

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC065855
Inspection date	15 February 2010
Inspector	Jacqui Gosling
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	9 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 is one of a group of four homes that have been set up as part of a tendering contract with a local authority.

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. Currently three young people are living here.

The home is situated within walking distance of local amenities. There are local bus routes to access the city 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 residential homes or specialist placements.

Summary

At this unannounced key inspection, all key standards in all outcome areas were assessed. None of the young people were at home as they were enjoying a day out to Blackpool.

The home provides an excellent standard of care. Young people are involved in their assessment, care planning and decision making processes. Staff are consistent in their approach to young people and they are appropriately trained to manage young people's behaviour appropriately.

Young people are cared for safely by a competent team of staff, who work well together and who are supported by clear policies and procedures, supervision and relevant training. Staff encourage young people to develop a healthy lifestyle and work hard to ensure that they are able to pursue their education and achieve to their individual potential. Staff also support young people to maintain positive relationships with their families and significant others.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

No actions or recommendations were made during the last inspection which took place in September 2009.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Young people are receiving an excellent service that is clearly focused on their emotional wellbeing and health 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.

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 supported to access medical professionals to ensure their health needs are met.

Staff undertake training in basic first aid, administration of medication and food hygiene. They 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.

Information held on behalf of all young people is correctly stored in lockable facilities. Staff are aware of their responsibilities to promote privacy and confidentiality and their practice is consistent with the organisation's policies and procedures. The facilities and arrangements for showering and bathing ensure the young people have their privacy respected.

The welfare of young people is promoted by a robust complaints policy. There is an effective system in place to record any concerns. The organisation ensures staff are equipped and trained with the knowledge and understanding to fulfil their role and responsibilities regarding protection and safeguarding. The procedures in the home fully comply with the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures.

Records show young people know that bullying is not tolerated and that staff will intervene to ensure they are protected from bullying by others should the need arise. Young people's safety is further promoted when their whereabouts are unknown as staff follow the agreed reporting procedures for these circumstances. This results in practices that are consistent with wider police protocols for reporting young people who abscond.

Young people are assisted to develop appropriate behaviour through the encouragement of acceptable behaviour and constructive staff responses to inappropriate behaviour. Behaviour management policies are robust and strategies have as their prime objective the creation of a safe, supportive environment. Staff have completed the required training to ensure if physical intervention is necessary it is consistent with guidance. Records clearly show that staff understand the need for boundaries while maintaining a high quality relationship between themselves and young people.

Young people live in a home that provides for their physical safety and security. There are robust risk assessments for all aspects of the safety of the premises and grounds including serious incident planning; the behaviour of the young people and their activities, which are updated as required.

The records kept in the home show that robust procedures are in place to protect young people from fire. There are records to show that all the fire systems are regularly tested. Staff and young people undertake fire drills in excess of requirements. Relevant certificates show that regular servicing and maintenance is completed on all gas and electrical equipment. Certificates of Public and Employer liability are displayed as required.

All visitors to the home are informed of the fire exits on arrival, they are also monitored by being asked to show evidence of their identity and required to sign in the visitor's book. These very efficient procedures ensure all young people living here are protected from potential risks.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Young people receive an excellent level of individual support that meets their specific and diverse needs. Detailed information about young people is made available to the home when a young person is referred for a service. A range of detailed plans are put in place, so that staff can make sure that their needs are being met. Each young person has an identified key worker, but all staff take equal responsibility for caring for them. There is excellent communication within the team and all staff are kept informed of each individual's progress, through regular planning meetings. This ensures that young people receive consistency in the advice, care and support they are given. Staff have strong links with services outside the home to ensure that additional resources can be made available for young people when a need is identified.

Staff are very positive about the value of education and work hard to make sure that every young person has an educational placement that meets their needs. Daily attendance at school is an expected part of the life of the home and staff work hard to help young people achieve this. They advocate on behalf of young people if there are difficulties at school and provide practical and emotional support to help them to maintain their attendance. Staff attend meetings at schools and provide facilities in the home, such as computers, books and a quiet space to study, to support young people. All achievements are recognised and celebrated, which encourages young people to persevere with their education.

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 officer's and advocates also have the opportunity to contribute to review meetings.

Young people are provided with the appropriate 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. Records detail young people's needs and are updated regularly to ensure information is current and relevant. 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 good.

The home provides opportunities for young people to learn the practical skills they will need to support themselves in later life. For example, they are encouraged to take part in routine tasks, such as cooking and cleaning their own rooms.

Young people benefit greatly from living in an environment that is maintained to an appropriate standard, internally and externally. There is ample private and communal space to meet the young people's needs. It is comfortably furnished, well equipped and kept clean and tidy. It is suitably located in a residential area, with good access to transport links.

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 are always sufficient staff on duty to care for the number of young people accommodated. The staff team are either qualified to National Vocational Qualification 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 Children's 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.