

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC063813
Inspection date	14 September 2009
Inspector	Robert Hewston
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	31 October 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 registered for up to seven young people aged between 12 and 18 years and is owned and operated by a private organisation. The premises are situated in a residential area, within walking distance of shops and public transport. The home accommodates young people with emotional difficulties for medium to long stay periods.

The ground floor has a lounge, an education room and a kitchen. The main office, laundry, meeting room and a self-contained young person's flat are also on the ground floor. On the first floor are five single bedrooms with washing facilities, two separate toilets and one communal bathroom. A staff 'sleep in' room and manager's office are also on this floor. The garden has a hard area for sports activities.

Summary

This was a random unannounced inspection that concentrated on previous recommendations and focused on areas relating to keeping young people safe and organisation. The inspection also concentrated on how the home consults with young people, plans for their care and how staffing and management arrangements support the operation of the service. Seven young people are accommodated in the home but only two participated in the inspection.

The overall judgement for this service is outstanding. Each young person is receiving a focused level of 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 because their views and opinions are valued.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection two recommendations were set. The first recommendation was to ensure all food is appropriately labelled and stored. This has been met well. The second recommendation was to ensure appropriate protocol is followed for the use of non prescribed medication. New improved training in all medication has been given to all staff. The company is also having advice and training from a large pharmacy company enhancing staff understanding of storing and handling all type of medication.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is not judged.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Young people are clearly benefiting from a service that has an outstanding focus on safeguarding and protection matters. Young people feel very safe in the home. Operational policies, procedures and staff guidance are used effectively to promote everybody's safety and welfare. Young people are frequently and consistently engaged by staff in how to keep themselves and

others safe. Young people benefit from living in a home where there are excellent arrangements in place to ensure staff are trained and well informed about effective safeguarding practices.

There are policies and procedures covering privacy and confidentiality. The staff are able to demonstrate a good knowledge and understanding of them in their day-to-day practice. Young people's privacy is respected and they are able to enjoy their own private space. For example the independent flat offers privacy for young people to experience independent living but also with the guidance and support of the staff.

Confidential information is shared appropriately with regard to child protection and information regarding the young people is stored in a secure location.

A key success of the home is the way in which staff are able to engage with young people about matters that are significant to their safety and protection. The positive interaction between staff, therapists with the young people enables the behaviour management programmes to be successful. Set boundaries and excellent supervision enhances the safety and well being of the young people. Young people feel safe and well protected by all of the staff involved within the home. For example young people had been placing themselves at risk when absconding. Reward planners, risk assessments have been reviewed and changed to meet young peoples needs. Key working sessions show in detail the discussions young people have around staying safe. In conjunction with therapist and councillors the staff offer an approach of consistency of care especially in keeping young people safe. Young people commented on how they do feel "well safe" in the home.

Young people live in a home where bullying is not allowed and where any form of unwanted behaviour is challenged. Staff provide regular and specific feedback to young people about their behaviour with a clear focus on setting fair and reasonable boundaries. Young people understand what is expected of them and they are rewarded for good behaviour. Staff are patient and listen to young people. Staff demonstrate patience, they promote boundaries that are safe and in the best interests of young people. Where more formal interventions are used, such as sanctions or physical interventions, the home's records demonstrate that staff responses are not always proportionate. Some sanctions have time scales which seem to long. The deputy manager has already acknowledged that sanction timescales are a weakness and had already started to address this with the staff team.

Staff practice is underpinned by a range of training that supports the home to be a safe place for young people to live. For instance, staff receive repeated child protection, behaviour management and health and safety related training. The improved training matrix in conjunction with improved training course should further enhance staff knowledge around safe guarding.

The Registered Manager ensures that no new member of staff starts work in the home until all the necessary vetting checks have been completed. These circumstances make an excellent contribution to the home's wider approaches to safeguarding and protection.

Young people are consulted and involved in decisions about their care and future plans whilst living at the home. The deputy manager had already recognised the need to promote a independent children right officer to the home. Discussion with the Local Authorities have already started to place.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is not judged.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is not judged.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is not judged.

Organisation

The organisation is not judged.

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
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Recommendations

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

- promote and make proper provision for the welfare of children accommodated in particular at least one person, independent of the home whom they may contact directly about personal problems or concerns at the home (NMS 7)
- ensure sanctions are not excessive or unreasonable. (NMS 22)