

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Julia Toller
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Date of last inspection	3 December 2008
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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 good service overall, with some elements that are outstanding.

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.

Staff benefit from a good level of training and support, they work well with other professionals to meet the complex and holistic needs of young people in areas such as emotional and physical wellbeing.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

No actions or recommendations were raised at the last inspection.

Since the last inspection, the home has varied their conditions of registration to care for young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. Staff with the relevant skills and qualifications have been recruited using safe recruitment procedures in line with regulations to safeguard young people.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people have a detailed health care plan, these are substantial documents that allow for the health needs of young people to be assessed, appropriate action taken and then monitored.

Each child has a team of key workers who work together to ensure that the health care needs of young people are met. This includes making necessary health appointments, arranging for advice and guidance where necessary and ensuring that health care plans are an up to date and accurate account of the young person's health needs. These plans are monitored to ensure that they are accurately maintained, this ensures that all young people receive a consistent standard of care.

All necessary medical appointments are arranged for young people, with staff demonstrating that they are aware that some young people may wish to protect their privacy and attend appointments alone. Where necessary, incentives are offered to young people who need encouragement to attend their appointments.

Staff encourage young people to attend appointments with relevant professionals to meet their individual health needs such as smoking and sexual health matters.

A medication procedure is in place to ensure the safe administration of medications at the home. Information sheets are held about the medications young people need, informing staff of any possible side effects that they may cause. Homely remedies are offered to young people, and written permission is in place to allow this. This ensures that the health care needs of young people are promoted and met.

Young people enjoy healthy, nutritious meals that they help to plan, taking into account their likes and dislikes. Young people are encouraged to assist with preparing meals and shopping in preparation for adulthood.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Staff create a warm and open environment where young people are treated with respect and are supported in every day decisions about their lives. Young people are encouraged to talk through any disagreements they may have between each other and to resolve them amicably. Staff encourage young people to talk about any problems they have and work together to sort them out, whilst being aware of potential safeguarding issues and the need to involve relevant professionals. This helps to promote an open atmosphere where young people develop skills for adult life.

Staff respect young people's privacy and confidentiality in a way that is consistent with good parenting and the need to protect young people. Young people make and receive telephone calls in private and are given space and time to be alone when they wish.

Staff fully understand about their roles and responsibilities to promote and safeguard young people's welfare, receiving training in how to safeguard young people including recognising the signs and symptoms of abuse. They provide a good level of supervision for young people based on their age to make sure they are safe in the home and in the community. They give young people good advice about personal safety. Staff respond appropriately to any serious concerns about young people's safety and let parents, the police and social workers know about serious events involving young people.

Bullying is not tolerated at the home, where staff are concerned that it is happening, risk assessments are completed and updated regularly to ensure that young people are kept safe. Staff make use of opportunities such as weekly meetings with young people and key working sessions to address bullying in a proactive manner, this reduces the risks associated with these behaviours and creates an open atmosphere for young people to discuss issues concerning them.

Young people are provided with information about their rights and how to deal with their concerns through the complaints procedure. They know how to make a complaint if they are

unhappy, including making a complaint to the placing authority. However the home does not always keep a written record of any complaints made about the home and any action taken to deal with them. Where necessary, staff ensure that young people have access to independent advocates to promote their rights.

Staff act as positive role models and use effective communication skills to encourage young people to develop socially acceptable behaviour. They place great emphasis on building positive relationships with young people and understanding young people's behaviour. Young people have clear and consistent boundaries and know what is expected of them and what is unacceptable. Records of sanctions are maintained in line with national minimum standards, which does not allow for the effectiveness of sanctions to be monitored. Sanctions are minimal, with staff placing an emphasis on rewarding positive behaviours instead.

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. This means that young people are clear about what is expected of them and how to achieve positive outcomes.

Young people live in a safe and secure environment. Although staff carry out regular health and safety checks of the environment, fire safety systems are not always checked at the required intervals, this does not fully safeguard young people at the home. The vetting of visitors and people wishing to work at the home is very thorough to make sure young people are protected. The home carries out robust recruitment checks before staff start work at the home.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Staff support and encourage young people to take part in leisure activities. Young people pursue particular interests, such as sports. They get opportunities to develop confidence in their skills, enjoy their leisure time and try new things. Staff are excellent at encouraging young people to take part in outdoor activities and enjoy new experiences.

Education is actively promoted and plays an important part in the lives of young people. Their educational needs are identified in written plans and there are clear arrangements for meeting their needs. Staff see education as important and create a stimulating environment that supports and encourages young people to learn and study. Young people know that they are expected to attend education and conform with this expectation, they each have access to newspapers, books, and educational materials to aid their learning. Staff demonstrate a commitment to the educational needs of young people and where necessary act as advocates to ensure that young people's opinions are listened to.

Young people's preferences are taken into account and they have opportunities to study or get work experience in areas that interest them. The home is excellent at working with schools to support young people's learning and address problems affecting their education.

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. Young people's placement plans are reviewed regularly to make sure that they are up to date and continue to meet their needs. 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 are encouraged to play an active role in making decisions about their future.

Placement plans clearly outline contact arrangements that staff comply with. Staff encourage young people's families and friends to visit the home and make them feel welcome, this helps young people see their families regularly to help them maintain relationships. They make sure that the arrangements for contact promote and safeguard young people's welfare, working closely with young people's families to ensure that contact is a positive experience for young people.

Young people enjoy warm relationships with staff based on honesty and respect. Staff are motivated and interested in young people. They enjoy spending time with young people and are proud of young people's achievements. They have clear professional and personal boundaries with young people consistent with good child care.

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. Also, they are encouraged to develop their personal care, organisational and social skills.

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

Where possible, the manager visits and assesses potential placements for the home, at this stage, the needs of individuals are considered alongside young people already living at the home. This ensures that the care needs of all young people can be met.

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 home is well run. 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 children's guide and statement of purpose has been reviewed since the last inspection

providing important information about the home in a way that is easily understood by young people. 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 very well supported by the manager and receive regular professional supervision. Staff meetings take place regularly and provide an opportunity to discuss the running of the home and reflect on young people's needs and progress.

The home is monitored monthly by a representative of the organisation, whilst the manager monitors systems at the home in line with Regulation 34. This shows that standards are monitored to ensure that systems are maintained to a good standard and that young people receive a consistent service.

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
26	ensure be means of fire drills, checks of fire equipment and practices that persons and young people at the home are aware of the procedure to be followed at the home (Reg 32)	31 July 2009
28	ensure that all persons employed at the home receive appropriate training supervision and appraisal (Reg 27).	31 July 2009

Recommendations

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

- ensure that there is an accurate record of all complaints and action taken in response to complaints made about the home (NMS 16)
- ensure that there all records of restraint are completed fully without gaps (NMS 22)
- ensure that procedures are in place to make proper provision for the welfare of children accommodated at the home in particular admission procedures between Considerate Care services (NMS 5).