

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Mick Earl
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	1 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 home provides care and accommodation for up to six young people, aged from eight years old up to 17 years old.

The home is a large three story detached house. The ground floor comprises of a kitchen, lounge, dining room, quiet room, laundry, toilet and staff office. On the first floor, the house has three bedrooms and one family size bathroom. Office space and sleep-in accommodation for staff is also provided on this floor. On the second floor, there is a further office and sleep-in accommodation for members of staff, in addition to three bedrooms with en-suite shower and toilet facilities used by young people, and a family size bathroom. Included on the second floor, is a corridor that leads to a separate self-contained flat. The flat has its own bathroom with toilet, an open plan lounge/dining room, kitchen and bedroom. A further bedroom is available for members of staff to use as an office or sleep-in accommodation.

The home is close to a local park. There are bus routes nearby to the town where young people can access shops, leisure and transport facilities.

Summary

The purpose of the visit to the home was to carry out an unannounced inspection to inspect the key national minimum standards.

National minimum standards were sampled in all outcome areas and identified the home has good strengths. These are in promoting young people's health, providing privacy and confidentiality for young people, supporting young people's education, involving young people and obtaining their views, providing a wide range of activities and social outings, providing comfortable accommodation and individual support.

There are areas for improvement which include the provision of staff supervision and training, the provision of looked after children documentation and providing an updated and accessible statement of purpose.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

There were no actions at the last inspection.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The manager and staff are effective at promoting the health of young people. There is a healthy and varied selection of food provided which the young people say they enjoy. There is a good range of fresh vegetables. Records detail the range of food that each young person eats which shows that they are provided with a healthy selection of meals.

The home has good policies and procedures in place to provide health care to young people. The records show that young people's health needs are well met and when appropriate they

are given advice, guidance and support on a range of health matters. This helps the young people to stay healthy.

Young people's records show health plans and health assessments are in place and record how basic health care needs have been met, such as doctors, dental and opticians appointments. Health planning to meet young people's assessed health needs is good. Information is available to young people when appropriate, on matters such as healthy eating, the dangers and risks associated with smoking, alcohol and substance misuse and sexual health.

Staff have received training in the safe administration of medication, first aid training and specialist training in connection with young people's individual needs is available as required so young people are better protected if they have an accident or are unwell.

Systems for safe handling and administration of medication are in place. The systems work effectively and the records are able to be audited to check that the right amounts of medication are still available in the home.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Young people are afforded privacy and they have free access to a telephone to keep in touch with people important to them. Information is stored securely which protects young people's rights. The home has a policy about searching young people's possessions in the interests of their welfare and safety and any searches are recorded appropriately.

The home has a complaints procedure in place. Information is provided to young people and their relatives and the young people said they know how to complain should they need to. There have been no complaints since the last inspection. Young people therefore have access to a system that promotes and protects their rights.

The home has a copy of the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures and its own child protection procedure. These are accessible to staff, who know and understand by them and staff have undertaken training in child protection. This means they know how to help protect young people if there was ever an allegation or suspicion of abuse at the home.

The home has a bullying policy in place. Individual assessments of a young person's risk of bullying or being bullied is held on their individual files as is any incident of bullying. A procedure is in place for dealing with any absence of a young person without authority. This is accessible to staff and helps them keep young people safe.

The behaviour of young people is managed well. Staff encourage and support young people to maintain socially acceptable behaviour and give positive messages to reinforce this. There are clear procedures and guidance for members of staff regarding how they should manage the behaviour of young people and they have received training in the safe restraint and holding of young people.

Risk assessments of young people's known and likely activities are carried out so staff know what to do to keep young people safe. Generic risk assessments of the home and its grounds are also undertaken and kept up-to-date. Health and safety matters are managed well, such as maintenance and checks of electrical wiring, gas boiler, portable electrical appliances and

fire equipment. These matters help to keep young people safe. Fire drills are carried out regularly and all staff and young people have been involved so they know what to do to keep themselves safe.

The home has not recruited any new staff since the last inspection. The home has in place a recruitment policy for employment of staff to ensure they are the right people to work with children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The manager and staff are very good at enabling young people to enjoy and achieve in life.

Each young person has a key worker who takes a special interest in promoting their welfare. Key workers have regular one-to-one sessions with each young person. Young people said they find these useful. The key worker system is effective at helping to ensure the individual needs of young people are met.

The manager and staff are particularly effective at ensuring the educational needs of young people are met. For example, they are good at enabling young people with previous poor attendance records to achieve full time education and they are effective at enabling young people to gain qualifications. They also fully support young people to achieve well in further education.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

The manager and staff have clearly recorded in-house residential placement plans for young people. However, the manager and members of staff said that they do not always receive the appropriate looked after children documentation and plans from the placing authorities. There is evidence on file to show that the home makes regular requests for the information. This is needed to ensure young people's needs are met effectively.

The in-house plans are updated regularly and young people are fully supported to express their opinions about their care plans in formal reviews and in the home's internal meetings.

The staff fully support young people to maintain regular contact with their friends and family, even though this may involve significant transport resources. Contact arrangements are also clearly described in the young people's files.

Suitable admission and discharge procedures are in place. For example, young people can look around the home first before they move in at a later time. The needs of the current group of residents and of any incoming young person are also considered. This helps to reduce the risk that young people may be admitted when it is not appropriate.

The manager and staff enable young people to have a full say in the running of the home. They have regular house meetings and these are recorded, they have regular one-to-one sessions with their key worker.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Staff are good at assisting young people to prepare for adulthood and they are actively involved in the planning, organisation and support of the young people's transition into adult care. Young people are encouraged to be involved with decisions about their lives and to help with the practical running of the home.

The young people receive appropriate allowances for personal items and clothing. Staff are good at encouraging the young people to plan their spending which helps them to develop budgeting skills.

The young people benefit from living in comfortable and homely accommodation. The general standard of repair, décor and furnishing is very good. Each young person has their own bedroom which they can personalise.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Members of staff support and enable young people to participate in community activities on an equal basis.

The home has a Statement of Purpose which is dated March 2008 and does not contain all the necessary information in an appropriate format, often referring to other documents that are not included. Young people also receive their own copy of a children's guide to the children's home when they first come to live in the home. Some of the information is out of date and one young person said 'I haven't really looked at it, I don't know what it's about'.

The staff team are consistent and there is minimal staff turnover. Young people said they know the staff well and they like and get on with them. The staff are experienced and interact with young people in a calm and appropriate manner, despite being confronted by occasional challenging behaviour.

Members of staff receive training to a minimum of National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People and they can also access short courses that cover specific needs of young people. Training records show that staff have completed all areas of mandatory training, but could not confirm that they had received six paid days training a year.

The records do not confirm that new members of staff receive the right amount of formal supervision each month and the record of the manager's supervision was not present in the home. This is needed to show that the work of staff members is being monitored appropriately and staff are looking after young people in a safe way.

The arrangements for the internal and external monitoring of the home and the care and welfare of the young people are appropriate. The Registered Manager monitors, compiles and forwards to management the home's records and statistics, to identify any patterns or issues requiring action. The management monthly visits take place at the right times and copies are sent to Ofsted. An annual development plan for the organisation is available but there is no evidence to show who has been consulted during the gathering of information for the plan.

Young people's case files are properly kept and the records of their needs, development and progress, reflects each young person's individuality.

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
1	include in the Statement of Purpose all matters listed in Schedule 1 (Regulation 4)	23 April 2010
2	ensure that the homes placement plan is consistent with any plan for the care of the child prepared by their placing authority (Regulation 12)	23 April 2010
28	ensure that a written record is kept in the home detailing the time and date and length of each supervision held for each member of staff, including new members of staff and the registered person. (Regulation 27)	23 April 2010

Recommendations

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

- ensure the annual development plan provides for consultation with children accommodated in the home, their parents and placing authorities (NMS 33)
- ensure that all childcare staff receive at least 6 paid days of training per year (NMS 31)
- ensure that the children's guide contains up-to-date information. (NMS 1)