

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Bill Drumm
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Date of last inspection	8 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

Care and accommodation is provided at the home for up to five young people aged from 12 years old up to 17 years old. The home is a detached house with an enclosed rear garden. The house has three floors. The ground floor comprises of a kitchen, dining room, lounge, another room used for doing school work and a toilet. On the first floor, there are four bedrooms and a family sized bathroom. On the second floor, there are a further two bedrooms and a shower room. Each young person has their own single bedroom.

The home is close to local shops. Bus routes are nearby if young people wish to visit the town centre with its larger shops, cinema and leisure facilities.

There are four young people currently living in this home, three of whom were present during the inspection.

Summary

This was an unannounced key inspection of the home. All of the outcome areas for young people were inspected. The outcome areas for being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution, economic well-being and organisation were found to be good. Overall this is a good service. Young people are encouraged to develop adult responsibilities and to take responsibility for their own actions. In addition, young people are actively supported and encouraged to attend education and training.

There are four young people currently living at the home, three of whom spoke with the inspector and contributed to the inspection process.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last inspection, the manager of the home has reviewed the paperwork used in the home for recording when it has been necessary to search a young person's bedroom. In addition, the home has undergone some redecoration and refurbishment.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people living at the home enjoy a healthy and well-balanced diet and healthy eating is promoted. Members of staff ensure young people have easy access to fresh fruit and vegetables. Nutritious meals are provided and young people participate in the planning of menus. One young person who returned a questionnaire commented, 'I eat a lot of vegetables and fruit'. Young people are encouraged to participate in shopping for some food items and in developing their skills in meal preparation. The home ensures that young people living there are able to follow the diet of their choice. The home also ensures that young people are able to sample food from different countries and cultures. Young people are encouraged to take exercise and to stay healthy.

The healthcare needs of young people are fully promoted. Young people living at the home have their healthcare needs identified. Young people are actively supported and encouraged to attend meetings and appointments with healthcare professionals. Young people are registered with a local doctor, dentist and optician. Members of staff encourage and support young people to attend all relevant appointments. One young person who returned a questionnaire said, 'they look after me and ask me if I'm alright'. Young people living at the home have ready access to specialist healthcare professionals employed by the organisation. These specialist healthcare professionals visit the young people at the home, in order to monitor their progress. Written records of the most recent visit of one healthcare professional were not retained within the home.

Young people living at the home are protected by the home's medication administration systems. Policies and procedures relating to the safe handling and administration of medication are in place and members of staff have undertaken formal training in the safe handling and administration of medication. An audit of the home's administration records was undertaken during the inspection and were found to be accurate and up-to-date. The home also has procedures in place for the administration of non-prescription, homely remedies. The list of homely remedies that the home can give to a young person is limited and does not include all those remedies which may be suggested by the young person's doctor.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Young people living at the home are treated with dignity and respect. Members of staff were observed to be pleasant and friendly towards the young people living at the home, who in turn appeared relaxed and comfortable in their presence. One young person who returned a questionnaire said, 'staff here are great, I get on alright with all of them'. There are sufficient bathrooms and toilets to meet the needs of the young people living at the home. Only members of staff working at the home can gain access to toilets and bathrooms from the outside in an emergency. Each young person has their own bedroom. Young people are encouraged to personalise their bedrooms in a style of their own choice and to keep the rooms clean and tidy. The home has policies and procedures in place, which explains what actions members of staff should take when it is necessary to search a young person's bedroom. The room search records comply with national minimum standards. Personal information relating to each young person is stored securely to prevent unauthorised access. Young people are able to make personal telephone calls in private.

There are policies and procedures in place for dealing with complaints in an effective and timely manner. There have been two complaints made since the last inspection. Written records examined at the time of the inspection show that the complaints were dealt with appropriately. The young people's guide provides information to young people about the complaints process. Young people are able to make a formal complaint without having to approach members of staff. Young people were observed at the time of the inspection to speak freely with all members of staff and to make their needs known.

Young people living at the home are protected from exploitation and abuse. A copy of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board procedures are available in the home. There has been one incident relating to a child protection issue at the home since the last inspection. Records examined indicate that this was dealt with appropriately by the home and the Local Safeguarding

Children's Board were fully involved. The home also has its own child protection guidance. All members of staff working at the home have undertaken training in child protection.

Young people are fully protected from being targeted by bullies. The home has policies and procedures in place with regard to countering bullying. There has been one incident of bullying since the last inspection. One young person spoken to at the time of the inspection said, 'the manager dealt with it really quickly and it won't happen again'. The young people's guide to the home includes information for young people about what action they should take if they feel they are being targeted by bullies.

The home has policies and procedures in place with regard to what action members of staff should take if a young person is absent without authority. Procedures fully comply with national minimum standards. There have been a number of occasions since the last inspection when one particular young person has been absent without authority. The whereabouts of the young person concerned was generally known. Strategies to address their behaviour was discussed in planning meetings and staff meetings. A reduction in the absences without authority were achieved.

The home has policies and procedures in place relating to the safe holding or restraint of young people and members of staff have received appropriate training. Restraint records are retained within a separate bound and numbered book used specifically for that purpose. There have been a number of restraints used within the home since the last inspection. One young person spoken to at the time of the inspection said, 'I know why I was held, it was my own fault. It was done for my own good'. The manager and staff promote socially acceptable behaviour by offering support and encouragement to young people. The home also has policies and procedures in place, relating to the sanctions that can be used to help young people improve their behaviour. Where possible, members of staff prefer to use less punitive measures to help young people change their behaviour, such as negotiation, reasoning and by offering incentives.

Young people are protected from fire and other hazards within the home. There are systems in place to ensure that young people, members of staff and visitors to the home are kept safe and free from hazards. Fire drills are carried out at regular intervals and includes those undertaken at night. The home's insurance certificate does not clearly state that the home has current public and employee liability insurance up to a minimum value.

The home has a committed staff team and there are good recruitment and selection processes in place. Safety checks are carried out to ensure the suitability of each applicant. Each member of staff has provided references from previous employers or those that know them. Visitors to the home are asked to clearly identify themselves on their arrival and to sign the visitors book.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The progress of each young person is closely monitored. Young people living at the home receive individual help and support when they need it or when they request it. Each young person has their own key worker. Meetings between key workers and young people take place at regular intervals on both a formal and informal basis. Young people also have access to an independent advocacy service, should they wish to discuss issues of a confidential nature.

The young people currently living at the home have only lived there for a short period of time. One young person attends school on a full time basis and another has left school. The remaining young people are being encouraged and supported to attend school or training following the summer break. The home has a proactive approach to helping young people progress with their education or training and to achieve their maximum potential. In addition, young people living at the home are actively encouraged and supported to develop their own hobbies and interests.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Young people living at the home are appropriately placed. Each young person has their own placement plan, which outlines what their needs are and how they will be met. In order to help ensure that needs are met, the manager and members of staff undertake individual risk assessments of each young person and devise more detailed care plans following admissions. One social worker who returned a questionnaire said, 'each young person is an individual in their own right and care planning is always directed to meeting their needs'.

The needs of young people living at the home are closely monitored and regularly reviewed. The manager and members of staff regularly attend review meetings with partner agencies, changing needs are quickly highlighted and appropriate actions are taken.

Where appropriate, young people are supported and encouraged to maintain regular contact with their friends and families.

The admission procedure for the home includes, where appropriate, arrangements for the young people to visit before a placement is agreed. Members of staff try to make young people feel welcome and to understand what it will be like to live there. When asked what it was like living at the home, one young person said, 'it's alright, I'm getting used to it'.

Young people are encouraged and supported to make decisions about their lives and to influence how the home is run. Young people are encouraged to raise issues which affect their lives.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

The manager and members of staff encourage and support young people to take responsibility for their actions and to develop adult responsibilities. Young people are encouraged to participate in activities of daily living and to learn independence skills. Support is given where necessary, on an individual basis, to help them achieve their full potential. Staff at the home also work closely with the young people to help them develop skills for daily living.

Young people enjoy homely accommodation that is decorated, furnished and maintained to a very high standard. Members of staff help to maintain the building and to keep it clean and tidy. Young people living at the home are encouraged to personalise their bedrooms and they are encouraged to keep their home clean and tidy.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Members of staff support and enable young people to participate in community based activities on an equal basis and to develop their own

identity. Members of staff have undertaken training in equality and diversity issues. The statement of purpose has recently been reviewed and accurately describes what young people can expect from living at the home.

Young people are looked after by members of staff who are supported and properly managed. All members of staff receive regular, formal supervision. The manager also makes himself available to talk with members of staff should they need to do so. Staff meetings are held at regular intervals.

Young people receive the care and services they need from competent staff. The majority of members of staff are trained to a minimum National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People. There are clear arrangements in place for members of staff to deputise in the absence of the manager.

Members of staff are sufficient in number and experience to meet the needs of the young people living at the home. The home's rotas ensure that, where possible, there is a mix of both male and female staff on duty. Staff sickness and holidays are covered by existing staff members being flexible in their work patterns. Consistency of care is provided to young people.

Young people are looked after by staff who are trained and competent to meet their needs. A record of all training received by members of staff is maintained within the home.

The care of young people living at the home is monitored regularly. A system is in place, to ensure performance is monitored and any patterns or issues requiring action are highlighted.

The needs of young people are recorded, to reflect their individuality and daily records are maintained. Information relating to the care that young people receive is stored securely. Young people and their parents are able to access this information within the home if they request it.

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 that the written notes of all appointments young people living at the home have with healthcare professionals are retained on the young person's file (NMS 12)
- review the home's procedure for administering homely remedies to clarify which homely remedies may be given (NMS 13)
- ensure that the home has current Public and Employee Liability insurance to a minimum value and that the certificate clearly specifies the name and address of the home (NMS 26.9).