

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	12 January 2010
Inspector	Sue Winson
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	24 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

The children's home is a detached house in a residential area which is close to public transport links and community facilities. There are three bedrooms upstairs and one of these is used as a staff sleep-in room. Downstairs there is a lounge, kitchen, office/sleep-in room and a conservatory. It provides care and accommodation for up to two young people who are placed by their local authorities.

Summary

This unannounced interim inspection took place over one day. All key standards under two outcome areas were considered, being healthy and staying safe. In addition, standards related to recommendations made at the last inspection were also included under enjoy and achieve and organisation outcome areas.

This is a good home where young people's safety and welfare is a priority and where staff work cooperatively to meet their needs and improve outcomes. Young people's health needs are met and staff ensure they have access to agencies and professionals outside of the home where necessary. Young people made positive comments about the staff and the behaviour management system which allows them to earn weekly rewards.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Progress has been made on the one action made at the last inspection. The home can now demonstrate that they are requesting full written information from placing authorities and social workers, however this has met with little success despite their efforts.

The manager and staff have acted on the five recommendations made at the last inspection. The home can now demonstrate that young people are seen by someone from outside of the home on their return after being absent without authority. Tighter procedures have ensured that there is careful vetting and selection of staff. There has been an improvement in the recording in general and the home can now demonstrate that individual work is carried out with young people in line with their care plans. Staff are now receiving regular supervision and appraisal. These improvements have largely been achieved through the stabilisation of the staff team. Fewer bank worker, employed by the company, are used and those who work in the home are experienced and known to the young people. Plans are in place to recruit to the two vacant posts. There is an evident commitment from the managers and staff to the home's improvement agenda.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people are provided with a balanced and varied diet and are encouraged to try foods which are new to them. They are involved in menu planning, shopping, cooking and baking and have choices about what they eat. Staff promote healthy diets and are trained in food hygiene.

Young people's health needs are outlined in detail in their care plans which include specific strategies for meeting physical and emotional needs. The staff have been in contact with placing social workers and have been persistent in requesting full written information to inform care planning. Staff have access to a therapist for consultation and the local Looked-After-Children's nurse visits and discusses issues with the young people. They are registered with doctors, dentists and opticians and are encouraged to attend for check ups and treatment. Staff are aware of a range of health promotion agencies in the local area and encourage young people to engage with them. Individual work in the home also addresses health promotion.

The policies and practices for the administration of medication serve to safeguard young people. Medicines are safely stored and full records are maintained including stock checks. Staff are provided with training.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Young people's privacy is respected. Young people are able to see visitors, have conversations with staff and make telephone calls in private. Staff ask permission from young people before entering their rooms. Confidential information is safely stored in locked cupboards in the staff offices. Suitable arrangements are in place for searching bedrooms.

Policies, procedures and practices in respect of complaints, safeguarding, bullying and absence without authority serve to protect the young people. One complaint from a person outside the home has been appropriately addressed and the complainant informed of the outcome in writing. Young people know how to complain and have access to a range of people they can contact. Staff talk with young people about personal safety and encourage them to engage with specialist agencies where necessary. A range of risk assessments are in place and staff carry out individual work with young people on keeping themselves safe. Staff are alert to the potential for bullying and regularly discuss the home's expectations with young people. Young people absent without authority are protected as far as possible and staff encourage them to remain in phone contact. They are seen by someone independent of the home on their return. Full records are maintained which demonstrate that they are welcomed back and offered food and drink. Risk assessments include triggers and warning signs for young people missing. Staff use a variety of strategies to encourage young people to return home on time in the evening. Staff are trained in safeguarding, safe caring, anti-bullying strategies and positive behaviour management.

Young people are encouraged to take responsibility for their own behaviour. Positive behaviour management is evident and staff use praise, encouragement and reward. Staff actively work to maintain consistency and clear boundaries. Sanctions used are fair and reasonable, and there have been no physical restraints since the last inspection. The manager signs that he monitors the records and comments on the effectiveness of sanctions. Young people respond well to the reward system which outlines a small number of goals which are agreed with the young people, and changed as necessary. Some are easily achieved and others present more of a challenge.

A wide range of risk assessments are compiled for the young people. These provide clear guidance for staff and include specific risk management strategies aimed at minimising or eliminating risks. They are reviewed and updated regularly. Electrical and gas checks have been carried out within the required timescales. Young people are informed about the fire procedures

and have had the opportunity to practice leaving the building. A visitors book is in use which allows for monitoring of people in the home. There are no evident hazards to the safety of the young people.

Recruitment procedures protect young people. All applicants go through an interview process and full checks and references are gained prior to them starting work in the home. These are fully recorded in personnel files and the manager signs that appointments are satisfactory. Personnel staff verify references and reasons for leaving previous employment with children or vulnerable adults. All staff have an induction period and their appointment is subject to a probationary period. Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) checks for all staff are regularly updated.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people receive individual support. Planned and unplanned work is carried out with them on a regularly. Staff take opportunities to discuss issues as they arise and are successful in engaging the young people. Individual sessions are fully recorded and monthly progress reports summarise the work carried out. The manager and deputy monitor the frequency and effectiveness of the support to young people through staff supervision and auditing of records.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is not judged.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is not judged.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Since the last inspection the manager has been registered with Ofsted and a new deputy has taken up the post. A small number of the company's bank staff are used to cover vacancies and staff absences. The manager ensures that they are experienced workers who are able to meet the needs of the young people resident. Consistency of staffing has improved and staff outlined how the young people have benefited from this. There is not always a permanent member of staff on duty in the home. Staff supervision is taking place at the required frequency and arrangements are in place which ensure that bank staff are supervised every eight shifts. Staff value supervision and were positive about the managers' leadership and support.

There has been an improvement in the recording in general and no incomplete records are held on young people's files. Records reflect their progress.

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 staff who are placed in charge of the home are permanent staff who have successfully completed their induction and probationary periods. (NMS 29)