

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Julia Toller
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	21 December 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 large terraced property located in a residential area with good access to public transport which provides access to the city centre.

Inside the accommodation is bright, spacious and has been refurbished to a high standard. Downstairs there are two main lounges, one of which is used as a quiet area. There is also a dining room, kitchen and staff office located on the ground floor.

All children's bedrooms are single and are located on the first floor with the staff sleep-in room. There is also one bathroom with a bath and shower and one separate shower room.

Summary

At this unannounced full inspection all key standards were inspected. This is a satisfactory service overall.

Three staff were present during the inspection and three young people, who spoke briefly to the inspector.

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.

The inspection showed that there are shortfalls with regard to health care plans for young people and medications, but risk assessments are comprehensive documents that outline risks pertinent to young people. These are updated regularly as young people's behaviours alter or new risks become apparent.

Staff 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 provided to ensure that staff have the necessary skills and 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

At the last inspection, two actions were raised regarding fire safety checks and staff supervision. Recommendations were also raised regarding complaints, records of restraint and admissions to the home.

Fire safety checks are now completed at intervals recommended by the fire authority, this helps to make the home a safe place for young people to live in. Staff are receiving regular planned supervision on a monthly basis. This provides staff with an opportunity to discuss all aspects of their work and their personal development needs. This ensures that staff have the necessary skills and training to care for the young people in their care.

Records of restraint continue to have minimal gaps. This does not fully safeguard young people and will therefore be monitored further at future inspections.

Complaints are recorded alongside action taken in response to complaints and an outcome. This shows that the home takes complaints seriously.

Admissions to the home are usually planned, there have been no further admissions to the home from alternative Considerate Care establishments and this will be monitored at further inspections.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

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.

Some young people have clear plans showing their health needs and the arrangements for meeting them. However, although staff are knowledgeable about the health care needs of young people, as young people do not always have health care plans it is unclear how their health care needs are being met.

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. The outcomes of health appointments are recorded, this helps to 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 does not always manage medication for young people safely. Procedures for the recording and stock taking of controlled drugs are inadequate and do not keep young people or staff safe.

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, and have received refresher training in safeguarding young people including recognising the signs and symptoms of abuse. This helps to safeguard young people.

Staff provide a satisfactory level of supervision for young people based on their age and understanding to make sure they are safe in the home and in the community. They also 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. They also keep 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. However records of physical restraints and sanctions are not always completed fully in-line with regulations, this does not fully safeguard young people or staff.

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 their home is a safe place to live.

The vetting of people wishing to work at the home is generally sound, although not all the information required in-line with schedule is always in place. 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 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. Their educational needs are identified in written plans and there are clear arrangements for meeting them. 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 comply with contact arrangements that are clearly outlined in young people's placement plans, making sure that contact is a safe and positive experience for young people. This means that young people are able to see their friends and family regularly and maintain relationships.

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 for adult 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 good.

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.

The home provides a safe and stable environment for young people. The manager shows effective leadership and a commitment to good child care. Staff feel supported and valued.

Young people know what support they can expect from the home and how they will be looked after. The home has a clear written statement for parents and social workers of how the home operates and plans to meet young people's needs.

Young people are looked after by competent and enthusiastic people who have suitable skills and experience to meet their needs. They provide positive adult role models for young people

and work in a consistent way to provide young people with stability and emotional security. Staff are well supported by the manager and receive regular supervision. Staff meetings do not always take place regularly. This does not therefore provide a regular opportunity to discuss the running of the home and reflect on young people's needs and progress.

The manager monitors systems at the home in line with Regulation 34; the home is also monitored monthly by a representative of the organisation. However, these visits are not always unannounced and the reports of the visits do not always include comments made by young people and staff. This does not fully safeguard young people or make full use of the process to improve the service available 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 Childrens Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

Standard	Action	Due date
12	ensure that all young people have a health care plan (Regulation 20 (1) (2))	21 July 2010
13	ensure that there are suitable arrangements for the recording, handling, safe administration, safekeeping and disposal of any medicines received into the home. (Reg 21 (1))	14 July 2010

Recommendations

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

- ensure that the record of physical restraint is completed fully in line with NMS (NMS 22.9)
- ensure that the record of sanctions is completed fully including the effectiveness of sanctions (NMS 22.10)
- ensure that staff files hold all relevant information in line with schedule 2 (NMS 27.2)
- ensure that team meetings are carried out regularly (NMS 28.10)
- ensure that Regulation 33 visits are carried out on an unannounced basis and that the reports of these visits include comments made by young people and staff. (NMS 32.2)