

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	9 September 2009
Inspector	Robert Hewston
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	4 December 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 one of a group of four homes that have been set up as part of a tendering contract with Birmingham City Council.

The home is a three bedded-unit in a large converted semi-detached residential property. The ground floor comprises of a lounge, dining room, kitchen, staff office and toilet. There is also a large rear garden. The first floor has three bedrooms for children, a bathroom and a staff sleeping-in room.

The home is situated within walking distance of local amenities. There are local bus routes to access Birmingham and surrounding areas. The home is an intake and assessment unit that provides short-term accommodation for young people. Following the assessment period the young people are referred to appropriate placements that may include, foster care, long-term homes or specialist placements.

Summary

This was a random unannounced inspection that concentrated on previous actions. The inspection also focused on areas relating to health needs, keeping young people safe, positive contribution and organisation. In addition, the inspection 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. Three young people are accommodated in the home but did not participate 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 only one action was set. This was to take the necessary action to ensure the water level in the pond is safe. The pond was drained and concreted in June 2009.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Young people are receiving an outstanding service that is clearly focused on their emotional wellbeing and health needs. Staff actively engage young people in a range of health related topics that supports them to learn about their own health and fitness. Young people's health documents are up to date and are monitored weekly. A record is kept of the outcomes of all medical appointments to ensure any ongoing concerns are addressed. The records demonstrate that young people's health is being monitored and promoted by the staff in the home. Young people are regularly accessing medical professionals that matches their needs.

Meals available at the home are varied, healthy and nutritious. Consultation with young people about their meal choices is viewed as important. Young people's good health is supported by the provision of a varied and balanced range of foods. Young people's awareness around diet and exercise is excellent because staff are committed to a programme of education which fits in with the home's wider approaches to promoting a healthy lifestyle. Most staff have up-to-date training in basic first aid, administration of medication and food hygiene. Staff without first aid have been placed on the next available course. Staff ensure that all the necessary consents for medical treatment and first aid are in place and this is well demonstrated in the case records. As a result, staff are able to manage emergency medical situations safely.

Effective systems are in place concerning the use of prescribed and non prescribed medication. Staff receive training in the safe handling of medication. Recording systems are regularly monitored to ensure they are completed correctly.

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. For example, the excellent eight week assessment report is comprehensive, identifying young people's strengths and weakness, recommendations for an alternate placement and an excellent summary completed by the Registered Manager.

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. All bedrooms and bathrooms have appropriate locking devices offering young people privacy but also allowing staff to enter in any emergency. Staff demonstrate that they have a good regard to dignity, privacy, choice and safety. Confidential information is shared appropriately with regard to child protection and information regarding the young people is stored in a secure location. Visitors are welcome at the home, rooms are made available for young people to have visits in private if appropriate.

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 and young people enables the behaviour management programmes to be successful. The weekly and monthly monitoring of young people's behaviour plans by staff enhances the final assessment report in identifying young people's needs and welfare. Set boundaries and excellent supervision enhances the safety and wellbeing of the young people. These processes demonstrate that the staff take young people's safety and protection seriously in these circumstances.

Staff view young people positively and there is a good atmosphere in the home. Staff work towards a specific plan of intervention that is outlined in the 'management and behaviour plan'. All staff receive training in the use of physical intervention and this is underpinned by clear procedural guidance for staff. Systems are in place to monitor staff practice and records relating to physical interventions and the application of sanctions. Records show that restraints and

formal sanctions are not used regularly which indicates that the home does not rely solely on the more formal methods of behaviour management. Young people's individual risk assessments highlight the methods to be used to assist a young person in calming down. Staff are using their knowledge and understanding of young people's needs in this area to communicate in a way that is supportive and encouraging.

Each young person's right to complain is supported by the staff team. In addition, young people have access to an independent advocate whose contact details are well advertised. This is an excellent example of the organisation's overall policy to promote young people's rights and entitlements.

The management of health and safety processes is good which helps to protect young people from the risk of harm or injury. The home has established systems and procedures in place to ensure that the health and safety of young people is monitored and promoted. For example, fire prevention systems are checked and serviced regularly, well rehearsed emergency evacuation procedures are carried out and risk assessments are completed to inform the home about environmental safety issues.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is not judged.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Young people have a placement plan which is used alongside other information to ensure the home's staff are fully informed about individual needs. The available information is of an excellent quality and details the support required resulting from assessments of individual needs and risks. Young people are fully involved in care planning processes and have regular time with staff to talk about their progress and any problems. The final written assessment clearly demonstrates young people's needs and appropriate provision to move on to.

Young people's reviews are being effectively managed. They are encouraged where possible to participate in their review meetings. Young people are given the opportunity to contribute to their review meetings which allows them to be involved in planning for their future. Parents and other professionals, such as children's rights officers and advocates also have the opportunity to contribute to review meetings.

Young people are provided with the right support when they move-in or leave the home. Staff are sensitive and aware of the need to listen to young people. This approach fits with the home's wider operation in terms of consultation and listening to young people. Young people are given excellent support when they arrive and leave the home and these routines are based around individual needs and circumstances. Staff understand that moving home can be very difficult for some young people and this awareness is used to provide support and reassurance in these circumstances.

Young people are consulted and involved in decisions about their care and future plans whilst living at the home. There is an excellent range of records that detail young people's needs which staff update regularly to ensure information is current and relevant to each individual. Young people's plans include the arrangements for contact which demonstrate that they are fully supported to maintain relationships that are important to them. Young people's case

records also highlight any limitations on family contact to ensure staff are informed about any agreed restrictions on these arrangements. Staff are vigilant and aware of the actual and potential risks young people can face in these circumstances.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is not judged.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The home is effectively managed and young people are cared for by a motivated, committed and enthusiastic team of staff who understand their role and responsibilities well. The Registered Manager provides good day-to-day support to individual shifts and as a result they are well informed about daily routines, events and the progress of each young person. The commitment from staff is a strength of the home and most absences are covered from the existing team who are already known by the young people and this ensures their continuity of care.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. Young people are cared for by staff who belong to a diverse care team. Staff knowledge and awareness about each young person's needs is excellent. This is because there is a comprehensive range of information available to ensure each plan of care is individualised and unique. In addition, young people are provided with a caring and supportive environment where differences are understood and where everyone is treated fairly and with equal concern.

The Registered Manager has excellent systems in place to monitor the operation of the home and the overall progress of each young person. Regular visits are made to the home by organisational representatives and findings are reflected in written monitoring reports. The Registered Manager responds to these reports along with other activities relating to the evaluation of the service. Internal monitoring systems are excellent. They clearly identify quality assurance processes such as trends in sanctions and absconding. In addition, quality assurance activity is able to capture children's experiences and demonstrate how the service is being measured and improved.

The Registered Manager provides clear leadership to the staff team to support their work with young people. Staff receive levels of support and guidance that is consistent to the current needs of the resident group. Young people are cared for by a committed team of staff who are suitably experienced and appropriately trained. There is always sufficient staff on duty to care for the number of young people accommodated. The staff team are either qualified to National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People or are working towards this qualification.

Young people's case files are kept securely and contain an appropriate range of information about their history and progress. This meets the requirements set out in Schedule 3 of the Children's Homes Regulations 2001.

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

There are no recommendations.