

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	20 August 2009
Inspector	Susan Mullin
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	18 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 service is a children's home that offers a long term therapeutic placement for up to two young people aged between 10 years and 17 years on admission, who have emotional and behavioural difficulties. The premises are located on the outskirts of a large town and consist of a detached farm house, domestic in appearance and within walking distance of some local amenities. The home has two vehicles for transporting the young people to other areas, so that they can access a range of recreation and leisure facilities and other amenities. Staffing levels can be adjusted to match the individual needs of the young people. Night time supervision is determined by levels of need and risk.

This service has its own school, which the young people can access as part of their educational programme. Older students are provided with individual programmes that may include part education and part work experience. The young people are able to engage in therapy that is provided by the Responsible Individual who has postgraduate qualifications in Cognitive Behaviour Therapy.

Summary

This was a full unannounced inspection of the service to assess compliance with the national minimum standards (NMS) for Children's Homes. The home was assessed under the six headings of Every Child Matters: Being Healthy, Staying Safe, Enjoying and Achieving, Positive Contribution, Achieving Economic Wellbeing and Organisation. All headings received a judgement of good. Overall the home was judged as good.

The home has a new care manager in post and during the time she has been working there overall standards have improved. The care manager and a social worker completed pre-inspection documentation and information from these are included in the main body of the report.

The home has been refurbished in parts and is looking much better, bright and contemporary. Two young people were spoken to and took part in some of the process of inspection. Staff morale is high and training for all staff is well underway.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

One recommendation regarding further documentation of room searches has now been met.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people have a good understanding of healthy eating and the menu reflects that they are provided with a good variety of wholesome and nutritious meals. Young people are very clear about what foods they like and their choices are reflected in compiling the weekly menu. Staff are very good at supporting young people to take regular exercise to promote their good health and well-being.

Young people's files contain detailed health care plans and comprehensive records are retained in relation to any health appointments. Staff work closely with associated medical professionals, such as the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS), to ensure that care planning takes full account of young people's mental and physical health issues. Staff receive core training in first aid and medication management and also have appropriate access to training related to the specific health issues of the young people resident.

The home follows a robust medication administration policy and records relating to the receipt and disposal of medication were all in order. There is a photograph of each young person on file and the medication administration sheets had been completed in line with legislation.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Young people's privacy and dignity are maintained by the staff's sensitive approach to entering rooms and personal hygiene programmes. There has been one room search since the last inspection which was documented in line with requirements.

Good individual support programmes are in place to promote young people's personal and social development and to minimise any presenting negative behaviours. Very positive relationships are observed between the young people and the staff. The home provides a homely and nurturing environment in which young people are well settled. Young people are relaxed and comfortable in the presence of staff and say they are able to talk to all the staff and they feel listened to; 'I am ok here and they have given me a rabbit as a reward for good behaviour', 'Staff are helping me to get ready to go in independent living'. 'Staff play pool with me but I normally win'.

The home's complaints procedure is in line with minimum requirements and both young people spoken to knew how to make a complaint. There had been a few grumbles from the young people, which they both stated had been quickly resolved by staff. No formal complaints have been received by the home since the previous inspection. Staff receive child protection training as part of their core training programme and their training is updated yearly. There has been no child protection incidents, since the last inspection. The care manager stated that she was very familiar with the local safeguarding procedures should any incident occur.

None of the young people say they are being bullied. The home has clear and appropriate policies and procedures detailing that bullying is not tolerated, and staff are vigilant of young people's interactions to ensure it does not occur. Young people have comprehensive behaviour management programmes and the home retains robust behaviour monitoring records, which allow staff to make changes to routines, such as bedtime or leisure time, to promote positive behaviour changes. An effective reward scheme is operated to ensure that young people's positive behaviours are well recognised and effectively rewarded. Rewards are very much tailored to young people's individual interests. Sanctions are fairly applied and appropriate records are maintained relating to sanctions and physical interventions. With one young person there has been a notable reduction in the incidence of physical intervention as positive behaviour management strategies have become effective.

Individual risk assessments are completed to a very good standard and demonstrate that young people are supported to take controlled risks and encouraged to participate in a wide range of activities. Regular checks are made on fire safety equipment and fire drills are held at appropriate

intervals. All other health and safety checks were in order. There is a good recruitment system in place and visitors to the home are required to sign in and are closely monitored. This ensures the young people are kept safe.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people benefit from a good level of individual support. There are good staffing levels in place, the duty rotas take into account the level of support required on a daily basis. This allows flexible staffing arrangements that are increased to meet individual needs. Staff are genuinely keen to assist and help young people undertake activities that they may not once have considered. Advocates are also available for the young people to access for further support outside of the staff team.

Young people's individual educational needs are well promoted, one young person attends a local college on a course regarding life skills, computer literacy and preparation for adulthood. The other young person attends the company's own school five days a week and both young people have further education lessons to enhance their reading skills. The staff support young people well to complete their homework and achieve success within school. A placing social worker spoke very positively about the support provided to a young person, to promote access to college courses and to improve independence skills to facilitate this. Young people are encouraged and supported to make decisions about their lives and to influence the way the home is run.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Young people's individual needs are comprehensively assessed and files examined contain appropriate looked after children documentation, which informs placement planning. Placement plans are clear and are supported by robust action plans, identifying specific objectives and by a good standard of daily, weekly and monthly recordings by staff. Specific recordings in relation to independence skills development and presenting behaviours robustly support individual placement plans. Young people's views are reflected in placement plans and the young people sign their individual plans. Placements are rarely made in an emergency and are generally preceded by visits by staff to the young person's home and school environment. Best practice includes visits by the young person and their family to the home, to become familiar with its facilities. Wherever possible introductions will also involve an overnight stay at the home.

Young people are fully encouraged to be involved in their own reviews, before, during and after the meeting and include advocates where required. All young people have a designated key worker and one-to-one meetings are held regularly and information about young people's individual needs, is cascaded down to all disciplines of staff. Contact arrangements are clearly stated in young people's placement plans and staff have developed some positive working relationships with families. The staff are able to support the young people in providing supervised contact, where required.

Young people's meetings are held each month and young people's suggestions are given good consideration and are implemented where it is thought beneficial for all involved.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Young people receive good care which helps to prepare them for and support them into adulthood, whatever their ages but particularly as they get older. This includes learning to manage a budget, by receiving money to buy shopping. This is supported by staff and young people are shown how to divide their money up so that they do not spend it all at once. They are supported with saving and managing bank accounts.

The home is maintained to a good standard and provides young people with a homely living environment. It is a large detached farmhouse in its own grounds. Plenty of outdoor space. A large family kitchen, which is the heart of the home and a good sized activity/quiet room. Single bedrooms are nicely furnished and the young people have their own possessions.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Young people's very individual needs are clearly identified and well met. Young people feel safe, well cared for and valued. Young people have been supported to develop a reasonable understanding of a range of religions and cultures. This has been achieved in a fun way at meetings where cards are selected with an equality or diversity topic and that topic is then discussed.

Some very positive team building work has been undertaken in the eight months since the new manager has been in post. Staff meetings have been well attended and have a meaningful agenda, which is clearly recorded. The home's statement of purpose has been reviewed and provides clear information about the services provided. The young persons guide is informative and where it may not be fully understood by some young people, the care manager is in the process of developing another one in a more child friendly format.

There is an appropriate level of staffing and it corresponds with young people's identified individual needs, in that some young people require a one-to-one staffing ratio whilst others need two-to-one staffing. All new staff complete a full induction and foundation training. Over 80 per cent of staff hold the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) at level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People.

Staff are provided with a range of core training covering areas, such as child protection, health and safety, restraint, first aid and medication administration. The provider organisation identifies appropriate timescales for staff to update their core training. The process for enrolling staff, on initial or refresher core training, is that the provider organisation circulates a training schedule and managers nominate staff for the training they need. A staff supervision matrix demonstrates that permanent staff receive supervision at monthly intervals as required.

There is regular monitoring of the home by both the organisation and the manager that identifies and addresses any patterns, or issues arising from records and young people's comments. The manager retains a good overview of the performance of the home and the written reports to demonstrate these are always completed in a timely manner. All young people's records are kept secure in the staff office. Young people benefit from an effectively run home in which their needs are given a high priority.

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.