

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Sonya Robinson
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	20 January 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 service provides residential accommodation for up to five looked after young people, all with complex needs. They provide care for both genders between the ages of 12 and 17 years.

The premises are large and spacious, providing homely accommodation for the young people accommodated. On the ground floor, there are two lounges which are linked by connecting doors, a kitchen and dining area, staff office, utility area and staff toilet. Children's bedrooms are all single and are located on the first floor; on this floor there are also two bathrooms for use by young people. There is an outside area to the rear of the property that is large enough for play and parking facilities to the front of the property.

The home is close to local shops, transport links and community resources.

Summary

At this unannounced full inspection, all key standards were inspected. This is a satisfactory service overall.

Young people benefit from positive relationships with staff, they are afforded a range of facilities and opportunities to encourage and support a healthy lifestyle, to develop their life skills and to reach positive outcomes from education. However, there are issues around recording of medication, staff training in relation to first aid and physical intervention, staff files, a development plan for the home and monthly monitoring of the home.

Staff benefit from a good levels of support, they work well with other professionals to meet the complex needs of young people in areas, such as, emotional and physical wellbeing.

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

On the previous inspection the manager was asked to ensure that there is an up to date placement plan for each young person placed and to maintain accurate and up to date records of measures of control, which must be reasonable for the needs of the young person. Both of these have been actioned and this was verified on this inspection.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

The home encourages young people to eat healthy and nutritious food from different cultures that meet their dietary needs. Staff understand the importance of good nutrition and what makes up a balanced diet. Young people's food choices are taken into account. Also, the staff try to encourage them to eat healthy food, such as fresh fruit and vegetables.

Young people's physical health and emotional well-being is promoted, but not always accepted. They have health plans that show their general health needs and the arrangements for meeting them. Staff review the health plan to take into account any changes to young people's needs and treatment and ensure young people continue to get the support they require.

Staff ensure that young people are registered with a local doctor, dentist and optician and encourage young people to attend routine health checks. Staff monitor young people's health and make sure that they get appropriate advice, support and treatment with health problems and when they are feeling poorly.

Staff encourage young people to take an interest in looking after their health and to lead healthy lives. They promote healthy lifestyles by encouraging physical activity and provide young people with advice, support, and information on a range of health and social issues including smoking, personal hygiene, alcohol and drugs.

Staff make sure that young people only have medication specifically prescribed for them and take it in line with the prescription instructions. However, the home's records of medication taken by young people are not accurately maintained in all instances. Also, not all staff have received first aid training.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Young people's privacy is actively promoted. They have single bedrooms and their privacy and dignity are respected when washing. The accommodation provides space where young people can relax and spend time alone when they wish. Staff respect young people's privacy consistent with good parenting and the need to protect young people. Confidential information is held securely in the office.

Young people know how to complain. Their concerns are listened to, taken seriously and addressed by staff. They receive feedback about the outcome of their complaints. The home has a suitable complaints procedure that is easily accessible to young people, their parents and other relevant people. Staff are open to responding to concerns, including those made by local neighbours.

Young people feel safe. Staff understand about their roles and responsibilities to promote and safeguard young people's welfare. The home has detailed and clear procedures and guidance for responding to concerns about young people's safety. Staff also have access to the local authority's child protection policy and guidance and all have received suitable training. Staff are knowledgeable about the procedures and put them in practice when they have concerns about young people's safety.

Bullying is not an issue for young people. Staff are aware of the potential for bullying and provide supervision and encourage young people to deal with any difficulties constructively when necessary. Staff place a emphasis on encouraging young people not to go missing by providing young people with meaningful and enjoyable things to do. Young people and staff are aware of young people's rights, legislation and guidance relating to freedom of movement and follow this in practice. The home has individual risk assessments regarding young people's known or likely activities.

Staff build positive relationships with young people by explaining and showing young people what is socially acceptable behaviour. Staff see young people in a positive light and are committed to helping them when they are anxious or upset. Also, they are knowledgeable and understanding about young people's individual behaviours. Young people say that staff help them when they are upset by giving them space and this helps them to calm down. The home

has well-established links with helping agencies, and actively seeks advice and guidance in managing specific behaviours.

Staff use effective communication skills to encourage young people to develop socially acceptable behaviour. Records relating to sanctions show that they are fair and reasonable. Records relating to physical intervention show that it is used minimally, although few staff have training in this area.

The home places emphasis on building positive relationships with young people and understanding young people's behaviour. Young people have clear and consistent boundaries and know what is expected of them and what is unacceptable.

Staff praise young people when they do well and reward them. They also reassure young people when they are upset and help them deal with their anxieties and frustrations in a positive way. Staff do not condone unacceptable behaviour and assist young people to learn to manage their behaviour and solve problems.

Young people live in a safe and secure environment. Staff carry out regular health and safety checks, including fire safety systems to make sure that the home is a safe place to live. The vetting of visitors and people wishing to work at the home is thorough to make sure young people are protected. However, such things as photographic identification and transferring staff files from other services within the organisation are not always evident.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Young people feel supported and confirm that things are going well. Staff view young people as individuals and ensure they receive help and guidance when they need it. Young people's needs are identified in placement plans, which are put into practice to a satisfactory standard. The home can meet a range of young people's potential needs, including healthy lifestyles, culture, sexuality, gender and personal care.

Young people's education and achievement is encouraged and supported. They are doing well at school. Their placement plans provide details about their learning needs and how these are supported. The home's daily routines support young people's daily attendance at school. Young people are enjoying their summer break at the time of this visit.

Staff encourage young people to enjoy their spare time and to take part in leisure activities at home and in the community. Young people are encouraged to follow their particular interests, such as bicycle rides and maintenance and seeing friends. Young people as a result are able to build confidence in their abilities and make friends with young people from different social and cultural backgrounds.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The home's records provide a good insight into the individual needs of young people and plans in place to meet them. Young people have written placement plans identifying their needs and outlining the arrangements for meeting them. Staff put the plans into practice and these are reviewed to make sure that they are up to date and continue to meet their needs. Staff seek

young people's views and ensure that they are listened to and their views about their lives are taken into account.

Young people have regular contact with their families to help them maintain and build positive relationships. Staff support this when necessary to promote and safeguard young people's welfare.

The home try to ensure that young people move into the home in a sensitive way, as not all young people want to be in care. Staff are good at helping young people settle in, making sure they know what is expected of them, what to do if they are worried, and their way around the local area.

Young people are encouraged to make decisions about their lives and to influence the way the home is run. They are involved in decisions about what food they eat and what they do in their spare time. The provider and staff seek young people's views about how well they feel they are looked after.

Young people enjoy positive relationships with staff. Staff have clear professional and personal boundaries with young people consistent with good child care.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Staff support young people to prepare for adult life by encouraging them to take more responsibility for themselves suitable to their age and understanding. Young people routinely learn skills through taking part in the running of the home, such as shopping, planning meals, using money and household tasks. Also, they are encouraged to develop their personal care, organisational and social skills.

Young people live in a homely and comfortable environment that meets their needs. Young people like the accommodation. The house is maintained, decorated and furnished to a good standard with a regular maintenance programme in place.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. Young people's rights are respected and promoted. The service demonstrates that the individual care needs of young people are identified and that direct work with young people is undertaken. Their care needs are monitored through systems. This ensures that the individual care needs of young people are met.

The manager shows effective leadership and a commitment to good child care. Staff spoken to say that the management and organisation is supportive of staff.

Young people know what support they can expect from the home and how they will be looked after. The children's guide provides important information about the home in a way that is easily understood by young people. Also, the home has a clear written statement for parents and social workers of how the home operates and plans to meet young people's needs.

Staff are supported and guided in promoting and safeguarding young people's welfare on a daily basis and through regular professional supervision. Also, team meetings take place to discuss the care of young people and the running of the home.

The provider and manager regularly monitor the running of the home and the quality of care. However, a couple of reports are missing and have either been mislaid or omitted. Also the home does not have a written development plan which would look at the development of the service over the next 12 months.

Young people are looked after by staff, who have skills and experience to meet the needs of young people living in the home and provide young people with consistency.

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
13	ensure that there are suitable arrangements for the recording, handling, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of any medicines received into the children's home (Regulation 21 (1))	4 September 2009
22	ensure that all staff employed in the home receive appropriate training such as, physical intervention (Regulation 27 (4) (a))	30 September 2009

Recommendations

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

- ensure staff are trained in the use of first aid (NMS 13)
- ensure that all the information about people working at the home required to be held by the home under Schedule 2 of Children's Homes Regulations 2001 is available for inspection by Ofsted (NMS 27)
- ensure that monthly audits undertaken by the representative of the home are maintained by the home and the recommendations made are acted upon (NMS 32)
- ensure there is a written development plan, reviewed annually, for the future of the home (NMS 33).