

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	7 July 2010
Inspector	Julian Mason
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	8 February 2010
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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 detached property located in extensive grounds. It is in the countryside adjacent to a main road and within easy reach of several large towns. The home is registered for up to four young people of either gender aged between 9 to 17 years.

Four young people were living at the home and were present during part of the visit. One young person participated in some of the inspection process.

Summary

This was a full unannounced inspection that focused on key national minimum standards.

The overall judgement for this service is good with some outstanding features. Each young person is receiving very individualised care and support that successfully promotes their personal, social and educational development. The Registered Manager and staff team are conscientious and committed to managing the home in a way that best suits the group of young people accommodated. Young people are able to make meaningful contributions to the running of the home and their future plans because they are listened to and their views valued.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

No requirements or recommendations were made at the last inspection.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people are provided with good support and guidance to help them lead fit and healthy lifestyles. For instance, young people are provided with practical support regarding their diet, fitness and food choices. Staff understand the importance of a varied diet along with regular exercise. Young people's routines include food shopping, menu planning and cooking which enables staff to promote positive choices that are consistent with good health. Physical exercise is encouraged and young people are engaged in a range of activities that they have chosen to do with help from staff.

Staff ensure that they listen to young people and that they respond in a practical and supportive way to any health related concerns or worries. Also, young people's health is monitored to ensure that they receive the right services at the right time. Risks to health are discussed in a sensitive and practical way to ensure lifestyle decisions that young people make are made through informed choices. For instance, some young people continue to smoke but staff regularly talk to them about the risks and the support available to stop.

Young people's medication is appropriately stored and safely administered. Administration records demonstrate that in nearly all cases medication is being administered according to individual prescription instructions. Staff receive training in a number of health related areas and parental consents have been signed to allow carers to act in the best interests of young people if needed.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Young people feel very safe in the home. They are provided with a safe residential environment that helps them experience positive and protective care. This is because the home is managed and staffed by an experienced team who understand their safeguarding roles and responsibilities. Where necessary, the manager and staff work in partnership with other professionals and agencies to ensure young people are safe. Young people know that staff care about them and that their well-being is important.

Young people are supported to behave well because staff are consistent in their approach and receive training in how to manage difficult behaviour effectively. As a consequence, positive relationships exist between young people and their carers. Records reflect an enabling and encouraging approach which makes the home's environment comfortable, friendly and free from any bullying behaviours. Currently, the use of physical intervention or formal sanctions are not a key feature of the home's behaviour management routines. This indicates the importance staff place on developing relationships with young people that are not reliant on the more formal methods of managing behaviour. Young people receive lots of rewards and praise for the progress and successes they achieve.

Young people know how to complain and feel that they are listened to and taken seriously. Young people can speak to staff in private when they want to discuss matters that are important to them. Confidential information is kept securely and only shared with people who are involved in the care of young people. There are well-established staff practices for reporting any event where a young person is absent from the home without permission. However, these circumstances do not currently occur and this is a further indicator of the success staff are having in providing a safe and stable home where young people want to live.

Young people's protection is further supported by very good health and safety routines, and appropriate staff recruitment and selection practices. The manager ensures that new staff only start work in the home once all the necessary checks have been satisfactorily completed. Regular inspections are made of the home's environment. Utilities and equipment are checked and serviced within required timescales and fire prevention routines and tests are carried out frequently to ensure staff can respond in an emergency. Because of these measures, young people's day-to-day living arrangements are consistently safe.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Young people receive excellent levels of individual support which is consistent with their needs and wishes. Young people are being fully supported to achieve the aims of their care plan because staff are clear about the purpose of each placement. Young people are very positive about the care they receive. In particular, the role link workers play in providing the right support at the times required or needed.

Good attention is paid to the differing needs of each young person, promoting their identity and treating them as individuals. The staff team work in an inclusive way with all young people, fully consulting and involving them in the life of the home. Staff demonstrate a considerable commitment to supporting and developing young people in all aspects of their lives. They are enthusiastic and committed to helping and supporting young people to develop and grow as

individuals. For example, staff make individualised assessments about the need for support and supervision and a young person's need to develop independence and personal responsibility.

Young people's education is actively promoted and supported which has contributed significantly to very good school and college attendance. Young people are doing well in their educational placements despite previous difficulties in other settings. Staff are well informed about each young person's progress because they take an active interest in what young people are learning. Achievements are valued and celebrated which provides a positive environment for young people's continuing development.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Each young person has a placement plan which is used alongside other information to ensure staff have access to details about current individual needs. Staff produce written reports outlining how young people's needs are being met and this is shared with key professionals so they are informed about individual progress and developments. Young people are fully involved in the planning of their care and arranging day-to-day routines. Consultation processes are broad and frequent, young people have regular time with staff to talk about their progress and any problems. In addition, young people have their say in more formal meetings and reviews which sometimes involve other professionals and family members where appropriate. The home's records provide good evidence of young people's expressed views and the feedback given to them by staff.

Young people receive good support when they arrive and leave the home. Staff are sensitive and caring when helping young people in these circumstances. They understand that each young person is different and that their needs vary according to individual circumstances.

Young people are well supported by staff to have regular contact with family and friends. Staff are well aware of the importance young people attach to family contact and always ensure that arrangements are in keeping with agreed plans. Staff regularly support and assist in transporting young people to various locations to facilitate family meetings. Young people are very happy with the support they get to keep in-touch with important people in their lives.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Young people are provided with spacious accommodation that is furnished and equipped to a good standard that helps create a pleasant and comfortable living environment. Staff regularly check all parts of the accommodation to ensure standards are maintained. The manager has a clear schedule of improvements and these are organised in a way that prioritises any health and safety matters. Young people are able personalise their bedrooms with their own belongings and furnishings. The manager and staff provide the right internal environment to ensure the social and personal comfort of each young person is met.

Young people are well supported to develop skills, knowledge and experience in preparation for leaving care and the achievement of independence. Young people are provided with a range of opportunities, practical activities and domestic routines to help them develop their independent living skills. Staff are supportive and encouraging because they recognise the importance of helping young people prepare for adult life.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Young people live in a well-managed home where staff are effectively organised to achieve good outcomes for each individual. Information about the home's operation is clearly reflected in the Statement of Purpose which has been recently updated. The young person's guide also provides the right information in a readable format that outlines what can be expected from the home.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Staff are very knowledgeable and aware of each young person's individual needs. This is because there is a comprehensive range of information available that is matched to each young person's circumstances and backgrounds. Discrimination is not tolerated and everyone is treated fairly and with equal concern.

The home's operation is supported by good staffing arrangements that are planned and organised to ensure each young person's individual routines are maintained. Young people are cared for by staff who are familiar to them and this helps to build trusting and supportive relationships. Staff receive good day-to-day support from their peers as well as from managers. There are clear lines of accountability between shift teams and effective staff communication ensures that each young person's daily needs and routines are well known and successfully managed. Staff have access to a range of good quality training that is regularly updated. In addition, managers appraise staff performance every year to ensure roles and responsibilities are being fulfilled. Many staff either hold or are working towards the National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People.

The service has a cycle of quality assurance activities that produces a detailed range of information about the home's operation. This includes regular monitoring visits from organisational representatives as well as internal audits across the service. The Registered Manager is well informed about successes as well as areas that the home needs to develop or strengthen. Young people's individual needs, development and progress are comprehensively reflected in their case files to ensure an appropriate record is maintained of their history in care.

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 medication is administered at the dose and frequency outlined in prescription instructions. (Regulation 21(2)(b))	31 July 2010

Recommendations

There are no recommendations.