practice. In doing so, this supports the effective management of the range of needs and circumstances relating to individual young people.

Young people are given a range of opportunities to discuss and understand the consequences of bullying behaviour. This is achieved through informal discussions, projects and learning new ways for building and sustaining positive relationships with others. Young people are supported when they have experienced bullying types of behaviour by others in situations away from the home. Details on countering bullying are clearly displayed in the home and care plans include areas of risk and support strategies.

Written policies and procedures are in place for responding to incidents involving young people who are absent without authority. However, there are no related incidents or concerns.

Behavioural management systems are robust, which promotes positive behaviours and interactions. Staff attend updated training on implementing methods of intervention adopted by the home. The management of these systems are enhanced and monitored by staff who are approved as trainers. Young people enjoy warm relationships with staff and their peers. The dynamics of behavioural management enables young people to build on their self-esteem, they benefit from boundaries and learn how to share and take turns for activities. Vigorous systems are in place for monitoring young people's behaviour and all types of interventions, including sanctions and restraint. Behavioural management records are detailed and countersigned by management. Although some recent incidents of intervention in the form of restraint are extremely minor and intermittent, the overall duration is not always recorded. Behavioural management policies are accessible and include a combination of procedures to be followed for serious incidents. The policy does not explicitly include a child's right to medical examination within 24 hours following an incident of physical intervention. However, individual forms include a dedicated section for recording any medical treatment a young person or other person may require following an incident.

The effectiveness of health and safety procedures maximises the safety of young people, staff and visitors at all times. This includes fire drills which are held at least monthly, routine testing of appliances and risk management processes. The frequency and quality of internal safety inspections, minimises and prevents risks and other hazards. Prompt action is also taken for

addressing faulty equipment and other findings which may impact on the safety of young people, staff and visitors.

As previously reported, recruitment records show that vigorous checks are undertaken to prevent young people being exposed to potential abusers. There have been no staff appointments since the last inspection and therefore records were not examined on this inspection. Young people are supported consistently by a very stable staff team including a well-established team of sessional staff. As a result, external agency staff are not used to cover vacant shifts. Young people's safety is enhanced by ensuring that, where appropriate, visitors and visiting professionals are appropriately vetted and supervised.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Young people are encouraged to explore and participate in a vast array of educational and leisure pursuits. Young people say they look forward to camping trips, the visiting library, community-based activities and holidays. Staff are very supportive of young people's hobbies and interests. In doing so, arrangements are accommodated for staff to accompany young people on trips away from home with organised groups. Professionals are invited to visit young people at the home to discuss topics of interest. This is also balanced whereby young people visit the workplaces of various professionals in the community. Young people's involvement in the community includes charity work. This helps develop their confidence, interaction and knowledge about people from all aspects of life. Although young people enjoy an active lifestyle, they also enjoy quieter times at home socialising with their peers and staff.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is not judged.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is not judged.

Organisation

The organisation is not judged.

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):

- improve the consistency when recording the duration of all incidents in the restraint record (NMS 22.9)

- revise the behavioural management policy to include a child's right to be examined by a registered nurse or medical practitioner within 24 hours following an incident of physical intervention. (NMS 22.13)