

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Liz Driver
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Date of last inspection	14 January 2010
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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 undertaken with very short notice given to the provider. All key national minimum standards were assessed during this inspection with two actions and one recommendation made as a result.

Overall the setting provides a very good standard of care with some areas of outstanding practice. Young people have all their needs assessed pre-admission resulting in good care plans with regular reviews taking place. Young people are given much support to gain skills needed for an independent adult life with excellent independence packages in place; although formal leaving care plans are not in place.

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 appropriate education placements and provide much 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 very good standards of care and they manage very challenging behaviour extremely well.

The home is safe, with all health and safety areas fully addressed. Monitoring of the home is robust. All events and incidents are well recorded however not all events listed in Schedule 5 are notified to the persons listed; especially Ofsted.

One young person spoke briefly to the inspector during the inspection.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

No actions or recommendations were made at the last inspection.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people receive a balanced and nutritious diet. Their dietary needs are fully assessed and they are encouraged to try different cultural foods. Current young people are encouraged to budget, plan, shop and prepare meals as part of their independence plan and are given much support in doing this. They are able to prepare snacks when they wish and have access to fresh

fruit. The company's ethical policy, that covers areas related to the food provision, has been introduced into the home. Staff are trained in food hygiene.

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 young people are registered with a local dentist, doctor and optician. Although currently staff are experiencing difficulty in encouraging young people to visit these health related professionals. The promotion of a healthy life style is clear with information provided about issues such as smoking, drug and alcohol misuse and sexual health. The manager has very good relationships with all health related professionals. Together they implement a wide range of strategies to try and gain the young people's confidence in attending appointments and assessments. 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's privacy is respected and no concerns were raised during the inspection. Members of staff knock on doors before entering a young person's room and they are provided with keys to their bedrooms. There is a policy in place with regards to searching a young person's room and a record is kept if this occurs. All confidential information 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 make a complaint 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 and at regular intervals throughout their employment. Recording systems for complaints are in place although no entries have been made since 2006. It was noted that there has been very positive feedback regarding practice and outcomes for young people since the last inspection.

Young people are cared for by staff who receive appropriate training in safeguarding, that includes identifying and responding to child protection concerns or incidents. There is a child protection policy in place for the staff to follow plus a copy of the policy of the Local Safeguarding Children Board. There have been no referrals since the last inspection. 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, or out in the community. Staff are aware of the risk involved in young people having inappropriate social groups outside the home and give them a huge amount of support to enable them to make safe choices.

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. Currently there are no concerns around this in the house.

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. The home liaises very closely with the local missing persons police coordinator and have put in strategies to decrease the previously high numbers of unauthorised absences. As a result and since the last inspection the number of unauthorised absences has decreased dramatically.

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 plans. The home has worked hard to turn around challenging behaviour with very good results. Sanctions are clearly stated in the company's policy with permissible and non permissible sanctions identified. Current records show sanctions are mainly given for young people smoking in the house, however this has decreased significantly since the beginning of July. This is due to innovative strategies being put in place, relevant to the individual young person.

All members of staff receive training in the method of physical intervention chosen by the organisation which owns the home. There have been no recorded incidents of physical intervention in the home since 2006. Behaviour in the home has improved significantly for the young people, who now spend more time at the setting and engage more with staff. 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.

All events and incidents are well recorded however not all events listed in Schedule 5 are notified to the persons listed; especially Ofsted. Therefore this results in an action.

The manager ensures that any risk assessments relating 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 with evacuations. 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. All records of checks are monitored by the manager on a weekly basis, and by the Regulation 33 visitor on a monthly basis. The home's health and safety policy has recently been reviewed.

The organisation operates a robust recruitment process which ensures that all members of staff have the correct checks before commencing work. All recommended information is kept on file in the office with the main recruitment records kept at the company's head office. Files evidence 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 visitors book.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Young people are given excellent levels of individual support which encourages them to address and move forward with their complex issues. 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. They also have the opportunity for numerous informal discussions with staff. The manager is innovative in introducing new strategies to further engage young people with specialist professionals. The manager works very closely with them to ensure the best possible outcomes for young people. This has proved difficult for current young people but staff have shown determination and resilience and are now beginning to see young people's behaviour changing for the better.

The staff work very hard to ensure young people have the opportunity to attend an appropriate 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, even though very challenging at times. 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 in this area.

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 outstanding.

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. There have been some excellent outcomes achieved since the last inspection with significantly improved changes to behaviour. Excellent 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 these are incorporated into care plans. The staff team continue to engage and promote links with specialist professionals, in the hope that young people will engage at some time in the future, if not at present. Together both the staff and specialists work closely putting innovative strategies in place to achieve this engagement. 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 high 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 frequently on an informal basis, which they do with confidence.

The way the home functions enhances young people's independence and opportunities to make everyday 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, although not all formal leaving care plans are in place. In the absence of this the home has good standard independence packages in place that both staff and young people draw up together. 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. 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 with the young people and staff having planted flowers, fruits and herbs since the last inspection. The young people take a keen interest in the garden. The home has enough space for the young people to meet visitors in private. There are some on going issues with the external structure of the building. A surveyor has recently visited to undertake a survey and improvement work is planned. In addition, the outside of the building is to be painted.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. 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. A robust recruitment procedure ensures staff are recruited fairly and without discrimination. Staff undertake a National Vocational Qualification at level 2 on equality and diversity. This results in heightened awareness of equality issues and improved practice. Young people benefit from good role models.

The setting provides suitable information regarding the facilities and services available for young people. The Statement of Purpose, updated in November 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.

There have been some staff changes since the last inspection. Young people currently 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. The staff receive regular supervision and yearly appraisals. They also have regular access to a child psychotherapist who can give advice and an oversight in their work with the young people. The staff undertake mandatory training throughout the year plus other appropriate training as identified. The training programme is excellent with clear records kept of individual training needs. 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.

The home is well managed with appropriate and suitable cover in place for absences. The manager moved from another of the company's home last year but has not to date submitted an application for registration.

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

are submitted to Ofsted without fail every month. The manager's monitoring of the home, in accordance with regulation 34 schedule 6, is of a high standard.

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
34	submit an application for registration of the manager (Regulation 7)	31 August 2010
20	ensure all events listed in column 1 of the table in Schedule 5 are notified without delay to the persons indicated; specifically Ofsted. (Regulation 30 Schedule 5)	31 August 2010

Recommendations

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

- continue to gain and implement formal leaving care plans; in agreement with the placing authority (NMS 6.3)