

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	5 August 2010
Inspector	Jackie Callaghan
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	11 January 2010
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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 is one of four homes within the company. The manager also oversees another home nearby. The home is registered to provide care for up to two children or young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties; there are currently two young people living at the home.

The home is a detached house situated on a main road. It is a short walk from local amenities and public transport with only a few immediate neighbours. Young people have their own bedrooms and access to three living areas and a secure rear garden. Both young people contributed to this report.

Summary

At this unannounced full inspection, all key standards in all outcome areas were assessed. Good practice recommendations from the previous inspection were also considered.

The home provides a good standard of care. Young people are fully involved in the assessment, care planning and decision making processes and feel confident about contributing their views to the running of the home. They enjoy positive relationships with staff which helps them to feel settled and to make good progress. Staff are consistent in their approach to young people and behaviour is managed at the lowest level.

Young people are cared for safely by a competent team of staff, who work well together and who are supported by clear policies and procedures, supervision and relevant training. Staff encourage young people to develop a healthy lifestyle and work hard to ensure that they are able to pursue their education and achieve to their individual potential. Staff also support young people to maintain positive relationships with their families and significant others.

Two recommendations were made at this inspection, which relate to medication monitoring and the recruitment of staff.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the Registered Manager was asked to; ensure that all staff receive appropriate training in physical intervention and make sure that all staff receive appropriate supervision.

All staff have now received training in physical intervention. This training included the teaching of de-escalation and distraction skills. Staff are also receiving formal one-to-one supervision as described by the national minimum standards. As a result, young people's welfare is being actively safeguarded.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people's health is actively promoted by staff. Menus demonstrate that a wide range of healthy food is eaten. Young people say that 'staff suggest you eat healthy meals and fruit. There is always fresh fruit around'. Staff are abundantly aware of young people's likes and dislikes and this is incorporated into menu planning. Young people are well supported to be involved in the preparation and cooking of meals.

Young people have comprehensive written health plans. The home is proactive at working with external health professionals in order to fully support young people.

Administration of medication is kept up to date and staff have had appropriate medication training. Staff regularly monitor all medication by undertaking an audit count of tablets at the time of administration. This is really robust practice. However, this record does not specifically record when medication comes into the home. When medication comes in, it is currently added to the existing count. This means that the actual amount of medication is correct but this is very confusing.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Young people using the service require differing levels of support and supervision from staff. Staff provide this in a way that maintains young people's privacy and dignity. Staff knock on bedroom doors before entering. Records are kept confidentially and young people's issues are not discussed openly.

Young people's welfare and safety is positively promoted. There are established systems and processes in place which are underpinned by a good range of policies that relate to the protection of young people. This means that young people live in a stable and safe environment where their welfare is paramount.

Young people are able to raise concerns with staff through a well-known complaints procedure. The home takes complaints from young people seriously and deals with them quickly and effectively. Young people say, 'I feel staff listen to me and respect what I say'. As a result, very few complaints have been made by young people about the home.

Young people and staff know that bullying is not tolerated. Young people receive clear messages that bullying behaviour will be challenged. Any issues are discussed openly within the home to ensure everyone is protected. There are systems in place for protecting young people who are absent from the home without permission and for notifying and reporting significant events to relevant bodies.

On many planned occasions, and when situations arise, staff go to great lengths to encourage young people to think about the difference between right and wrong. Staff successfully use positive encouragement and distraction techniques. As a result, there continues to be no physical restraints taking place. Young people confirmed this and added 'we get consequences, like not being able to watch TV or less free time if we break the rules'.

Positive steps are taken to keep young people, staff and visitors safe from fire and other hazards in the home. For example, records indicate that regular drills are undertaken and young people are given the opportunity to participate. In addition, risk assessments on the environment are completed and updated on a regular basis.

The home operates a robust staff vetting procedure and staff demonstrate proactive awareness of the need to safeguard young people. However, the young people are not involved in the recruitment of the new staff. This means management are not provided with a different point of view and young people have no ownership or involvement in the recruitment process.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Young people are supported by a professional and well-informed team who ensure the home maintains a flexible approach to providing individualised personal care. The home successfully nurtures young people to develop skills that will serve them well as citizens in the future. Consequently, young people are clearly happy and settled in the staff's care.

Young people unquestionably benefit from the positive relationships which have been established between the home's staff and the schools attended. Young people are consistently supported to complete any educational activities in the home, such as, homework. Staff creatively ensure that less formal learning opportunities are available to young people. For example, teaching independent living skills using a variety of activities that involve young people in the daily routines of the home. This not only prepares them for later life but gives them a real sense of belonging.

Young people enjoy a range of activities, both in the home and externally. Activities are organised through discussion with the young people and there are appropriate risk assessments completed where necessary. Staffing ratios are excellent. These high levels of support mean that young people are safe, very considerably cared for and well educated, yet still able to work towards functioning independently.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Young people are introduced to the home in a way that meets their individual needs. They usually visit the home on a number of occasions prior to an overnight stay to enable them to meet staff and acclimatise. Information about the home is available for young people in accessible formats, such as, easy read. Young people are encouraged to bring familiar possessions with them and staff support young people to customise their bedrooms.

Young people are clearly respected as individuals. Staff build a clear picture of their likes and dislikes, for example, what they enjoy eating. On recognition of young people's preferences, staff work actively to encourage them to try new activities and experiences. Staff are pro-active in ensuring young people maintain contact with parents and significant others.

Young people are supported by clear and concise care. Care plans are reflective of the identified needs outlined in the looked after care plans. Plans are individualised and show in abundant detail how the home is meeting young people's needs. Staff set objectives for each young person, which are then broken down into achievable targets. This helps young people to broaden their horizons and improves their self-esteem.

Young people are successfully supported to make choices and decisions that affect their lives. For example, what they wear, what they eat and where they want to go. The day-to-day routines of the home and activity planning are undertaken with consideration made to the individual

needs of young people. The home takes action to remove the barriers to participation and belonging. As a result, young people's self-confidence increases significantly, often from very low starting points.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is satisfactory.

Due regard is given to building young people's life skills and basic skills. Young people comment that staff 'teach us about budgeting and how to cook for ourselves'. This means that preparation for young people's economic well-being is appropriate.

Young people benefit from staying in a comfortable and homely environment. The home is adequately maintained. Downstairs has good quality décor and furnishings. Upstairs the decoration and carpets are more worn. The Registered Manager has raised this in reports to the company. Both the interior and exterior of the home are maintained to a reasonable state of structural and decorative repair with an ongoing maintenance programme.

The home is located in a residential area and the young people have good access to transport, education facilities, health care provision and leisure activities. Young people say they are able to have a say in personalising their bedrooms.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Young people, parents, staff and placing authorities have access to a Statement of Purpose and young person's guide, which outlines the principles, practice and the services that they can expect from the home.

There is a clear staffing structure with clear lines of accountability in the home. The Registered Manager is appropriately qualified, skilled and experienced to provide leadership to the staff team and young people. She is actively involved in the day-to-day operation of the home and has clear expectations that the staff team will achieve the best possible outcomes for all young people in their care. The home has clear deputising arrangements in her absence.

Staff duty rotas and the manner in which staff are deployed confirm that the home keeps sufficient staff on the duty rota at all times. Senior members of staff who are sufficiently experienced and competent lead the shifts. Staff are receiving good supervision in accordance with national minimum standards. Staff speak positively about the support they get and comments include; 'very well supported and feel very valued'. 'Manager is very good always ready to listen and leads from the front'.

The staff training and development programme includes an in-depth induction programme and further training opportunities for all staff. There are good systems in place to monitor the daily lives of young people currently living in the home. Young people benefit greatly from this positive approach as they are cared for by highly motivated, suitable and knowledgeable staff.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. Young people feel respected and are developing an in-depth understanding and appreciation of different cultures, religions, disability and sexuality. Files contain a range of information about young people's history and progress,

which matches the requirements set out in Schedule 3 of the Children's Homes Regulations 2001.

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

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- develop the medication recording system to show when a new amount of prescribed medication has been added to the stock (NMS 13.2)
- develop the recruitment and selection of staff to include young people's observations and involvement. (NMS 27.8)