

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Karen Malcolm
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Date of last inspection	15 September 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 home aims to provide residential care and support for up to five young people, aged between 11 and 17 years, with emotional or behavioural difficulties. The home is owned and operated by a private organisation and was registered in 2005.

The home is situated in a residential area and within walking distance of local shops, the library, transport links, a hospital, leisure centres, sixth form colleges, three secondary schools and several local parks.

The ground floor consists of two bedrooms, an office, a dining room and kitchen, a bathroom and toilet. The first floor consists of three bedrooms, a staff sleep-in room, a bathroom and toilet, an adequate sized lounge and a utility cupboard. Outside there is a paved garden area.

Summary

This unannounced full inspection evaluated the progress the home has made in addressing the actions set at the last inspection. All key standards under each outcome area have been inspected. An area of concern is that no complete application to register a manager has been received.

Questionnaires received from young people and carers were positive. Overall young people do receive reasonable care and their health care, nutritional, educational and contact needs are well met. Young people are well supported after they move on into independent living. Staffing levels have improved and the provider, manager and staff are capable and committed.

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

The previous inspection resulted in twelve actions being made. These were focussed on improvements to healthcare records, medication, complaints and relationships between staff and young people. In addition safeguarding measures with regards to cyber-bullying, guidance on the rewards systems, updated risk assessments and testing of electrical appliances required further action. The visitor's book needed to be fully maintained, the Statement of Purpose updated, regulation 33 reports needed to be completed and the monitoring under regulation 34 reviewed.

Following this inspection, all areas for improvement were addressed, except the monitoring of records under regulation 34. The recruitment procedures were found to be poorly maintained by the Registered Person.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

There has been a marked improvement in staff's understanding of the importance of safe handling of medication. Further training has been provided to all staff. Staff members spoken to said that the training provided was relevant, useful and practical, and focussed on the support and care given to young people who we support. At present none of the young people placed

are on any prescribed medication. Homely medication is administered when needed. There is clear guidance on how this is administered.

There is ample choice of nutritious and healthy food provided for all the young people. Young people say that staff meet with them and seek their choices. They say that there is always enough to eat and staff ensure that meals are cooked properly. All staff receive guidance in healthy living and healthy lifestyles. Staff promote healthy eating and ensure young people understand the importance of a balanced diet. The menu plans contain a variety of nutritious home cooked foods which reflect young people's choices and cultural heritage. Young people are offered opportunities to develop an awareness of new foods, and various different cultural foods through 'food tasting' workshops. Feedback about the workshop session has been positive. Those young people who are preparing to leave care are involved in the planning and preparation of meals.

All young people have dedicated health files and these documents contain historic and current health needs; this is an improvement from the last inspection. All medical interventions, which include routine and more specialist treatments, are clearly detailed in these health records. All young people are registered with core health services, which include the GP, dental and ophthalmic services. Young people are able to choose male or female professionals when they seek health interventions, subject to community resources. All healthcare information and appointments are recorded and monitored by the key worker. There is now guidance in place for administering non-prescribed medication and the system for recording this has improved.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Young people say that staff members ensure that they have adequate privacy and confidentiality. Young people say that they are allowed time alone and staff always knock on their doors before entering. Staff follow the guidance provided to them regarding case records and these are stored securely and safe in the office. Room searches take place, if this is necessary, to help keep children safe; the records of these do not always include the time of the search or whether young people themselves were aware that a search had taken place. Staff are sensitive to gender issues especially when dealing with young people of the opposite sex.

The home has adequate bathing and toilet facilities with appropriate locks to ensure individual's privacy is respected.

A complaints procedure is maintained in this home to ensure all young people are able to make a complaint or representation over any matter. Young people say that they do not generally want to use the formal systems; they say that if something is bothering them then any staff members will support them. Complaint records maintained by the home have improved. There is now a clearer explanation of what action has been taken by the manager. However, there is a high incidence of theft of clothing in the home, and there does not seem to be any clear strategies in place to manage this.

The home has a 'no tolerance' approach to bullying which is known to all the young people and staff. Issues of bullying are discussed in residents' meetings when they arise. Some young people have computers and at the previous inspection a concern was raised about cyber-bullying. The home has introduced different workshops for the young people. One of the workshops

was on bullying, mobile phone and cyber-bullying. The feedback from the session was positive and young people found the information shared valuable.

The home has revised the positive behaviour scheme and now has two schemes running at the same time, which rewards young people daily following tasks completed. With this positive behaviour system the central incentive is monetary with some activity rewards. Staff state that sanctions are rarely used, it is all about positive behaviour.

Young people are safeguarded in the home. Any child protection concerns are promptly dealt with. Young people are safeguarded by the vigilance of staff and systems, such as detailed daily records about the movements and welfare of young people, adequate staffing levels and good communication between staff. Training is provided annually. Young people have also undertaken workshop training pertaining to their safety and have completed training on 'stranger danger' and safety at home.

The health and safety of young people and staff is safeguarded by regular checks of the home's gas, electric and fire safety equipment. Fire drills are undertaken regularly. However, the fire records do not indicate if newly appointed staff undertake a fire evacuation as part of their induction.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people acknowledge that they receive good support from staff giving their key worker as an example. The practical individual support is reflected in the records of key worker sessions along with the variety of planning documentation that is in place. This includes identifying any religious and cultural needs a young person may have. The staff know the young people well and are very knowledgeable of their individual needs and the implications this has for their care.

All the young people are now at the age where they are attending further education colleges and preparing for their futures. Education is actively promoted. The home provides adequate facilities for home study. Although, the home provides a computer with internet access, generally most have their own computers. Guidance on using the computer safely have been discussed with young people as part of their independence, learning and skills training.

There are ample opportunities for young people to participate in a range of appropriate leisure activities, and the registered person allocates sufficient financial resources to fund leisure activities and trips. Risk assessments pertaining to high risk activities are in place and updated when necessary. Young people said that they have no hobbies, but they are encouraged to do new things for example joining the gym.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Young people benefit from placement plans recorded by staff shortly after they move into the home. The home is provided with some information about young people's needs by placing authorities but this does not always include their placement plans. Young people are appropriately placed in the home and their welfare and progress is regularly reviewed by placing authorities. Young people and their key workers contribute to these reviews and the home is

provided with copies of review reports. Young people's needs and progress are also regularly discussed and reviewed in staff meetings and supervision. Placement plans now have clear detail evidencing cultural needs and identity and how young people like to be supported.

Young people are well supported in maintaining contact with their families. Staff understand the importance of family contact and are also aware of any risk factors. Staff liaise effectively with placing authorities in order to structure young people's family contact and work at building positive relationships with them.

There are procedures for young people leaving the home covering both planned and emergency departures. Guidance is available for staff to ensure that newly placed young people are given extra support as well as those moving on. In the event of an emergency placement, procedures are in place to ensure that the placement review is conducted in accordance with the national minimum standards.

Young people benefit from positive relationships and good communication with staff. Young people are confident in expressing their views and feel that these are listened to. Their views are sought in regular key work sessions, informal discussions with staff and in regular residents' meetings.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Young people receive good support from staff at the home to help them practise the skills they will need to live successfully and independently when they are older. The home works alongside the social worker to ensure young people are being given the right choices to plan for their future.

Young people are able to manage their personal allowance appropriately and receive a suitable sum according to their age and ability. Young people are encouraged to save.

Young people are provided with reasonable, homely accommodation. Young people can personalise their space if they wish, for example, displaying their cultural heritage and identity.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The manager has been in post for a number of months. However, no complete application to register the manager has been received, although a letter of notification with regards to the management arrangements of the home was received by Ofsted. The Statement of Purpose has been updated with the current staffing information, and includes all the required information.

Past and current rotas were in place and reflect adequate staffing levels, supporting the young people both day and night. Young people benefit from competent and committed staff being employed to work in the home. There have been some recent changes in the staff team and new staff have been well supported. Staff demonstrate good understanding of young people's needs. Seven of the eight care staff working at the home at the time of the inspection hold a national vocational qualification level 3 or equivalent.

Young people say they get on well with staff. There are sufficient permanent staff and staffing levels meets the young people's needs. Staff benefit from training provided by the home and

this is updated yearly. Training provided is relevant to the needs of the young people being supported. Staff spoken to said that they receive regular supervision and those who were new to the post said that their induction was good, informative and useful.

Monitoring visits are undertaken by a consultant monthly and these are all completed as announced visits. The consultant also supports the registered provider with a newly introduced quality assurance monitoring of the service. Young people's case files meet the standards and the regulations.

The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. There is evidence of improvement in equality and diversity practice. The quality and detail of young people's plans now include a clear account of how individual's needs are to be supported. Young people receive an individual service which is designed to meet their personal needs. All staff have a recently undertaken equality and diversity training and have a good knowledge of the young people they are working with ensuring their needs are consistently met.

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
32	ensure, by means of fire drills and practices at suitable intervals, that the persons working at the home are aware of the procedure to be followed in case of fire. This includes new starters (Regulation 32)	20 June 2010
34	ensure that the acting manager completes the process to become the home's Registered Manager. (Care Standard Act 2000 Part 2)	31 July 2010

Recommendations

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

- introduce clear strategies to monitor and address how incidents relating to theft are addressed by the home (NMS16)
- ensure that the room search log is completed in sufficient detail. (NMS 9.8)