

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Julia Toller
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Date of last inspection	23 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 is a children's home for three boys or girls, from 12 years old up to 17 years old. The home looks after young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. It is a large semi detached house, in a residential area. There is a train station and bus stops nearby. It is also close to shops, parks and cinemas.

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 good outcomes from education and work.

However, although they work well with other professionals to meet the complex and holistic needs of young people in areas such as emotional and physical wellbeing staff training is limited and staff are not always provided with the necessary knowledge to meet the needs of the young people they are caring for.

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

One action was raised at the last inspection regarding staff training and the recording of physical restraint and one recommendation about health care plans for young people.

Staff have now attended training in physical restraint, this promotes the safety and welfare of young people and staff. There have not been any incidents requiring the restraint of young people, although appropriate records are in place should this be necessary.

All young people have a health care plan, there have been some improvements made to these since the last inspection, but they do not always reflect the full level of work being carried out by staff to promoting the health needs of young people and this recommendation will therefore be monitored further at the next inspection.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people enjoy healthy and nutritious meals that meet their dietary needs and staff encourage young people to develop healthy eating habits. Young people are encouraged to plan and choose what they have to eat.

Young people's health needs are met. They have clear plans showing their health needs and the arrangements for meeting them, although the plans do not always fully reflect the level of work being carried out to meet the health care needs of young people.

Staff monitor young people to make sure they are healthy by encouraging them to attend routine health checks and by ensuring they get medical treatment when they are unwell.

However, the outcomes of health appointments are not always recorded, the needs of young people which does not ensure that all staff are made aware of the individual needs of young people.

Staff deal with health issues sensitively and make sure young people get appropriate support and advice to promote healthy lifestyles. The home has good links with specialist health and advisory services to make sure that young people get suitable support with specific health issues.

The home manages medication for young people safely, storing it in a suitable cupboard. Staff make sure that young people only have medication specifically prescribed for them and take it in line with the prescription instructions, although when young people refuse medication this is not always recorded, this does not fully safeguard young people or staff. Staff keep detailed records of any medicines stored in the home and the administration of medicines to young people.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Young people feel safe living in the home. Staff have created an environment where young people are treated with respect and get on well. Any disagreements are resolved amicably and bullying is not a problem.

Staff respect young people's privacy and confidentiality consistent with good parenting and the need to protect young people. They understand about their roles and responsibilities to promote and safeguard young people's welfare, but they have not received refresher training in safeguarding young people including recognising the signs and symptoms of abuse. This does not fully safeguard young people.

Staff provide a satisfactory level of supervision for young people based on their age to make sure they are safe in the home and in the community. Also, they give young people good advice about personal safety.

Staff respond appropriately to any serious concerns about young people's safety and let parents, police and social workers know about serious events involving young people. They inform Ofsted of serious incidents that take place at the home.

The home makes sure that young people have access to information about their rights and how to deal with their concerns through the complaints procedure. Young people know how to make a complaint if they are unhappy.

The home keeps a written record of any complaints and the action taken to deal with them. Young people say that they prefer to discuss any issues they may have with staff on an informal basis, but know who they could go to if necessary.

Staff use good communication skills to encourage young people to develop socially acceptable 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 people wishing to work at the home is generally sound. The home carries out checks with the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) and verifies written references. This makes sure that young people are kept safe.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people are able to talk to staff about problems and receive individual support when they need it. Staff spend a lot of time individually with young people. There are examples of young people getting advice and support with a broad range of possible needs including sexuality, healthy lifestyles, and relationships.

Staff support young people's education. Young people's educational needs are identified in written plans and there are clear arrangements for meeting their needs. Staff are supportive to young people in achieving success in education and jobs and promote achieving a successful future with young people.

The home works well with professionals to secure suitable schools and work placements for young people who are not in full time education. Young people's preferences are taken into account and they have opportunities to study and get work experience in areas that interest them.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Young people have clear written placement plans identifying their needs and outlining the arrangements for meeting them. Staff put the plans into practice and keep detailed records about young people's progress and experiences. The plans are reviewed regularly to make sure that they are up to date and continue to meet the individual needs of young people.

Young people are listened to and their views about their lives are taken into account. They are fully involved in reviewing their placement plans and play an active role in making decisions about their future.

Staff work with young people to consult with them and influence the way the home is run. They are involved in decisions about what food they eat, what they do in their spare time and how the home is decorated.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Staff prepare young people for adult life. Young people are encouraged to take more responsibility for themselves, suitable to their age and understanding.

They routinely learn skills through taking part in the running of the home, such as shopping, planning meals, cooking, using money and household tasks. They are also encouraged to develop their personal care, organisational and social skills. This helps young people to prepare for independent adult life and develop the skills they will need to be successful in life.

Young people enjoy homely and comfortable accommodation. The home is decorated, furnished and maintained to a good standard. Young people personalise their bedrooms and have enough personal space to meet their needs.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The cultural and individual care needs of young people are identified and met. Young people are listened to and their views are taken into account regarding their care, for example, daily routines and leisure activities.

Young people and referring professionals are provided with the Statement of Purpose and the children's guide, this is updated annually in line with regulations to ensure it is an accurate reflection of the services offered at the home.

Young people are supported by staff that are offered some training that is reflective of the young people's needs. However, training is minimal, and staff are not provided with regular training to ensure they have the necessary skills and knowledge to meet the needs of young people they care for. Formal planned staff supervision takes place monthly, staff are therefore receiving the necessary guidance and assessment that evaluates their care practices and promotes the welfare of young people.

The manager monitors standards at the home in line with regulations. Although a representative of the organisation carries out monthly visits to the home in line with regulation 33, these have not taken place regularly and reports of the visits are not always available. This does not allow staff at the home to use the findings of the visit to improve the service they offer to young people.

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
31	ensure that all staff receive appropriate training in particular training in safeguarding young people (Reg 27)	30 June 2009
32	ensure that the home is monitored in line with regulation 33 and a report provided following the visit (Reg 33).	26 June 2009

Recommendations

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

- ensure that when young people refuse to take their medications this is recorded on the medication sheets (NMS 13)
- ensure that health care plans reflect the range of professionals involved in young people's care (NMS 12)
- ensure that records reflect the outcomes of health appointments (NMS 12).