

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	28 July 2009
Inspector	Robert Curr
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Date of last inspection	4 March 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

This setting provides up to three long term placements for young people aged from 11 to 17 years old. The accommodation consists of three single bedrooms. There are spacious communal areas for eating, studying and relaxing.

The home is in a residential area, approximately five miles from the town centre and is close to public transport. One of the main aims of the setting is to provide a warm, safe, stable and nurturing environment.

Summary

This was an unannounced inspection. All of the key standards were checked and improvements made since the last inspection were noted.

This is a good service with some strong and outstanding features. Young people's education is consistently encouraged and promoted. Individual leisure needs are met and a multi-disciplinary approach ensures young people's views are taken into account when planning their future.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good and the staff demonstrate an appreciation that individual young people may have a range of possible needs arising from diversity.

Young people's welfare is enhanced by the positive relationships and role models fostered by the staff team. The service is very closely monitored, thus enabling the Registered Provider to oversee the operation of the home

There are sufficient experienced and competent staff who are very well supported. However, the overall qualification recommendation is not met. The safety of people within the setting could be compromised by a weakness in fire safety.

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 Registered Person was asked to review procedures around medication, the statement of purpose and take action in relation to staff achieving a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) at level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People.

Clear and accurate medication records are held and the statement of purpose has been reviewed.

Although progress has been made in relation to staff training generally, NVQ ratios do not meet current standards.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

The home is very effective in assessing and identifying young people's health needs, which are recorded both on young people's case files and within their health plans. Consent to medical

intervention is in place and routine appointments are made as necessary with clear recording of the outcomes of such visits.

Specialist help is sought for particular health problems and young people have ongoing support from a range of health care professionals. One young person stated that if they are feeling unwell, staff 'always keep a close eye on me to make sure I'm alright'.

All young people state that the staff team encourage them to eat healthy meals by 'reducing snacking, having salad with meals', and buying 'loads of fruit and vegetables'. Young people cook a range of food with staff and are given ample opportunities to learn about food from different cultures. Records of meals eaten by young people demonstrate that a varied, balanced and individualised diet is offered.

Medication records tally with the amount of medication available at the home, which is securely stored. There is a robust monitoring system for ensuring that all prescribed medication is administered in line with instructions. This ensures that young people are receiving appropriate treatment.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The arrangements to safeguard and promote the safety and welfare of young people are good. There are systems in place to protect vulnerable young people, such as, effective working with local safeguarding agencies, prompt responses to young people's concerns, complaints and allegations, and counter bullying policies. One young person said 'they don't allow bullying here'.

Safeguarding is promoted. Staff undertake child protection training and in discussion with members of staff it is evident that they are familiar with safeguarding procedures.

Young people are very settled at the home and choose not to abscond. Young people say that they think the rules of the home are fair, and there is appropriate behaviour management that is based on a solution-focussed approach, with an effective sanction and rewards system. During the inspection it was observed that staff provide good role models and employ effective interventions to shape positive behaviour.

Staff respect young people's privacy. Staff check the identity of visitors to the home and they record the details of visits appropriately, and the home is large enough for young people to have private space should they need it. There are secure arrangements for the storage of information about staff and young people. Arrangements for bathing ensure that young people's dignity is maintained.

Young people and visitors to the home are protected from hazards by the home's health and safety procedures. For example, gas and electrical safety checks are carried out. Risk assessments are completed and regularly updated, including those relating to young people's known or likely activities.

Fire safety records are held and checks on fire fighting equipment are up to date. Fire drill records are unclear and it is difficult to determine who has undertaken a fire drill. There is a

fire door that does not close when the fire alarm is activated. This could compromise the health and safety of the young people and staff residing at the home.

Young people are protected by the recruitment and selection process. Staff undergo appropriate checks before starting work at the home. The organisation ensures that staff apply for an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau disclosure regularly.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Young people are given continuous support in line with their individual welfare needs. Effective implementation of placement plans ensures that young people's self esteem is promoted and their social skills are well developed.

Care plans are based on clear assessments and information from a variety of sources and address how emotional, social and personal support will be provided. As part of this process, staff are determined that all known or likely behaviours are risk assessed, which clearly helps to promote the safety and well being of young people.

Staff support young people to enjoy their individual leisure time and there is a good balance between engagement in home-based and community activities.

School and educational attendance is strongly encouraged, even with people who have a history of poor school attendance. All staff strive to overcome this issue and have developed ongoing contact with the educational establishments in the area. Young people have an up to date personal education plan and have access to computers to undertake schoolwork or pursue leisure interests. This offers an advantage to the young people with regard to their education.

Young people express their appreciation of the staff team and the key working system that offers them individual support resulting in two young people securing part time jobs within the community.

Educational achievement is highly valued and young people are well supported with accessing a variety of educational placements. Staff make excellent use of support services, such as Connexions, an information and advice service for young people. The staff team access a range of educational support services to aid young people find the best approach to their educational needs. This consistent approach to education offered to the young people has resulted in them gaining educational qualifications and college placements.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Young people benefit from outstanding practice with regard to assessment, planning and review processes. Young people receive a very high standard of care at the home, and they confirm that they feel supported and are offered guidance from staff through key working sessions, young people's meetings and daily discussion with staff. Where necessary, the home draws on specialist services to support the placement which ensures that the individual needs of the young person are met.

There is excellent monitoring of young people's progress by regular statutory review processes and other informal means. The management also engage in consultation sessions with young

people, to have a clear understanding of how young people are progressing. Young people state that they are encouraged to set aims and objectives within the home.

The home provides placing authorities with feedback which informs them of the progress young people are making. This also acts as an effective safeguarding measure. Young people are able to maintain constructive contact with people who play a significant role in their lives and arrangements for family contact are set out in the placement plan and supported by staff. Friendships in the community are also encouraged, and young people confirm that they can have friends visiting the home.

Young people are regularly consulted about significant decisions and there are a range of methods in place to ascertain views. These include the key worker system and statutory reviews. The home is able to demonstrate the ways in which it responds to what young people have to say, for example, changes of decor and buying new furniture.

The home consistently strives for stability for children and young people and therefore admissions and discharges are managed well.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

The home has an effective semi-independence programme which enables staff to assist young people in developing the skills necessary in adult life. For example, young people are encouraged to open a bank account and make regular savings, supported to learn how to cook and take responsibility for tidying their own bedrooms. Young people confirm that they are able to shop for clothes and other personal items with the support of staff, and that they are encouraged to save.

One young person stated that the staff have done all they could to enable them to plan for their transition into their own accommodation. However, one young person does not have a formal pathway plan in place to make clear what the responsibilities of the home are.

The home is decorated and furnished to a good standard which creates a pleasant domestic environment appropriate to the age and culture of the young people living there. The interior and exterior of the home are maintained in a good state of structural and decorative repair. The manager has a clear maintenance and repair programme.

Each young person has a single room of a suitable size. Each room has a single bed, seating, storage and lockable safe storage for personal possessions.

The young people confirmed that they are able and encouraged to personalise their bedrooms and were fully consulted in choosing the décor.

The management and staff team work hard to maintain appropriate links within the community. This enables the young people to have positive relationships with immediate neighbours.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The priority of the home is to establish a safe and homely environment for young people to live in. This is achieved through the commitment of all staff involved in the care and welfare

of young people and very clear direction from the manager, who also has a good overview and analysis of individual practice.

Good staffing levels are provided to ensure that the needs of young people are met. Young people are supported by a committed, competent staff team. Although further staff have achieved a qualification at NVQ level 3 or above in Caring for Children and Young People, the overall qualification recommendation is not met. A number of training events have been arranged. The manager maintains a matrix that is up to date although training records of bank staff are hard to retrieve.

Staff are supported through regular and effective supervision and team meetings. However, probationary staff are not receiving supervision at the recommended intervals.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The manager offers packages of care to suit the specific needs of individual young people, who have access to services that reflect the diverse community in which they live, and the staff team is balanced in terms of age and gender.

There are a number of quality assurance processes, including monthly monitoring visits by the operations manager. The Registered Manager and deputy also produce comprehensive reports. This enables the proprietor to have a view of the standard of care provided in the home. However, there is evidence that not all action points are followed up. There is an outstanding fault on a fire door that was identified two months ago.

A comprehensive self-assessment was provided by the manager for this inspection which accurately indicated how the home is performing as well as identifying areas for improvement.

The statement of purpose clearly sets out what the home will provide and the way in which this will be achieved. This is presented in a way that is easily understood by young people and their families. A children's guide is given to all young people on the first visit.

Administration within the home is exceedingly well organised, and young people's files comply with the requirements of the regulations. There are high standards of recording across all documentation.

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
26	ensure that all parts of the home are free from hazards, in particular the identified fire door that does not fully close (Regulation 23).	28 July 2009

Recommendations

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

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- record full names of staff having undertaken fire drill training (NMS 26)
 - endeavour to obtain a pathway plan (NMS 6)
 - provide new staff with one to one supervision at least fortnightly during the first six months of their employment (NMS 28)
 - ensure a minimum ratio of 80 per cent of all care staff complete an NVQ at level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People (NMS 29)
 - maintain an accurate written record of all training undertaken by staff, including bank or relief staff (NMS 31).