

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	7 July 2009
Inspector	Diane Thackrah
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	6 November 2008
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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 for two young people and sets out to offer young people high quality care in a stable and safe environment. This is achieved by providing an ambience where interpersonal relationships are based on mutual respect and understanding.

The home aims to offer a flexible range of living experiences that are sensitive to individual needs and acknowledge age, race, religion, sexual orientation, disability, and national and ethnic origin.

The staff team are committed to providing an environment which facilitates the young people's growth, maturation, self respect, acceptance of responsibility and development of age appropriate skills and behaviour. This is within the context of the need to provide young people with positive adult role models, guidance and boundaries and achieve within a manner that respects their rights, individuality and dignity.

Summary

At this full unannounced inspection, all key National Minimum Standards were assessed. This is a good service.

Young people receive care that promotes their health and wellbeing. Food is of good quality, varied and healthy. Young people have opportunities to take exercise. Medication is safely handled and there are good arrangements for first aid.

Young people are safeguarded and have their wellbeing promoted. They have their privacy respected and are protected through good child protection arrangements. Bullying is not tolerated in the home and staff follow good practice to keep young people who go missing from the home safe. There are robust arrangements for staff selection and young people live in a safe environment.

Young people's views are taken seriously and they are given opportunities to have their say about the running of the home. Staff make sure that they understand young people's needs. Staff are well trained and supported by management.

No actions have been raised as a result of this inspection. One recommendation has been made.

Two young people are currently living in the home. One young person was present during this inspection and contributed their views to the inspection.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

There is now weekly testing of the fire alarm and regular testing of the home's emergency lighting with records kept. These steps help to promote the safety and wellbeing of young people.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people benefit from good quality, healthy food and lead healthy lifestyles. Menus are varied and reflect young people's likes and dislikes. Meals are social occasions and eaten in a pleasant dining area. Young people are able to access food and drink at reasonable times and staff have received training in food hygiene.

Staff ensure that the physical, emotional and health needs of young people are well met. Each young person has a health care plan that sets out their health needs. Staff are familiar with these plans and are therefore able to support young people with their health needs. Each young person is registered with a local general practitioner and other health care professionals. Staff support young people to access specialist health care professionals where this is necessary. Any significant accidents and incidents are recorded and monitored by the manager. Staff members talk about issues such as drugs, smoking and alcohol with young people with a view to helping young people keep safe and healthy.

The arrangements for first aid and the administration of medication are good and help to promote the safety and wellbeing of young people. There is training for staff members in first aid and a well stocked first aid box is available. Medication is stored safely and staff who administer medication have been trained to do so safely. Clear records are maintained of any medication that is administered to young people. Records are held of non-prescribed medication held in the home, however, these are not always accurate. This practice has limited impact on the wellbeing of young people and systems were set up to improve this practice at the time of this inspection.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Young people have their privacy respected and information about them is handled confidentially. Young people have the privacy of their rooms, can make private telephone calls when they need to, and benefit from safeguards in place to protect written information about them.

There are good arrangements for handling complaints which ensure that the views of young people and their families will be taken seriously. Information about making a complaint is available in the home's Statement of Purpose and young people's guide. There are policies and procedures in place which serve to promote young people's safety. Staff members, including agency staff, receive training in child protection and are clear about their roles regarding this. Staff do not tolerate bullying and challenge it should it occur. Staff members understand and follow policies and procedures that protect young people who go missing from the home. The police, local authority and family members where appropriate are always informed when a young person does not return home.

The home is a crisis unit which offers up to three months intensive, structured direct work with young people. Young people have very detailed behaviour management plans which staff understand and follow in order to help young people develop socially acceptable behaviour. All staff members are trained in safe physical intervention, but only use these techniques as a last resort. Young people are treated as individuals and behaviour management is tailored to individual need. Sanctions are used to respond appropriately to young people's behaviour and are not over used. Young people and staff share positive relationships.

Young people benefit from living in a home that promotes their safety and well-being. There are good fire safety arrangements that include regular checks on the emergency lighting and smoke alarms and regular fire drills. Staff members are trained in fire safety and there is fire fighting equipment situated throughout the home. Regular safety checks occur on the gas and electrical installations. There are robust staff recruitment policies and procedures that offer protection to young people. All staff members must undergo all required documentation checks prior to commencing work in the home. This includes obtaining an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau check.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people receive individual care when they need it. The staff group work hard to try and ensure that young people's individual care plans reflect their needs. Young people are also supported to 'fit in' the residential group and to enjoy positive relationships with staff. Written risk assessments are in place and these enable staff members to support young people to take controlled risks and reduce significant risks.

Staff promote and support the educational attainment of young people. Each young person has a personal education plan that staff members contribute to. Staff support young people to attend education by ensuring that they have transport to get to their educational establishments. Staff also liaise closely with educational staff in order to promote consistency for young people. Facilities are available in the home to enable young people to study and to do their homework.

Staff ensure that young people have very good opportunities to pursue their particular interests and to engage in constructive social activities. There are enjoyable things for young people to do in the home such as listening to music, watching DVDs and playing games. One young person said that staff members take them to the gym. There is a pleasant garden where young people can play and relax. Staff ensure that young people are able to enjoy holidays and days out.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff ensure that they are aware of young people's needs as a comprehensive needs assessment is obtained prior to a young person moving into the home. Comprehensive care plans are generated from these needs assessments which set out how staff will support young people in all aspects of their lives. The cultural and religious needs of young people are taken into account.

Young people's needs are kept under review and staff take an active role in annual reviews. Comprehensive reports are written for the review. Reports from other agencies, including the child's local authority, therapists and the school are available on the young people's file. Staff ensure that young people's views are taken into account at reviews and on an on-going basis.

Young people benefit from being able to maintain constructive contact with their family members and friends. Information about contact arrangements is clearly detailed in young people's care notes. Staff maintain contact with family members where this is appropriate and ensure that young people can visit and maintain telephone contact with families.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff members support young people to develop skills for independence. Care plans detail that young people are encouraged to do their own laundry and be involved in menu planning.

Young people live in a home that is well furnished and adequately decorated. Staff have made good efforts to ensure that young people benefit from living in a homely environment and young people are encouraged to personalise their bedrooms. The home's bathroom is worn and requires updating. Paintwork around the home is worn and chipped. The Registered Manager made assurances that action would be taken to rectify these issues on the day following this inspection. Ongoing concerns have been raised at inspection regarding one of the staff sleep-in rooms that currently doubles as a day room for young people. This situation remains and is a consequence of this being a small home. This infringes on the young people's space and does not provide adequate facilities for staff members.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The promotion of equality and diversity in the home is good. Young people have a package of care and placement length that suits their individual needs. There is a Statement of Purpose and young people's guide in place. These are updated as required and made available to young people and stakeholders to ensure that they have the information they need about the home.

There is a well qualified and experienced staff team which ensures that young people receive very good care and support. Arrangements are in place for staff to deputise in the absence of the manager. There are very good arrangements for staff training and development which equips staff with the skills they need to provide good quality care. The majority of the staff team are trained at National Vocational Qualification Level 3 in Children and Young People. Staff are employed in sufficient numbers to meet the needs of young people currently placed in the home. Some agency staff members are used in the home, however, careful consideration is given to ensuring that there is continuity of staffing that does not disrupt young people's attachments.

There is regular monitoring in the home to ensure that care is provided in a way that safeguards young people and best meets needs. Care records are well maintained for individual young people and contain all legally required documentation.

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 staff sleep-in rooms do not form part of the communal living area. (NMS 24)