

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC047483
Inspection date	21 October 2009
Inspector	Jackie Callaghan
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	18 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

The home is one of four homes within the company with the manager overseeing 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; the current teenager contributed to this report.

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.

Summary

This was an unannounced full inspection undertaken by one Ofsted inspector over two days. The inspection focussed on the key children's homes national minimum standards (NMS). All outcome areas were inspected.

This is a good service. Young people are encouraged to eat healthily and focus on life skill tasks so that they leave the home with the confidence to be independent. However, the risk assessment process for self-administration of medication is not being wholly exploited to safeguard young people.

Young people's welfare is enhanced by the good relationships that exist between young people and staff. Staff are well supported by the manager who has a strong commitment and focus on improvement. Although the recording of absence without authority has some minor gaps the young people on the whole are safely supported to return to the home. However, it does have the potential to impact on young people's safety as the detection of patterns and trends are not as overt as they might be because information is not always complete.

Staff training around physical intervention is yet to take place which has the potential to infringe on young people's welfare because staff may respond inconsistently. However, it is acknowledged that there have been no physical interventions needed since the last inspection.

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 their last inspection the home was asked to improve issues relating to staff training, fire procedures, young people's health, the admission and leaving processes, the environment and the leadership and management of the home.

Staff are now undertaking a variety of training courses in order to develop their skills and knowledge and the fire procedures are being actively followed at all times. This provides young people with care that safeguards their welfare. The recording of health care and medication has improved with each young person having a clear written health plan that addresses any issues that arise. On moving to or leaving the home young people are now provided with written and verbal information that is appropriately designed, appealing and understandable. This ensures that young people's wellbeing is actively promoted. The home has been redecorated and there is a process for maintenance and improvement taking place. Young people's welfare is further promoted and safeguarded because there is now clear defined leadership of the home.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people's health needs are afforded a high priority with prompt steps taken to meet those needs quickly. Information regarding young people's health history, immunisations and current medication is gained on admission.

Young people's files contain a signed consent form from a person with parental responsibility. This form gives permission for the young person to self-administer medication. Staff demonstrate that they have an awareness of the potential risks around self-medicating. However, there is no written record of these risks being assessed that evidences the actual safeguards that are in place to protect young people from mis-administration. For example, young people have a secure lockable facility in their bedroom to store any medication. A written record will evidence staffs' actual practice and give additional safeguards for young people.

Young people are provided with healthy balanced meals that meet their dietary needs and choices. They are sufficiently supported to be independent and as a result, plan and prepare their own meals. Mealtimes are relaxed, sociable occasions and promoted as a time for the staff and young people to get together in a family style atmosphere.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Young people's rights are promoted and respected. Staff are aware of their responsibilities to promote privacy and confidentiality, and describe practices that are consistent with the home's guidance. Information held on behalf of young people is correctly stored in lockable facilities which are only accessible to staff.

Young people are able to raise a concern or complaint and staff listen to what they have to say. This is confirmed by a young person who states that 'I feel that staff listen to me and respect what I say'. Consequently, young people feel valued and appreciated.

Young people are well safeguarded. Staff fully understand their individual responsibility to act on any concerns they may have about a young person's welfare. Staff take appropriate steps to ensure that young people who are absent from the home without consent are protected in line with written policy and guidance. However, there are occasionally minor gaps in this recording. This can potentially impact on staff's ability to overtly safeguard young people's welfare, because it can deny them the opportunity to ascertain if there are any obvious patterns and trends occurring.

Staff respond quickly and firmly to eliminate any bullying when and if it occurs. Young people are encouraged and positively enabled to accept responsibility for their own behaviour in order to face the demands of life ahead. Staff are awaiting physical intervention training. However, some delay has occurred in providing this training. Although there has been no need for staff to physically intervene for sometime. If the need was to arise then staff are at risk of intervening differently which has the potential to compromise young people's welfare.

Young people's health and safety is robustly promoted as fire evacuations are taking place and staff regularly monitor all of the fire prevention systems. The home has risk assessments for

all aspects of young people's safety. For example, fire, young people's behaviour, and activities. Consequently, young people live in a home that provides for their physical safety and security.

The home operates a good staff vetting procedure and staff demonstrate an appropriate awareness of the need to protect young people. Recruitment checks take place prior to staff being deployed, including an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check. This ensures that young people are cared for by suitable staff.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people's individual needs are assessed and appropriately responded to. Staff believe that prejudice still exists in today's society and feel that they should recognise and challenge any discrimination in the home. This means that young people receive clear messages about respecting others. Written plans and monitoring systems are used to guide young people's progress and to reflect on the individual care they receive. As a result, young people are happy in the setting's caring environment and they have positive relationships with staff.

Young people are successfully supported to attend college and staff are accomplished at celebrating young people's educational achievements which develops their self-esteem. Staff are proactive and use both the environment and their skills to set, explain and maintain clear and consistent limits for young people. This good practice enables young people to be self-disciplined, to explore and investigate both within planned and spontaneous activities. This helps to maximise on young people's learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Young people's care and welfare is suitably promoted as detailed plans are in place. They cover a range of important matters and are used in conjunction with behaviour plans and risk assessments. Prior to or on admission the individual needs of young people are assessed. An initial meeting is convened and a placement plan is drawn up that effectively details how the young person's needs will be met. The plans are reviewed regularly and young people are successfully supported to attend these meetings enabling their voice to be heard.

Young people are able to maintain valued relationships with family through appropriate contact arrangements that are clearly defined. As a result young people benefit from a service that places high importance on the promotion of appropriate family contact.

Staff demonstrate a clear commitment to promoting consultation and involve young people in the running of the home. They use a range of ways to consult and young people confirm that they have the opportunity to express their views and opinions. The home is proactive in ensuring that all young people are aware that they can speak to independent agencies and professionals outside of the home. This means that there are good additional precautions in place that promote young people's welfare.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is satisfactory.

Young people are actively encouraged and helped to prepare for adulthood and leaving care. Young people benefit from the good use of space and resources within the integral kitchen and utility area, so helping them to have ownership of the environment.

The home provides a pleasant, clean adequate environment in a detached house. Ongoing refurbishment, redecoration and general maintenance ensures that young people are provided with a comfortable place to live. The home provides satisfactory space for communal and individual activity and for young people to relax in. Young people's rooms are adequately furnished and decorated well to reflect each young person's interests and preferences. The home's bathing and toileting facilities are sufficient for the numbers living at the home.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Young people have information about what they can expect from the home, how they will be cared for and who they are likely to share with. Parents and placing social workers have a clear statement on how the home operates. Consequently, all parties are well informed about the running of the home.

Staff are appropriately supported through regular supervision and staff meetings. They say they are well supported which enables them to be competent in their roles. Staff receive good induction and initial training. Systems are in place to ensure the workforce is skilled to National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Level 3 in Working with Children and Young People. Young people benefit greatly from this positive approach as they are cared for by motivated, suitable and knowledgeable staff.

Young people's progress is effectively monitored and continually reviewed through established systems of communication. They are supported by a dedicated staff team who maintain a flexible approach to providing care. Staff sickness and annual leave are identified on the rota and there is sufficient numbers of staff on duty. This makes sure that the young people's differing needs are met at all times. The manager is an active presence in the home and is supported by staff that are well skilled. Consequently, young people are making good progress because of the clear management systems that are in place.

The manager of the home is appropriately experienced and is in the process of becoming the registered manager. She conducts weekly and monthly monitoring of the operation of the home under schedule 6 and has written a development plan for the home. Good monthly regulation 33 monitoring ensures that the home is fulfilling their statement of purpose. These visits provide good additional safeguarding mechanisms for the young people by looking at staff and management practices.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Efforts are made within the home to reflect the cultural diversity of society and, specifically the culture of the young people in residence. The provision has an open culture and environment that focuses on the care and welfare of each individual young person.

Young people's information, required by law in records, is confidentially maintained. Their needs, development and progress are recorded to reflect and celebrate their individuality by a staff who incorporate the principles of the 'Every Child Matters' outcomes into each day.

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 written records detail all aspects of NMS 19.6
- ensure that all staff receive consistent physical intervention training (NMS 22.8)
- ensure that children keeping and administering their own medication are assessed by staff as sufficiently responsible to do so. (NMS 13.9)