

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Julia Toller
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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 provides care for up to four young people aged 10 to 17 years, who may experience emotional and behavioural difficulties.

It is a large terraced house over three floors, situated in a residential area. The communal areas consist of a lounge, activity room and kitchen with a dining area. A utility room is situated off the kitchen. The bedrooms all of which are single are situated on the first and second floor; a bathroom fitted with a bath and shower is available on the first floor of the home. There is also an office, staff sleep-in facilities and a garden to the rear of the home.

There is a good public transport system with buses and a local railway station nearby. Shops, schools, cinemas and other leisure facilities are within easy reach of the home.

Summary

At this unannounced full inspection, all key standards were inspected. This is a good service overall.

Young people benefit from positive relationships with staff, they are afforded a range of facilities and opportunities to encourage and support a healthy lifestyle, to develop their life skills and to reach good outcomes from education.

Staff benefit from a good level of training and support, they work well with other professionals to meet the complex and holistic needs of young people in areas such as emotional and physical wellbeing.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

One action regarding the monitoring of the home in line with Regulation 33 was made at the last inspection and one recommendation about the recording of incentives.

Arrangements have been made to monitor the home in line with Regulation 33, unfortunately this visitor has now resigned. This has resulted in shortfalls with regard to the internal monitoring of the home.

Young people earn incentives for positive behaviours, such as completing additional tasks around the home, which are now clearly recorded. This shows that young people are achieving incentives on a regular basis and experience success following positive behaviours.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people do not have a formal health care plan that outlines their health care needs, although these needs are partially recorded as part of young people's placement plans. Liaison with health care professionals and relevant advice is used to develop coping strategies for staff to ensure a consistent approach for young people.

Young people are registered with a general practitioner and dentist, the outcome of appointments with these professionals are recorded.

Young people are encouraged and supported to follow a healthy diet and lifestyle. Menus are discussed at weekly meetings with young people and changes made as necessary, staff encourage young people to take part in regular exercise through a variety of activities.

There are appropriate medication storage facilities at the home, and medication records are signed appropriately. This helps to keep young people safe and ensure that their health care needs are met.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

There is a child protection policy in place and also an anti-bullying procedure. These help staff to keep young people safe and promote a consistent approach from staff in line with safeguarding procedures.

Bullying is not an issue at the home, staff work with young people to explain the effects of bullying and offer young people ways to keep themselves safe.

Staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities in safeguarding procedures. Risk assessments are in place in line with placement plans, these address the specific high risk behaviours of young people to ensure their safety and well-being, by minimising risks.

Records of sanctions and physical restraint are in place, these are maintained in line with national minimum standards (NMS). Sanctions made of young people are reasonable and appropriate to their age and understanding. A consistent approach from staff offering rewards for positive behaviours results in a minimal amount of sanctions being made.

Procedures are in place for when young people are absent from care. Staff notify Ofsted of all incidents in line with Regulations and take appropriate action to safeguard young people.

The safety of staff and young people is promoted through the testing of fire safety equipment at required intervals.

Although a valid electrical safety certificate is in place this has not been renewed in line with the NMS of three years to ensure that the premises are a safe place for young people to live.

Although complaints are recorded, they are not always recorded at the time the complaint is made. There is however evidence that appropriate action is taken in response to complaints and acceptable outcomes reached. This shows that the home takes complaints seriously and listens to the opinions of others to improve the service they offer.

Recruitment procedures are sufficiently robust to assist in safeguarding young people with staff files holding information in line with Schedule 2 of the Children's Homes Regulations 2001.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people have placement plans that contain relevant information. They outline individual's care needs and how they should be cared for by staff.

Staff demonstrate an awareness of the needs of young people, they work with young people to ensure that their care needs are met, unfortunately this work is not always reflected in the recording systems at the home.

Young people have their care needs reviewed at the required intervals and it is evident that the home has appropriately contributed to the review process. This ensures that then care needs of young people are monitored and young people are provided with an opportunity to 'have a say' about their care and future.

A range of risk assessments are in place to identify risks that may be apparent to young people when taking part in activities, this enables staff to minimise risks and keep young people safe. Staff promote activities with young people and take time to explore individual interests to promote positive behaviours. This enables young people to develop a range of interests and shows them positive ways of using their leisure time.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

There are good examples of young people receiving advice and support, including issues such as healthy lifestyles, sexual awareness, building self-esteem and drug and alcohol awareness. Staff spend time individually with young people, listening to them and offering guidance. Unfortunately this positive work is not always recorded, this does not fully demonstrate how the care needs of young people are being met.

Contact arrangements are clearly detailed in young people's records. The home facilitates and promotes all aspects of contact with families and those significant to young people. Where appropriate, contact is planned and staff work with children to ensure that transport arrangements are made, and that the contact is a positive experience for the young person and their family. Staff are in regular contact with families to discuss progress of young people in their care and similarly any issues that need to be addressed.

Young people have opportunities to undertake a range of activities suitable to their age and interests.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Staff prepare young people for adult life, they are encouraged to take more responsibility for themselves, suitable to their age and understanding. They routinely learn skills through taking part in the running of the home, such as shopping, planning meals, cooking, using money and household tasks. Also, they are encouraged to develop their personal care, organisational and social skills.

On the whole, the premises are well maintained and offer homely accommodation for young people to live in, however, standards in bathrooms and bedrooms are not monitored by staff to ensure that appropriate standards are maintained.

Young people receive regular pocket monies and clothing allowances. Young people go with staff to purchase clothing or spend their allowances. Depending on their age and needs they may also go with their friends. This allows young people to develop their skills for independent life and learn about making appropriate choices.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The cultural and individual care needs of young people are identified and met. Young people are listened to and their views are taken into account regarding their care, for example, daily routines and leisure activities.

There is a statement of purpose and children's guide, which is updated annually to ensure it is an accurate reflection of the services offered at the home.

Young people are supported by staff that are offered a range of training. Formal planned staff supervision takes place monthly, this provides staff with an opportunity to receive the necessary guidance and support to evaluate their care practice and promote the welfare of young people.

The manager monitors standards at the home, including an audit of health and safety, to ensure satisfactory standards are maintained.

A representative of the organisation carries out monthly visits to the home in line with Regulation 33. Unfortunately this person has recently resigned, which has resulted in shortfalls around the monitoring of the home.

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
7	ensure that the individual needs of children are promoted and met (Regulation 11)	31 August 2009
32	ensure that the home is monitored in line with Regulation 33 and Schedule 6 of the Children's Homes Regulations (Regulation 33).	31 August 2009

Recommendations

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

- ensure that an electrical safety certificate is renewed every three years (NMS 26)
- ensure that the complaint record is completed promptly when complaints are made (NMS 16)

- ensure that there are appropriate systems in place to maintain an appropriate level of cleanliness at the home (NMS 24).