

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Debbie Foster
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	24 March 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

The home is a brick built detached three storey building. There is a kitchen, dining lounge, lounge, an office with sleeping facilities for staff, two single bedrooms for the young people and a bathroom. At the rear of the building is a small garden.

The home is on the edge of a town centre and is on the bus route servicing the town and outlying areas. In the local community there are shops, schools, health, leisure and employment facilities.

The home provides placements to young people aged 11 years to 17 years who have a history that encompasses placement breakdowns and emotional and behavioural problems.

Summary

This was an unannounced full inspection focusing upon 25 key national minimum standards (NMS) under the Every Child Matters outcomes for children and young people.

A young person has taken part in this inspection.

The home gives great importance to ensuring a healthy life style is promoted with young people. This is being achieved through providing a nutritious and balanced diet and access to health care professionals. The staff also receive training in a number the relevant areas, giving them knowledge to pick up on and address areas of concern around young people's health.

Young people's safety is a high priority. Staff and young people are aware of how they are to be kept safe, specific and detailed measures are in place to ensure this happens. There are particular strengths in managing the behaviour of young people positively. Very good links with other professionals and parents are in place. This supports young people and assists them to make further progress in their lives. Staff have good communication skills which assists them significantly in their work with young people.

The short falls found relate to a proportion of staff still being required to complete the National Vocational Qualification at level 3, Caring for Children and Young People, to meet the national minimum standards. Although, all staff have completed a Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) check the recorded information is not clear that it has been undertaken at an enhanced level to work with children.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

There were no areas identified for improvement at the last interim inspection.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Healthy eating is given high importance in the home. Staff have worked hard, guiding and assisting young people to eat a nutritious and balanced diet. Young people are involved in planning their meals each week and cooking some of the time. There are a variety of meal

choices on the menu. Healthy food options are available for meals and snacks. Young people commented that staff encourage healthy eating. Therefore, this assists young people in living more healthily.

The health needs of young people are identified and services provided to ensure that their health is promoted and maintained. Young people are fully supported to attend health appointments and have access to the appropriate healthcare professionals to meet their individual needs. A wealth of advice and guidance for young people is available from staff and other professionals.

Good practices and procedures are in place to ensure that young people's medication is administered, stored and recorded safely through the homes policies, procedures and practices of staff. Those staff administering medication are suitably trained. The medication recorded and securely stored. Frequent monitoring of first aid stocks takes place within the home.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

The young people's privacy is respected and information confidentially handled. Young people have keys to their own bedrooms and a lockable facility. Young people make private telephone calls. Records are securely stored.

There is a clear policy and procedures for making a complaint. The staff and the young people are fully aware of these. There have been no complaints made since the last inspection. Although, there have been two compliments about the service. Records indicate that appropriate information is recorded which includes the action taken and the outcome. The complaints procedures and systems indicates complaints are taken seriously.

Young people's welfare in the home is robustly promoted. There are stringent protection measures in place to keep young people safe. Staff have child protection training and could verbalise the procedures. The child protection procedures are available for staff to refer to and use.

There are clear policies, procedures and the practice for the staff to follow to ensure young people are protected from bullying. Staff said there is no bullying occurring in the home. and they would act promptly to deal with such situations. High staffing levels assist in monitoring young people closely. Therefore, young people are protected from bullying.

Young people are aware of the circumstances when they will be reported missing. Staff talk to young people about keeping themselves safe. There are appropriate, detailed and clear procedures to follow to protect them when they go missing without authority. There have been a number incidents of young people going missing since the last inspection and the procedures have been followed. On the return of a young person, after such an incident, the staff undertake individual work with them to discuss their actions. This is to assist in keeping them safe in the future.

Managing behaviour positively is a high priority in the home. This is promoted and encouraged consistently by the staff team by having clear boundaries in place. Young people are involved in the decision making process to determine the incentives and rewards put in place, which

empowers them and assists in bringing their commitment to succeed in this area. This encourages and supports individual young peoples positive behaviour.

The sanctions and restraint records record the required information. One sanction has been made since the last inspection and no restraints have taken place.

Young people's safety is significantly enhanced through the practices and support from staff. The home provides physical safety and security. For example, detailed risk assessments are in place, which cover the relevant areas and supporting safety measures which are implemented with young people to keep them safe. These have been reviewed and updated where necessary.

Fire records indicate that frequent checks on the system and appropriate fire safety training, instruction and drills have taken place. All health and safety areas are monitored by the manager on a regular basis to ensure appropriate measures are in place to keep young people safe.

The robust vetting and recruitment procedures for staff ensure young people are prevented from being cared for by unsuitable staff. Staff recruitment files contain all the required information and all relevant checks on the person are undertaken, including the Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) checks, references and a full employment history. The CRB check information held does not always indicate that the check undertaken is at an enhanced level to work with children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The young people receive individual support from the staff and a selection of professionals when they need it to assist them to make progress in their lives. There are positive links with a number of professionals including the youth offending service and education.

Education is a priority in the home. This is demonstrated by the staff forging strong communication links with schools, liaising regularly and have good working relationships. Young people's attendance at school has fluctuated but the commitment from staff to address this has resulted in improvements.

There is a good selection of books and access to a wide range of study materials. There is a computer for the young people to access for education and leisure. Therefore, young people are encouraged to attend education to assist in them attaining the necessary education, which will support them into adulthood.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Young people's needs are well assessed and documented within the care plan and supporting documents to outline in detail how their needs will be met and implemented. Staff are able to verbalise the specific care they provide to young people to meet their individual needs. This is reflected in the daily recordings and progress reports on the young people.

Young people's progress is being closely monitored. Care reviews take place and statutory review minutes are held on individual case files. Young people and their parents attend and are actively involved in planning for their future.

Young people have regular and constructive contact with family members and significant others which staff positively promote. This ensures they maintain important links with their family and community links.

Positive empowerment is promoted within the home to assist young people to make decisions about their lives and the running of the home. Staff are committed to building good relationships with young people. This is evident in the way staff explain the work they are undertaking with young people and the way they speak to each other, with respect. Young people are involved in making decisions about the food they eat, incentives, rewards, activities and equipment in the home and the plans for their future when attending statutory reviews.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Young people are being supported well to develop independent living skills appropriate to their age and understanding. They are involved in a number of areas and undertake practical daily living tasks, such as preparing and cooking of some meals, processing their own laundry, and learning budgeting skills. A young person said that they have undertaken an independence package and this has helped them to learn what it will be like to live on their own.

The accommodation is decorated and furnished to a good standard, providing a positive and domestic environment for the young people to live in. The home is clean and tidy and well maintained. Young people's bedrooms are suitably equipped and furnished. The young people have keys to their bedrooms. The second lounge/ activity room has been refurbished since the last inspection.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The statement of purpose included the required information to inform professionals and members of the public, about how care is provided at the home. The home is being conducted in a manner which is consistent with their statement of purpose.

There is a good written children's guide. Young people have received the guide which, staff have discussed and explained to them on admission. This assists in them knowing what the rules are and what is expected of them in their new home.

Staff have excellent communication systems to support and guide them in promoting young people's welfare. This is through formal supervision at frequent intervals, monthly staff meetings and daily handovers. Staff said they work extremely well together as a team. They spoke about their work with young people with enthusiasm and commitment. These support system assist the staff team in providing a consistent care approach to young people.

Young people receive care from competent and experienced staff who can meet their needs. There are two staff on duty each shift, morning and afternoon to care for one young person. The manager works Monday to Friday. The staff team have a wealth of relevant experience working with young people to undertake their duties.

The target of 80% of the work force being trained in the National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People or equivalent has not yet been achieved.

Currently 60% of staff have completed this qualification and other staff are undertaking professional training.

The staff have access to a wealth of training in current childcare practices to ensure they are competent to meet the needs of the young people. An ongoing programme of refresher training is provided in a range of subjects, to enhance the staff's competency to meet the needs of the young people. Staff have opportunities to undertake mandatory and other training in a number of areas, such as legislation relating to children, race awareness, NVQ at level 3 in teaching assistant and leaving care.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. This is evidenced through practice, supporting policies, procedures and the individual placement plans. Young people receive an individual service, which is being tailored to meet their personal needs. The staff have an excellent knowledge of the young people's needs and are working with them to ensure the right support and care is being provided.

A comprehensive monitoring system is in operating. Monthly monitoring visits take place to check how care is provided in the home. Further detailed monitoring is undertaken by the manager and senior staff team. Parents and young people have completed questionnaires to indicate their views on the quality of care provided to them. Parents made very positive comments on the good communication, consultation and are happy with the care provided to their child. Therefore, there is excellent monitoring of the welfare, safety and quality of care provided for the young people in the home.

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 the CRB information recorded, clearly states that it has been undertaken at an enhanced level to work with children (NMS27)
- ensure that the minimum ratios of 80% of all care staff complete their NVQ level 3 in the Caring for Children and Young People. (NMS 29)