

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Roy Bega
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	6 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

A private organisation owns and operates this children's home. It is situated in an urban area of a city close to local transport and amenities. The organisation also has similar services located in the area.

The setting supports and cares for a maximum of one young person of either sex between the ages of 12 and 18 years who has complex emotional behavioural and educational difficulties. The unit specialises in the care of more vulnerable individuals who may pose a specific risk to the community and/or themselves.

Through various approaches the home seeks to enable young people in recognising and accepting responsibility of their inappropriate behaviours. It then encourages the development of more socially acceptable sustainable behaviours to improve young people's quality of life towards independence.

The organisation has a team of specialist practitioners who provide professional support and guidance for care staff and young people.

The organisation provides an approved behavioural approach to education known as the 'Award Scheme for Development and Accreditation Network' which follows the National Curriculum and encompasses a behavioural approach. Designated facilities are provided and appropriately trained staff are employed to deliver the scheme.

Summary

This is an unannounced full inspection where all key standards are inspected.

The home is well managed and has an experienced and committed staff group who have a positive outlook towards training. They are provided with regular opportunities for training in areas to meet specific needs of young people.

Young people are actively encouraged in taking an interest in their personal health and healthy ways of living. The home provides appropriate age related information regarding health, safety and social issues.

There is an open culture in the home of listening to young people. Young people benefit from the organisation's safeguarding policy and procedures. The organisation provides excellent procedural guidance for staff and information for young people regarding anti bullying.

Specialist staff are employed by the organisation to support the home in meeting young people's needs. There are also excellent working relationships with external specialist agencies.

Staff are highly motivated, resourceful in supporting young people in preparing to leave care and securing appropriate further education and/or employment.

Young people are encouraged by management and staff to maintain contact with family and significant others where appropriate and actively supported to re-build relationships where they have become estranged.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

No actions or recommendations were raised from the last inspection.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

The home ensures young people's individual dietary needs are met. Staff place much importance on ensuring young people have a choice of nutritious meals to lead healthy lifestyles. Young people are actively involved in planning, preparing and shopping for food as part of their leaving care plan. Staff receive training in food hygiene and have a good understanding of the appropriate way to store, cook and handle food.

Detailed health records are in place. Staff have excellent knowledge in respect of young people's health needs. Staff provide excellent support and guidance for young people requiring medical treatments. Young people benefit from interventions and support provided by external and the organisation's specialist therapeutic staff. Well informed care staff are appropriately supported in continuing the therapeutic work on a daily basis.

Young people are actively encouraged in taking an interest in their personal health and healthy ways of living. The home provides appropriate age related information regarding health, safety and social issues. Discussions and documented evidence shows young people are fully consulted regarding health matters.

The home has an effective medication policy, procedure and practice guidance which includes the use of non-prescribed medication. Staff are given copies of this policy to read and sign.

An appropriate written record is kept by the home of all medication, treatment and first aid given to young people. Prior to admission written permission is obtained from the person with parental responsibility for each young person for the administration of first aid and appropriate non-prescribed medication.

Where appropriate young people are fully encouraged to manage their own medication in accordance with the organisation's comprehensive policy and procedures.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Young people benefit from the organisation's excellent procedural guidance on privacy and confidentiality.

There is an open culture in the home of listening to young people. Young people benefit from the organisation's complaint procedure and inclusive environment. They feel enabled to raise any concerns they may have. Discussions and records show there have not been any concerns raised in the past year.

Young people benefit from the organisation's safeguarding policy and procedures. Staff have an excellent understanding of the procedures to be followed in safeguarding children and

young people and receive annual training. Since the last inspection management took appropriate action in relation to a safeguarding incident.

Young people are protected by the home's written policy and guidance regarding becoming absent without authority. Procedures for individual young people are clearly recorded in the event of them becoming absent without authority. Discussions and records show no incidents have occurred in the past year.

The organisation provides excellent procedural guidance for staff and information for young people regarding anti bullying. Management and staff are proactive in creating an atmosphere where bullying is known to be unacceptable. Staff are vigilant about maintaining professional relationships between themselves and young people.

The home specialises in providing residential care for young people who have severe psychological emotional and related behaviour disorders. Specialist staff are employed by the organisation to support the home in meeting young people's needs. There are also excellent working relationships with external specialist agencies. Staff receive training in the use of acceptable de-escalation and restraint methods.

The organisation has excellent procedures in place to ensure safety is maintained as a priority. A member of staff is a designated health and safety officer and completed appropriate training. All staff receive health and safety training as part of the induction process and continued development. Young people are provided with practical advice in relation to safety matters as part of daily living and in preparation for leaving care. Risk assessments for the environment and activities are reviewed and revised as necessary.

There is a high awareness of fire safety among staff and young people. All staff and young people are given fire safety instructions when they arrive. Fire drills are carried out within the required timescales and at different times of the day and night. Fire safety equipment is checked regularly and detailed records kept.

Young people are appropriately safeguarded by the organisation's robust and stringent recruitment procedures. Good quality internal monitoring and audits of recruitment files are undertaken to ensure that all appropriate checks within Schedule 2 children's homes national minimum standards and regulations are sought prior to staff commencing employment.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

The organisation employs a range of professional specialist staff and has well-established links with external supporting agencies. Staff are highly motivated, resourceful and proactive in earnestly securing the appropriate services in meeting young people's individual needs.

The organisation is proactive in maintaining excellent continuation of care and contact with young people post 18. They have their own 'leaving care programme' and work closely with other agencies in securing appropriate post 18 support and accommodation. Discussions and records seen show young people are actively involved with their leaving care plan and fully kept up to date regarding proceedings affecting their future.

Management and staff are vibrant in their approach to education and its value for young people. They are proactive in supporting young people in preparing to leave care and securing appropriate further education and/or employment.

Staff actively encourage young people to participate in a wide range of leisure activities within the organisation and local community.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

The setting provides a stable homely environment for young people who live there. Discussions and records confirm management and staff are very approachable, listen to what young people have to say and act responsively.

Consultation with young people is excellent. Management and staff actively encourage young people to participate in the care planning process and reviews including leaving care programmes. Discussions and records confirm young people are consulted on a personal level about all aspects of their lives.

Young people are encouraged by management and staff to maintain contact with family and significant others where appropriate. Management and staff also actively support young people to re-build relationships where they have become estranged.

Relationships between staff and young people are based on mutual respect, understanding and clear professional and personal boundaries.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is outstanding.

Preparation for leaving care and acquiring the skills for adulthood is a fully integrated part of the care provided in the home. Young people routinely learn skills through taking part in the tasks of running the home, such as open participation in house meetings, menu planning, domestic duties, budgeting and management of their personal bank accounts.

The home identifies with full participation of the young person and significant others, areas of skills and support that need developing as part of the leaving care plan. Staff receive training in helping young people move towards independence and have close, established links with other relevant agencies. The organisation works closely with other agencies in securing appropriate post 18 support and accommodation.

The standard of the young people's clothing is very high enabling them to feel proud of their appearance among their friends and peer group. Young people are fully involved in planning the spending of the budget allocated to their personal clothing and toiletries. They are enabled to exercise choice in the clothes and personal requisites through normal shopping arrangements. Records of personal allowances paid to the young people are maintained to a high standard, but avoid an institutional approach.

The home is decorated and furnished to a standard which creates a pleasant domestic environment. Young people show pride in their bedrooms by personalising them with possessions and posters.

There is a good maintenance and repair programme for the building. The organisation employs a maintenance team to ensure faults are rectified as soon as possible.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The homes' annually reviewed statement of purpose is very clear in setting out the aims and objectives and how they are to be provided. It is presented in a form that is easily understood by young people and their families. Young people are provided with a copy before they move into the home.

The manager of the home is appropriately qualified. Effective, established systems for the running of the home are in place that avoid an institutional approach. The leadership of the home is clear and open. Young people confirm management are very approachable and always ready to listen and talk with them. Management receive professional support and training to carry out their responsibilities.

There are clear lines of accountability. Staff are well supported and receive monthly one to one supervision which is recorded. An integral part of their supervision is an agreed personal development plan for which they receive guidance from management to achieve.

The organisation provides a thorough induction training programme for new staff. Staff are supported and encouraged in a continuum training programme.

The staff team is a very competent, with a large amount and range of experience among its members. Skills within the team are very well matched to the group of young people accommodated. All staff are provided with training for the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) at level three in the Caring for Children and Young People. It is the home's philosophy to develop staff careers by encouraging them to pursue the NVQ at level four and other associated professional training. The organisation also employs specialist professionals to work alongside care staff and young people.

Management ensure the needs and activities of young people are met by maintaining a sufficient number and gender mix of staff on duty at all times.

Monthly monitoring visits by senior management are fully integrated into the quality assurance system of the home. Any action points are clearly identified and followed up by the provider and/or manager.

Young people's individual case files are stored in a secure cabinet and are arranged in a manner that makes them readily useable by staff and accessible to young people.

The promotion of equality and diversity in the home is good. Management and staff create an atmosphere and ethos where meeting individual needs is paramount.

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

There are no recommendations.