

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Bill Drumm
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	5 January 2010
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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 children's home provides care and accommodation for up to five children, of either sex, aged from eight years to 17 years, who have a learning disability. One-to-one care and supervision is provided for the young people because of their high levels of need.

The home is a large detached house in an area of mixed residential and commercial property. Each young person has their own bedroom. The home provides two waking staff during the night. There is a small parking area at the front of the property and a separate garden area, which is equipped for the young people's recreation. The home is set on the outskirts of the town centre and there are adequate schooling, leisure and shopping facilities in this area.

Summary

This was an unannounced inspection of the home which looked at all key standards and examined all outcome areas. All outcome areas were judged as being good. Overall the home provides a good service to all the young people who live there and has strengths in all outcome areas. Four good practice recommendations have been made as a result of this inspection. Young people's needs are comprehensively assessed prior to admission and an individual plan is developed to meet their needs. Members of the staff team are knowledgeable, skilled and committed to delivering a high quality service to children. Monitoring processes are good and help to ensure high standards are maintained, with any shortfalls addressed quickly. There are clear systems and procedures for keeping young people safe and for their health and welfare to be promoted and their needs met.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection three recommendations were set. These related to records of restraint, Criminal Records Bureau checks and public liability insurance. Since the last inspection, the manager of the home has introduced a system to ensure that a copy of any restraint used on a young person is immediately placed on that young person's personal file. In addition, information relating to the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check of each member of staff is now retained within the home. There is still no certificate to show the home has public and employee liability insurance.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people living at the home enjoy a healthy and well-balanced diet. Nutritious meals are provided and, where they are able, young people help in the planning of menus and in the purchase of food items. Members of staff ensure young people remain well nourished, fit and healthy. In addition, regular exercise and keeping fit is encouraged.

The healthcare needs of young people are promoted and members of staff provide good levels of care. Some of the young people living at the home have complex healthcare needs. Each young person has a comprehensive healthcare plan, which identifies their specific healthcare needs and what help they may require. Members of staff have developed good working

relationships with healthcare professionals to ensure that each young person receives a consistently high standard of healthcare. Young people remain fit and healthy and are supported to attend all medical appointments.

Young people living at the home are protected by the home's medication administration systems. All members of staff have attended a suitable course in first aid and in the safe handling and administration of medication. However, nobody working at the home has attended a full four day course in first aid suitable for their work with children. Written records are completed comprehensively and accurately. Members of staff use their initials to indicate that medication has been dispensed and there is a record of corresponding signatures to help identify members of staff. The health and welfare needs of young people is safeguarded.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Young people are able to keep in touch with their families and personal information is stored securely. Young people living at the home are treated with warmth, dignity and respect. There are sufficient bathrooms, showers and toilets to meet the needs of the young people accommodated. Personal care needs are dealt with in both a sensitive and discreet manner. Each young person has their own bedroom and they are enabled, where possible, to attend to their own personal care needs.

There are policies and procedures in place for dealing with complaints in an effective and timely manner. There have been no complaints made since the last inspection. One compliment has been received from a satisfied parent of a young person who has now left the home. Young people living at the home have access to complaints information and they are encouraged and supported to make their needs known. Young people know how and feel able to complain if they are unhappy about anything.

Young people living at the home are protected from exploitation and abuse. A copy of the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) procedures are available in the home and the home has policies and procedures in place relating to child protection. There have been no child protection referrals made since the last inspection. All members of staff working at the home have undertaken formal training in child protection, although some training has not been updated for some time. There are systems in place to promote the safety and welfare of young people.

The home has policies and procedures in place with regard to countering bullying and young people are protected from being targeted by bullies. The young people's guide to the home is written in a clear format and makes full use of pictures and graphics to aid understanding. There have been no incidents of bullying at the home since the last inspection.

The home has policies and procedures in place with regard to what action staff should take if a young person is absent without authority. There have been no occasions since the last inspection when a young person has been absent without authority. Members of staff provide consistently high levels of supervision and quality care to young people to help keep them safe.

The home has policies and procedures in place relating to the safe holding or restraint of young people, and members of staff have received appropriate training. Restraint records are retained within a separate bound and numbered book used specifically for that purpose. There have

been a number of restraints used at the home since the last inspection. Records show that on these occasions restraint was used appropriately and proportionately. The manager and staff promote socially acceptable behaviour through encouragement and rewards. The home also has policies and procedures in place relating to the sanctions that can be used to help young people improve their behaviour. Members of staff respond positively to acceptable behaviour.

Young people are protected from fire and other hazards within the home. There are good systems in place to ensure that young people, members of staff and visitors to the home are kept safe and free from hazards. Health and safety risk assessments are carried out at regular intervals and regular fire drills are carried out. The home does not have a specific insurance certificate that shows the home has current public and employee liability insurance to a minimum value. This was a recommendation at the previous inspection and remains unmet.

The home has a very stable, consistent and committed staff team. There are good recruitment and selection processes in place and safety checks are carried out to ensure the suitability of each applicant. Each member of staff has provided references from previous employers or those that know them. Full written details of each CRB check, carried out on each member of staff, is retained within the home. Young people are protected from being exposed to potential abusers.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people living at the home receive high levels of individual support when they need it. Each young person has their own key worker and meetings between them take place at frequent intervals. Key workers review each young person's stay at the home on a monthly basis in order to ensure essential information is recorded and, where necessary, services adapted to meet their needs. Monthly reports are thorough, clearly written and individual to each young person.

All young people living at the home attend school. The manager and staff at the home offer daily practical support and ongoing encouragement to young people to help ensure their regular attendance at school. Practical help with developing skills for daily living is provided to all young people living at the home. In addition, young people are encouraged and supported with their hobbies and interests. Young people are encouraged and assisted to develop their own community presence.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Young people living at the home are appropriately placed. Each young person has a thorough and detailed placement plan, which outlines what their needs are and how they will be met. The admissions process is needs led and specific to each young person.

The needs of young people are continually reviewed. The manager and members of staff regularly attend review meetings with partner agencies; changing needs are quickly highlighted and appropriate action is swiftly taken. This helps to ensure that the placement remains appropriate.

Contact between staff at the home and parents is both positive and essential, in order to meet the needs of individual young people. Where appropriate, members of staff are in regular

contact with parents to ensure that young people have a very positive experience from living at the home.

The home has a comprehensive admissions policy and procedure; this includes arrangements for children to visit the home before a placement is agreed and, where able, their wishes and feelings will be discussed. The admissions process to the home is thorough, it is needs led and it remains flexible to meet the needs of all the young people who live there.

Meetings with young people take place at regular intervals. Records show that these meetings actively seek the opinion of each young person. Young people are encouraged to make decisions about their lives and to influence how the home is run.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

The manager and members of staff work hard to encourage and support young people to take responsibility for their actions, to develop socially acceptable behaviour and to develop adult responsibilities. Each young person is encouraged and supported, within their capabilities, to learn independence skills and activities for daily living. The transition plan for one young person was looked at. The plan was written some years ago and there was no evidence to suggest it had been reviewed and up dated in line with the young person's changing needs. The young person may not receive the care and support necessary for them to move into adulthood.

The home is equipped to meet the needs of young people with a disability. Young people enjoy homely accommodation that is decorated, furnished and maintained to a good standard. The home's grounds provide a safe and secure place where all young people can play and enjoy themselves.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. All members of staff support and enable young people to participate in community based activities on an equal basis and to develop their own individual identity. The Statement of Purpose does not fully explain the diverse experience of all staff members, although it does describe what services young people can expect from living at the home.

Young people are looked after by members of staff who are very well supported and properly managed. All members of staff receive regular, formal supervision. The manager is also available to talk with members of staff should they need to do so. Staff meetings are held regularly and written records of all decisions made in these meetings are retained.

Young people receive the care and services they need from skilled and competent staff. Nearly all residential members of staff are trained to a minimum National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) at level 3 in caring for children and young people. This is good. Training is provided at regular intervals to ensure staff have the necessary skills, confidence and ability, to meet the diverse and changing needs of the young people living at the home. A record of all training received by members of staff is maintained within the home. However, some staff training has not been reviewed and updated for some time. This could mean that members of staff are not using the most appropriate and up-to-date knowledge.

Staff are sufficient in number, experience and qualification, to meet the diverse needs of the young people living at the home. No agency staff are employed to work in the home. There are clear arrangements in place for members of staff to deputise in the absence of the manager. Staff rotas have designated handover periods built into them.

The care of young people living at the home is monitored regularly. A system is in place to ensure performance is monitored and any patterns or issues requiring action are quickly highlighted. The systems used within the home for monitoring performance are currently being reviewed to provide more comprehensive information. The opinion of the young people themselves and their parents is sought in order to continue to improve and develop the service provided at the home.

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):

- ensure that the home has current Public and Employee Liability insurance up to a minimum value (NMS 26.9)
- ensure that there is a comprehensive transition plan in place for young people preparing to leave the home (NMS 6.1)
- review the home's Statement of Purpose to include more information about the experience of persons working at the home (NMS 1)
- review staff training to ensure young people are looked after by staff who are fully trained to meet their needs. (NMS 31.1)