

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC040642
Inspection date	3 December 2009
Inspector	Gavin Thomas
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	21 July 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 is owned and managed by a local authority. The house is situated in a residential area. The town centre and its amenities, which include a cinema, sports centre, park and library, are a short bus ride away.

One of the key objectives of the home is to provide individually tailored care plans to support and help prepare young people for moving on to semi/independent living. This is enhanced through the provision of a semi independence flat which supports transitional plans for young people moving on.

Extensive work is undertaken to engage young people in meaningful activities and work experience placements.

All young people are accommodated in single bedrooms and benefit from adequate living space and a large rear garden, which young people help to maintain.

Summary

This unannounced interim inspection looked at the progress the setting has made with the two recommendations made at the last inspection on the 21 July 2009. These related to use of terminology in the sanctions record and accessibility of information. The provision has taken appropriate action to address these recommendations. This inspection also focused on outcomes for young people under the Every Child Matters outcome staying safe and effectiveness of care planning under the outcome making a positive contribution.

Young people were engaged in a range of appointments and activities and sufficient staff were on duty to support them. Significant progress has been made with one young person who, since the last inspection is now occupying the semi independence flat.

There are no actions or recommendations arising from this inspection.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

The Registered Manager was asked to consider reviewing the terminology used in the sanctions record such as 'staff disapproval', when the reasons for sanctions are recorded. This has changed and a more relevant reason is recorded for each sanction imposed. The recording and accessibility of risk management processes is also much clearer. Written protocols for young people's risk assessments have improved and a similar process is in progress for health and safety risk assessments. These steps help to provide a clearer framework for the way in which information is recorded and presented.

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.

Provisions are in place for ensuring that young peoples' privacy is not compromised. This includes adequate facilities for private meetings and discussions, a dedicated telephone booth and single bedrooms. All young people are offered keys to their bedroom doors which help maximise their personal space. Protocols are being established for ensuring the safe exchange of information with external agencies and professionals and confidential records are stored appropriately.

Young people are aware of the complaints procedure and confident that their views are taken seriously. Records indicate that very few complaints are received and these are mainly related to internal matters. The complaints procedure and details of external contacts are accessible in the home. This means that young people may raise a complaint or concern independently if they so wish.

Extensive work is undertaken with individual young people regarding their safety and protection. This is enhanced through effective work and communication with families, external agencies and professionals. A vast array of records are kept to exceptionally high standards to evidence the depth of work undertaken in relation to safeguarding matters. One young person said that staff work hard to keep young people safe and this is also achieved because the manager is consistent. Significant work is undertaken with staff to ensure a consistent approach when addressing safeguarding matters. This includes daily shift reviews, weekly team meetings with a focus on individual cases and needs-led training.

Direct work is undertaken with young people if it suspected or known that bullying is an issue, such as name calling. One young person said that staff would intervene if verbal remarks between young people were escalating. They also expressed their confidence in the Registered Manager who they described as someone who would go to great lengths to keep young people safe and together with the staff team, help prepare them for appropriate relationships with people beyond this setting.

Incidents involving young people who are absent without authority are managed in accordance with the home's procedural guidance. Incident reports are comprehensive and include details of action taken. Staff say that young people are fully supported on return to the home including dialogue and preventative work as agreed in accordance with individual care plans.

Behavioural management systems are robust and supported with comprehensive records. These are monitored regularly by management and the person carrying out Regulation 33 visits. One recent incident of restraint was the first that was necessary for some considerable time. Sanctions are recorded in detail and clearly linked to unacceptable incidents or behaviours. The recording of reasons why sanctions are imposed is more relevant now as opposed to recording 'staff disapproval'.

Fire safety checks are consistent and include checks carried out by the home and approved contractors. Young people are familiar with fire evacuation procedures and fire drills are carried out frequently. Work has been undertaken to review the fire risk assessment since the last inspection. In addition, the home is also proactive in addressing defects of the fire detection system with approved contractors.

Risk assessments relating to young people are clear and succinct, taking into account a range of topics and high risk activities. The methods for recording and presenting these risk

assessments are being adapted for general health and safety risk assessments. This will improve the recording and accessibility of these assessments.

Recruitment procedures are thorough and robust. This includes the vetting and assessment of applicants. The suitability of applicants takes into account the safety and needs of young people. In doing so, Criminal Records Bureau checks are completed prior to the start of employment, references are verified and records show that interviews are interactive and conducted by a panel. Staff recently appointed say that their introduction to the home was constructive and meaningful. Young people's protection is enhanced by ensuring that visitors provide positive proof of identity. They are also required to sign the visitors book.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is not judged.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Young people's assessed needs are clearly identified in care plans and associated records which are comprehensive and regularly reviewed for effectiveness. Care plans are updated in accordance with young people's needs and agreed outcomes with other agencies and professionals. The effectiveness of care planning takes into account a vast array of matters including assessment of needs and matters identified following young people's admission to the home.

Young people are encouraged to participate in care planning activities. In doing so, they help identify and establish their own goals and targets for achievements. This level of involvement is encouraged through key worker meetings and other forums. This process benefits all young people but in particular, those identified for occupying the semi independence flat where they are required to be more self-sufficient.

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 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

There are no recommendations.