

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Michelle Moss
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Date of last inspection	4 March 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 offers accommodation to six young people. The building is designed in a way that offers plenty of space to the young people, including a large lawn garden area to the rear of the building. The ground floor of the building consists of a living room, dining room, computer and arts room, kitchen, laundry room and access to a private telephone.

The home is within easy reach of places of worship, shops, restaurants, local community markets and a range of community activity centres.

The first floor is designed to have two separate landing and bedroom areas. Each side consists of three single bedrooms, storage cupboards, shower and toilet facilities and a communal area on each landing with soft seating. Between the landings are additional toilet and bathing facilities.

Summary

This was a full inspection that was conducted unannounced. All key standards were assessed to help form a judgement on the provision of care.

Outcomes for young people are overall enhanced in nearly all aspects of their care. The majority of key standards are met. Areas of health and enjoyment are exceeding the national minimum standards. However, there are a few minor shortfalls requiring improvement. These include ensuring young people receive a key to their bedroom and are participating in all aspects of their care. Also, that Regulation 33 visits are taking place more frequently and repairs are carried out in a timely manner.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Little improvement has been made regarding the frequency of Regulation 33 visits. This continues to compromise their function to review the quality of care and to facilitate improvement in the interests of young people. This extends to no visits or reports being confirmed for the past two months.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

The staff have excellent access to expert advice in meeting the physical, emotional and mental health of young people. This includes having strong links established with looked after children's nurses, Eclipse and psychologist services. The placement plan incorporates informative health plans and records that provide a detailed evaluation of young people's health needs. The arrangements for administering and recording out of medicines are well managed to secure young people's health. The provision and preparation of meals is excellent to ensure young people enjoy healthy, nutritious meals that meets their dietary needs. This extends to helping young people to explore cultural differences relating to food through organised theme nights. These collective approaches including of collaborative working with health professionals strongly enhances the health of young people.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The safety of young people is promoted well through a wide range of good practices and recordings made by the home. This is centralised around the placement plan that secures the knowledge about young people's needs. This includes assessing known risks and undertaking assessments that helps to keep young people safe. This extends to countering bullying, protecting young people from abuse and having safeguards developed for when young people put themselves at risk from being missing from home.

There are highly effective systems operated to secure the health and safety of young people inclusive of fire safety and the recruitment of workers. Furthermore, young people are able to raise concerns with the knowledge their complaints are listened to and addressed. Privacy is respected by staff knocking on doors before entering and ensuring information held about young people is stored safely to secure their rights of confidentiality. However, young people do not always have sufficient security to store their personal belongings in their bedrooms, by not having a lockable facility on their door.

The staff receive behaviour management training, which focuses on effective communication to aid young people to self manage their behaviour inclusive of staff deploying de-escalation techniques. The staff are successful in implementing these techniques and as a result, physical restraint is seen as a last resort. When it has been necessary to use such measures, a record is made that provides a detailed account of the incident and the type of measure applied. However, what is absent from these records is the views and feelings of young people. This limits equality being secured, whereby all views and opinions are inclusive of one report.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

The rapport between young people and staff is built on mutual respect with staff understanding their professional boundaries, yet being able to incorporate terrific support and encouragement in helping young people to learn and reach their potential.

Young people are able to have access to independent visitors. There is some terrific work undertaken, where staff help and guide young people to stay safe and healthy. For example, work completed around self esteem. In addition, staff make sure young people are helped to celebrate birthdays and other important events.

Young people have good community links and access to a wide range of activities that reflects their diverse interests and needs. This extends to staff assisting young people in achieving their aspirations, inclusive of gaining vocational qualifications in their preparation towards adulthood.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Young people have aspects of their needs comprehensively assessed in aspects of their health and welfare. Some recognition is given to young people's identity and diverse needs, but this is not as comprehensive of other elements of the plan. This extends to insufficient details being made that demonstrate how cultural, religious and racial needs are met on a day to day basis. In addition, although the placement plan is monitored and updated frequently, the evidence

to show young people's views are taken into account is not secured. This limits the value young people can give to their care plan from their experiences. More positively, arrangements for contact are promoted and the home helps young people to sustain the appropriate levels of contact, reflective of any required safeguards.

Young people as a group have monthly house meetings that provides them with opportunities to contribute to the running of the home. These cover a broad range of topics. However, young people report not being around to attend these meetings. This restricts their views and opinions about activities and outings to be heard.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

The home is located in an established residential area and offers young people good access to the local community facilities that takes account of individual hobbies and interests.

The staff work hard to provide a homely and pleasant environment for young people to live. However, delays in repairs pose a risk to the safety of both young people and staff. For example, several doors have broken panels, that have sharp and jagged edgings. The damage also impacts on the standard of presentation of the home that is visible to young people and visitors. More positively, young people are given a range of opportunities to develop their life skills to help them prepare for adulthood. This support is increasing young people's confidence and equips them with skills to live independently in the future.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The staff form a diverse team, who have a wide range of skills and experience that helps them to meet the needs of young people. This includes receiving purposeful training, such as safeguarding, first aid and care and control. However, during the last year the number of confirmed training sessions are below the national minimum standards set at six days per year. More positively, all staff supporting young people hold relevant qualifications fitting to their roles and responsibilities. This includes the National Vocational Qualification in childcare or other relevant qualifications. The staff receive regular supervision and annual appraisals that ensure they are themselves supported and guided to safeguard and promote the welfare of young people in their care.

The home has a written statement of purpose and children's guide that provides intended readers with detailed information about what the service sets out to achieve. For the young people, their guide helps them to be well informed about what it will mean to them living at the home and how they will be cared for.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. This is demonstrated through the care and support young people receive. This includes receiving lots of opportunities to aspire in their learning and to pursue interests. In addition, the home is excellent at exploring cultural heritage through the direct work they undertake with young people and in the provision of meals.

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
24	ensure the home is in good internal structural repair (Regulation 31.2d)	31 July 2009
32	ensure at least once a month a visit is completed and a report made on the conduct of the home (Regulation 33.3,4c)	3 July 2009
2	ensure in preparing and reviewing the placement plan that so far as practicable young people's views are taken into account (Regulation 12.3).	31 July 2009

Recommendations

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

- increase the level of detail on identifying young people's diversity within the placement plan. Also, provide more opportunities to contribute to decisions by more frequent house meetings (NMS2 and NMS 8.2,4)
- make sure young people's privacy is respected by providing them with lockable bedroom doors that will also safeguard their personal possessions (NMS 9.2 and NMS 24.6)
- give young people the opportunity to have their views recorded against the records made by staff for sanctions and physical interventions (NMS 22.14).