

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Liz Driver
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	16 October 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

A private company owns and operates this setting. The home accommodates one young person at a time who has emotional and behavioural difficulties aged between 11 and 18 years of age.

The premises are an end of terrace house situated close to the town centre. The ground floor comprises a lounge, a dining room and a kitchen. There is a small yard to the rear. The first floor comprises three bedrooms, one for the use of the young person and two for staff who perform 'sleeping-in' duties. One of the bedrooms doubles as an office.

Summary

This key inspection was unannounced taking place on a weekday. The one recommendation made at the last inspection was revisited during this inspection and found to have been addressed. All key national minimum standards were assessed during this inspection with two actions and one recommendation made.

Young people have all their needs assessed pre-admission resulting in good care plans with regular reviews taking place. They are encouraged to shop and cook their own food in preparation for adult life. Robust procedures and policies ensure young people are protected with appropriate safeguarding training provided to staff. Young people have numerous avenues where they can voice their views and opinions about the running of the home and their lives. Staff encourage young people to maintain education placements and provide support to do this. Young people live in a very comfortable home which has recently been subject to redecoration and refurbishment. The home is managed well with staff suitably trained to provide good standards of care. The home is safe, with all health and safety areas fully addressed. Monitoring of the home is in general sound, although there are some inconsistencies in recording of the monitoring and reports of regulation 33 visits not being available.

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 the setting was asked to ensure that the fire risk assessment was updated on an annual basis. This has been done with a new one in place for 2009.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people's dietary needs are fully assessed and a nutritious and varied diet is encouraged. Young people have the opportunity to choose and help prepare meals. Young people in the home are encouraged to eat a healthy and balanced diet although this can at times require a lot of encouragement from staff. They plan their own meals at least four times a week as part of life skills development and are given advice from the staff as to what constitutes healthy eating. They are able to prepare snacks when they wish and have access to fresh fruit. The company's new ethical policy, that covers areas related to the food provision, has just been introduced into the home.

Young people's health needs are fully assessed and reviewed at regular intervals. Physical, emotional and medical health needs are contained within an individualised health care plan with placement objectives that are regularly reviewed. Routine medical appointments are made and they are registered with a local dentist, doctor and optician. Any specialist medical appointments are arranged by the home and young people encouraged to meet with health professionals for specific advice. The promotion of a healthy life style is clear with information provided about issues such as smoking, drug and alcohol misuse and sexual health. Young people are cared for by staff who are trained to administer first aid.

There are good procedures in place that ensure the storage, stock control and administration of medicines is safe and secure. Currently no medicines are administered so practice was not evidenced, however, the policy and procedures are in place should young people require medication.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Young people have keys for their own bedroom door if they wish. Members of staff knock on doors before entering a young person's room. There is a policy in place with regards to searching a young person's room and a record is kept if this occurs. Any confidential information kept on the young people is kept securely and stored in locked cabinets in a secure office. There is a comprehensive policy regarding client access to records.

The right of a young person to complain about their care in the home is made clear to them on their admission to the home. The young person's handbook gives clear guidance to the young people about who they can complain to and their contact details. Staff receive training in complaints and whistle blowing as part of their induction process. Recording systems for complaints are in place although no entries have been made since the last inspection. Recent feedback from a placing authority was good about all aspects of the home and care.

Young people are cared for by staff who receive appropriate training in safeguarding, including the home's and local authority's protocols in identifying and responding to child protection concerns or incidents. There is a child protection policy in place for the staff to follow and they have a copy of the local safeguarding procedures in the office to which they can refer. There is no designated child protection log in the home as current practice is to record in individual files. Procedural guidance for staff clearly demonstrates the systems required in order to protect children and minimise the risk of abuse whilst young people are living in the house. No referrals have been made since the last inspection.

The home has a very clear policy in place with regards to managing bullying. Behavioural expectations are made clear to the young people when they are admitted to the home and the policy emphasises that there is no tolerance of bullying behaviour.

The home has a clear policy in place for the staff to follow in the event that a young person goes missing. Young people's care plans clearly state what course of action will be pursued should the young person leave the home without permission or not return to the home at the agreed time. This strategy is also explained to the young people so that they are clear as to what the consequences are if they are missing. Since the last inspection the level of police involvement has been high, however, this has recently decreased significantly.

Young people have a behaviour management plan in place which outlines what support they need to achieve positive behaviour. Triggers for distressed or challenging behaviour are recorded in young people's behaviour management plan. Targets can be set on a weekly basis to enable young people to develop coping skills and anger management techniques. If targets are achieved then the young people can earn rewards such as extra outings or activities. Sanctions are clearly stated in the company's policy with permissible and non permissible sanctions identified. Current records show numerous sanctions given with close monitoring by the manager to ensure they are all in accordance with company policy.

All members of staff receive training in the method of restraint chosen by the organisation which owns the home. The setting's manager is also the company's trainer for behaviour management. There have been no recorded incidents of restraint in the home since 2006. Behaviour in the home is of a good standard. The staff are aware of the fact that good relationships with young people underpin good order in the home rather than relying on imposed control via disciplinary measures.

The manager ensures that any risk assessments related to the premises, activities or young people are updated and reviewed regularly. The home has up to date checks carried out on electric, gas and fire safety systems. Additionally, there are regular fire drills. Internal checks are also carried out on a weekly basis by members of staff to check the fire alarms, smoke detectors, emergency lighting and fire extinguishers. Records show some inconsistencies in recording which has been identified in a previous regulation 33 report. The manager has since addressed this and records are improved.

The organisation operates a robust recruitment process which ensures that all members of staff have the correct checks made on them before commencing work. Files evidenced staff have enhanced criminal record bureau checks and the standards for safe recruitment are met. All visitors are vetted, supervised if appropriate and asked to sign the visitor's book.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Young people are given excellent levels of individual support which enables them to achieve in all aspects of their lives. Care plans clearly highlight the individual needs of young people. The religious and cultural needs of young people are established prior to arrival and where necessary actions are implemented to ensure these are met. A key working process is in place to ensure young people have regular opportunities to discuss their care plans and voice their wishes, concerns and aspirations, plus they have the opportunity for numerous informal discussions with staff. The setting is excellent at encouraging young people to have a voice and provide them with the tools to raise issues about their present and future lives with the home's staff, their social workers or other relevant professionals if necessary.

The staff work very hard to ensure young people have the opportunity to attend an educational placement. Staff liaise with education placements and arrange meetings to prepare individual education plans and personal education plans. The staff assist young people in attending their education placement. The home has an ethos where education is highly valued and young people are encouraged to take advantage of the support and opportunities given to them. Links with local work experience and employment companies adds to the education provision and transitional support into adult life. Outcomes for current young people are excellent with

post 16 further education placements sought and gained. Staff encourage young people to further their education to enable them to gain a work skill for life.

Young people have the opportunity to take part in a range of activities both in and out of the home. Preferences for activities are ascertained during key work sessions and during the admission process. The home provides a significant amount of money for leisure activities.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Young people have a robust assessment of their needs and placement plans identify how their needs will be met. A structured review process continually assesses young people's needs throughout the placement to ensure positive outcomes are achievable. Good avenues are in place for young people to have a positive contribution about their present needs, the way the home is run and their future. Where necessary specialist advice is sought to address particular issues young people may have and incorporated into care plans. Contact is fully promoted for young people and their friends; any restrictions are for valid reasons that are fully understood by young people and staff, and clearly recorded. All looked after children's paperwork is in place.

Young people are given a range of avenues to express how they feel. They have a good level of access to adults caring for them. There are regular key worker sessions, formal reviews and the young people are able to voice their views on an informal basis constantly.

The way the home functions enhances young people's independence and opportunities to make every day choices. It is clear that the young people's views are highly valued and that the ethos of the home means that their needs are of paramount importance. The staff approach ensures that the young people feel valued and listened to.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Good procedures are in place for young people as they approach adulthood. This includes liaising with social workers and contributing to pathway plans or leaving care plans. The manager works closely with placing authorities to ensure young people are allocated a designated leaving care social worker.

The home provides a good standard of accommodation throughout. Recent work to the house including decoration and renewing of fittings and furnishings has taken place. Suitable toilet and bathing facilities are provided. Young people choose the décor in their rooms and are able to personalise them with posters and pictures. Young people have their own key for their room if they wish and there is separate sleeping-in accommodation for the staff. The outside space is compact and the manager has identified the need for it to be tidied up. The home has enough space for the young people to meet visitors in private.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The individual needs of young people at the home are properly considered in relation to religion and cultural needs together with health and dietary needs. Recruitment procedures ensure staff are recruited fairly and without

discrimination. The company has recently introduced a training course, National Vocational Qualification at level 2, on equality and diversity that all staff are to complete.

The setting provides suitable information regarding the facilities and services available for young people. The statement of purpose, updated in 2009, highlights all areas of care provision and identifies the aims and objectives of the service. Young people are given a children's guide that is comprehensive and clearly states what they can expect and what is expected of them, although one was not available for the inspector to view during the inspection.

Young people benefit from a strong staff team consisting of experienced staff who are all fully supported by the manager and other senior staff in the organisation. An extensive induction programme is offered to newly recruited staff with continued training after this period. Staff receive regular supervision. Sickness and holidays are covered by bank staff. A good staff to young people ratio is in place to ensure high levels of support. Staff undertake mandatory training throughout the year plus other appropriate training as identified. Current staffing is predominantly male.

The staff team has access to a variety of training courses. The competency of the staff is underpinned by an active and ongoing training program. Staffing is maintained on a basis of two members of staff to one young person and this ensures a high staff presence and excellent levels of support.

There are team meetings where staff can discuss the running of the home and the young people's behaviour and progress. Records show the last staff meeting having taken place in May 2009. All members of staff have clear job descriptions which outline their duties and responsibilities. The staff have access to a number of written policies and procedures which are kept in the staff office. Additionally, the staff have regular access to a child psychotherapist who can give advice and an oversight in their work with the young people.

The home is well managed with appropriate and suitable cover in place for absences. The manager is in the process of completing an annual development plan for the home.

The home has regular visits undertaken by an external manager from within the organisation. These are the subject of reports which ensure that key areas in the home are monitored. They were not all made available during the inspection. The manager's monitoring of the home, in accordance with regulation 34 schedule 6, is inconsistently recorded.

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
34	ensure all regulation 33 reports are made available to the registered manager as identified in Regulation 33.5 (b) and that they are available for inspection (Regulation 33)	31 August 2009

34	ensure all matters set out in schedule 6 of regulation 34 are monitored at appropriate intervals and recorded consistently (Regulation 34)	31 August 2009
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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):

- consider having a designated log for child protection referrals (NMS 17).