

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC066187
Inspection date	17 March 2010
Inspector	Jacqui Gosling
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	22 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

The home is one of a group of four homes that have been set up as part of a tendering contract with a local 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 young people, a bathroom and a staff sleeping-in room. There are currently three young people living at the home.

The home is situated within walking distance of local amenities. There are local bus routes to access the large city nearby and surrounding areas. The home is an intake and assessment unit that provides short-term accommodation for young people aged 12 to 16. 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 random unannounced inspection considers outcomes for young people under the national minimum standard staying safe outcome area. Whether previous recommendations have been addressed is also considered. Three young people are currently living here but they did not participate in the inspection.

Young people are clearly benefiting from a service that has an outstanding focus on safeguarding and protecting them. 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. They 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.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Two recommendations were made following the last inspection that took place in January 2010. Both have been fully addressed.

To ensure young people manage their finances appropriately, they are no longer allowed to use future pocket money entitlement to pay for unauthorised taxi use.

The staff are now proactive in contacting the placing authority to request statutory reviews when due for any child, if the placing authority has not arranged the review.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is not judged.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

The home has very effective policies, procedures and care practices, which ensure that young people are cared for safely. For example, robust individual risk assessments and support plans ensure that staff have appropriate strategies in place to protect young people. Young people are protected from abuse because staff are properly trained and have a good understanding of the home's procedures for reporting and managing safeguarding concerns.

To protect young people from bullying staff supervise them appropriately in the home and they encourage the young people to understand the impact of bullying on individuals. The privacy and confidentiality of young people is respected appropriately; they have individual bedrooms where they can have time to themselves and keep their personal possessions safe.

Complaints are managed very well. There is a very clear complaints procedure which is made known to young people when they come to live in the home. Young people understand how to make a formal complaint and there is clear evidence that they feel confident about letting staff know if they are unhappy with any aspect of their care. In addition, young people have access to independent advocacy services who they can talk to.

There is a robust protocol for managing unauthorised absences to keep young people safe. Staff encourage young people to let them know where they will be when they leave the home and keep in touch with them by phone if they are away. Individual risk assessments identify the specific issues in relation to unauthorised absences, which staff need to consider. If a young person leaves the home without the staff knowing their plans or goes missing, staff work closely with police, local authority and other agencies, to ensure the safe return of the young person to the home.

There is a strong emphasis in the home on recognising and rewarding positive behaviour and effort. Staff develop positive relationships with young people and help them to learn to manage their own behaviour in a way that is socially acceptable. Staff are trained to manage challenging behaviour, including the use of restraints. However, there have been no incidents of physical restraint in the home since the last inspection, which indicates that staff are successful in the positive way that they work with young people.

The management of health and safety processes is excellent, which helps to protect young people from the risk of harm or injury in the home. Equipment and installations are serviced regularly and there are regular fire safety tests. Young people take part in evacuation drills, so that they understand what to do in the event of a fire or other emergency. Risk assessments on the environment and on activities that young people may be involved in, are robust and are regularly reviewed to make sure that information is up to date.

There are highly effective procedures for the recruitment and selection of staff. These ensure that all staff are thoroughly vetted before they start work. The identity of all visitors to the home is checked when they arrive. These robust systems protect young people, as they ensure that unauthorised individuals are not able to gain access to the home.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is not judged.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

To encourage young people to learn to manage their finances appropriately, the staff no longer allow them to use their future pocket money entitlement to pay for unauthorised taxi use.

As an assessment unit, the majority of young people require a statutory review to take place within 28 days of their placement. The staff are proactive in contacting the placing authority to request statutory reviews when due for any young person, if the placing authority has not arranged the review. However, some local authority social workers are not ensuring all young people's reviews take place within required timescales. This has the potential to delay the young people's care plans being fully implemented.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is not judged.

Organisation

The organisation is not judged.

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.