

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Joanna Heller
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Date of last inspection	7 April 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 registered children's home for up to seven young people aged 11 to 18 years with emotional and behavioural difficulties. This is one of two homes owned by the company, both of which are in short walking distance of each other. The home is situated in a residential street within short walking distance of the local town centre with its amenities and transport links. Each young person has their own lockable bedroom which they are able to personalise.

Summary

This was an unannounced inspection carried out as part of the annual inspection program. All outcome areas and key standards were reviewed.

Young people feel that they are well supported and that the home effectively meets their needs. Young people enjoy positive relationships with staff. Staff benefit from a commitment to staff training.

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 home was asked to improve its processes in relation to staff recruitment, reporting missing young people, health promotion work in relation to drug misuse and the recording of sanctions. The home was also asked to review the young people's guide and provide this in a more accessible format.

Since the last inspection the home has developed a DVD version of the young people's guide which young people were involved in developing. Staff have received training on meeting the needs of young people who self harm and have developed further the health promotion work provided. Staff recruitment practices have improved. The recording of sanctions, however, on occasion remains unclear.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people benefit from a variety of nutritious home cooked foods which reflect people's choices and cultural heritage. Young people say that plenty of food is available and that they are able to help themselves to healthy snacks at any time. Staff are trained in food hygiene and the home was positively rated at the recent environmental health inspection.

Young people have access to appropriate health services such as doctors, dentists and opticians. The home succeeds in engaging young people with attending key health appointments through a reward scheme. Specialist health services such as counselling are sought where required. Health promotion takes place in one- to-one sessions and outside agencies have been involved in relation to cannabis misuse. Where concerns arise about young people's health this is passed onto placing authorities. Young people are encouraged to lead healthy lifestyles and some people regularly enjoy the use of a local gym.

The home has safe systems in place for the storage and administration of medication. Staff are trained in managing medication. Clear records are held of medication coming into and leaving the home. Clear records are maintained of medication given.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Young people and placing authorities feel that this is a safe place for young people to be. Young people say 'I don't want to move I like it here. I feel supported and safe. This is a good place to be'. Young people enjoy good relationships with staff who serve as positive role models. Good systems are in place to safeguard young people's welfare. Any issues of a safeguarding nature are forwarded to the appropriate agencies to manage. Staff are clear on their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding and receive regular training. Young people said that bullying was not tolerated and that staff address any issues swiftly. Young people who go missing are notified to the appropriate agencies in line with local guidelines.

The building is safe and well maintained. Regular checks are carried out to ensure the ongoing health and safety of the building. Fire precautionary arrangements in the home ensure young people and staff are safeguarded from fire in line with current good practice

For a two month period the behaviour of young people was not well managed and staff were not implementing effective consistent boundaries. However, the home conducted a review of behaviour management within the setting. This resulted in some changes to both staff and client group and the

re-implementation of effective boundary setting and reward systems. The effect of this has been that behaviour management in the home has improved which in turn has resulted in young people earning a flat screen TV for the unit.

Young people say that the rules are fair and any sanctions are fairly applied. Sanction records show that no prohibited sanctions are applied. However, on occasion sanctions are not clearly recorded. For example the sanctioning of activity money was not clearly specified as such and records evidencing the paying back for damages were difficult to audit. Individual reward systems are in place for young people.

Complaints from young people are well managed. Young people say that they have confidence that the home will address any issues of concern that they may have. Staff are aware of the key issues of confidentiality and records are securely stored. Young people each have their own lockable bedrooms. All bathrooms are lockable so that privacy is maintained.

Young people are safeguarded from unsuitable people gaining employment in the home through robust vetting practices. No staff are employed until checks on their identity, employment history, qualifications and any criminal background are completed.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

The home demonstrates excellent commitment to meeting the individual needs of the young people. Each young person has an individual care plan drawn up from the central core assessment of need. The care plan covers all areas of individual need such as emotional, health, education,

cultural and social needs of young people. The five outcome areas are explored and the care plan is kept under review to identify any changes in need. Young people and placing authorities feel that young people's individual needs are well met. Young people have a keyworker and co keyworker with whom they are able to develop a positive relationship and discuss any issues concerning them. Staff of both genders from diverse backgrounds are employed enabling young people to have positive role models which reflect their backgrounds. Staff have regular one-to-one key working sessions with young people where key issues are explored. These are not, however, always signed by young people to evidence that they are in agreement with the issues discussed and any decisions reached.

Young people have the opportunity to enjoy a wide variety of leisure opportunities and explore their individual interests. Books and games are provided, which, young people are able to enjoy. Young people enjoy one- to-one activity time with their keyworker each week and are able to choose activities such as going to the cinema, ice skating or out for a meal. Staff and young people enjoy games of football at the local park or play snooker in the home's games room. Young people enjoyed a holiday to Blackpool funded by the home.

All young people are attending a suitable educational placement. The home works closely with schools and colleges to monitor attendance and secure good educational outcomes. Staff are aware of the educational goals and need of the young people and offer appropriate levels of support. Reward systems are in place to encourage good school attendance. The organisation operates a school on a local site and is able to offer educational support to young people who are not in education.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The home has good systems in place to ensure that it is able to meet the needs of young people admitted to the home. Prior to placement, the home ensures it has a copy of the core placing authority assessments and where possible supplements this with its own assessment. Where placements are planned young people are offered the opportunity to visit the home. A trial stay is offered initially for emergency placements to ensure that the home is able to meet the young person's needs. Young people moving on from the home are offered a leaving party and gift.

Having moved to the home, a placement planning meeting is convened to identify the key goals for the placement and a care plan is drawn up. The care plan is kept under review through the homes internal monitoring and statutory reviewing processes. Monthly updates are compiled and a copy sent to the placing authority.

Young people are able to maintain contact with their families. Family members are able to visit young people at the home , however, most choose to return to the family home to visit. Regular contact is maintained between the home and parents to promote consistency and ensure that parents are aware of the ongoing work that the home is doing.

Regular young people's meetings take place where young people are consulted about the day-to-day running of the home and key issues. For example, a whole house meeting was held to review concerns about behaviour in the home and agree a way forward. The organisation operates an annual consultation day across the organisation and representatives from each service are encouraged. Young people are consulted about decisions made about them and are

invited to be involved in all their reviews. Young people say that staff and management are approachable and they feel able to discuss any issues with them.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

The building provides the young people with welcoming homely accommodation that meets their needs. Whilst the home is generally well maintained and decorated, some issues of maintenance were pointed out to the manager. Good systems are in place to ensure the ongoing safety of the building such as regular checks of electrical and gas safety. Fire precautionary arrangements in the home ensure young people and staff are safeguarded from fire in line with current good practice. The building is situated in a residential area close to the town centre which has good transport links into a major city.

The home has good systems in place to support young people through adolescence and into adulthood. Young people receive good emotional support and are actively encouraged to develop self reliance skills. Young people are expected to care for their clothes, are able to cook meals and are supported in learning budgeting skills. A life skills process is in place, however, young people are not fully engaging in this.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Young people's individual needs are met. The home ensures the language, racial and cultural needs of all the young people are met and staff provide positive role models for young people.

The statement of purpose and children's guide are useful documents which serve to inform young people and placing authorities about the services available within the home. These documents are reviewed annually and are available in alternative formats.

Staffing levels are suitable to meet the needs of the young people. A minimum of two staff are on duty at any given time day or night with additional staffing as required. Staffing is deployed flexibly to meet the needs of the young people. Where extra staffing is required this is covered by staff from the home or staff from another 'partner home' to maintain continuity of care.

The organisation demonstrates a good commitment to staff training and staff benefit from a wealth of training relevant to the roles they perform. Core training such as child protection, first aid, food hygiene, behaviour management and health and safety is provided to all staff.

Staff demonstrate a commitment to working with young people to secure the best life outcomes possible. Staff are professional and competent and receive positive comments from placing authorities. Young people say they feel that the home should be graded as good to outstanding.

The organisation has good systems in place for monitoring the standards of care within the home. The organisation ensures visits are carried out to the home monthly in line with Regulation 33. Young people are involved in commenting on the service through young people meetings and through an open door policy.

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
22	maintain an accurate and up-to-date record of measures of control used, as set out in Regulation 17, in particular ensure that sanction records clearly record the sanction applied (Regulation 17)	22 December 2009
23	maintain the premises to a good standard (Regulation 31).	11 January 2010

Recommendations

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

- ensure young people sign keyworking notes (NMS 7).