

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	3 July 2009
Inspector	Carole Moore
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	31 October 2008
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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 children's home offers a therapeutic placement for up to two young people aged six to under 18 years who have emotional and behavioural difficulties.

The home is on three floors; the ground floor consists of a large communal lounge, kitchen, utility room, care office, toilet and a conservatory dining room. The young people are provided with their own bedrooms which are located on the first floor along with a bathroom and staff sleep-in room. An activity/classroom is located in the attic space on the second floor.

The house is set in its own grounds and comprises of hard standing area to the front of the building and lawned area to the rear.

Summary

This unannounced full inspection concentrates on assessing the key National Minimum Standards focusing on the outcome areas of Being Healthy, Staying Safe, Enjoying and Achieving, Positive Contribution and Economic Wellbeing. The inspection also considered how the home is managed and how staff are supported. The progress towards the action and recommendation made during the last inspection is also considered. Two young people living in the home were present during the inspection.

The home provides an environment where individual needs are important and where staff actively promote their social inclusion in the home and wider community. The staff team are organised and demonstrate clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. The manager provides good day-to-day support and guidance to staff to enable them to do their work. The home also has a clear focus on ensuring young people are protected and that known and potential risks are managed in a way that supports their safety and wellbeing.

The home is judged as good overall with outstanding outcomes in health and in making a positive contribution. The home provides a nurturing, caring home for the young people and ensures each young person is seen as an individual and their specific needs are met.

One recommendation has been raised as a result of this inspection.

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 and one recommendation was made following the last inspection that took place in October 2008.

The home was asked to ensure that 80% of all staff are NVQ Level 3 qualified. There is now an established training programme and all relevant staff have now either achieved the qualification or are on target to be enrolled on the programme.

Team meetings now take place on a monthly basis and provides time for reflection on practice.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

The promotion of young people's health and the arrangements for meeting medical needs are exceptionally well organised. Staff are well informed about young people's needs because they are reflected in detailed health plans which are regularly updated. New 'Healthy Heroes' packs have been introduced to engage the young people in understanding about healthy diets, health and hygiene, exercise and to enable young people in making appropriate choices in relation to food, exercise, general health and keeping appointments. These packs give young people more ownership of their care and development. Medical and health records are comprehensive and clearly show that medical appointments are arranged according to needs and circumstances. Young people's needs are being closely monitored because staff are focused on achieving and promoting good health outcomes. The home actively maintains links with external agencies and professionals to ensure young people can access and receive appropriate services they are entitled to. Well-maintained written records ensure placing social workers, carers or families, where appropriate, are informed of the current status of young people's health and well-being. The home have access to an in house therapist who is trained to meet the emotional needs of the young people in placement. Each young person has an individual therapeutic programme and one to one 'therapy sessions' form part of this programme.

Young people's health and safety is further promoted through the home's policies and procedures for the safe storage, administration and disposal of medication. Administration records demonstrate that staff are following prescription instructions in relation to the health needs of individual young people. All staff are trained in the use of first aid and first aid boxes are provided within the home. Quality assurance systems are in place to confirm that policy is put into practice.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Young people are living in a stable and safe environment where their welfare and protection is paramount. The home has clear procedures and staff guidance in place that are communicated effectively to promote practices that keep young people safe. Staff receive regular training in a range of areas to do with safeguarding young people which helps them fulfil their role and responsibilities.

There are policies and procedures covering privacy and confidentiality. The staff are able to demonstrate a good knowledge and understanding of them in their day-to-day practice. Young people's privacy is respected and they are able to enjoy their own private space. Confidential information is shared appropriately with regard to child protection and information regarding the young people is stored in a secure location. Visitors are welcome at the home, rooms are made available for young people to have visits in private if appropriate.

The home has clear procedures for responding to child protection concerns and a copy of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board procedures is kept in the home. All staff have been trained in child protection and this is regularly updated. Staff monitor all visitors to the home, who are required to provide evidence of their identity and sign a visitors' book and this ensures young people are not being exposed to potential risks.

Young people are being kept safe because staff demonstrate a clear understanding of what their key role and responsibilities are in terms of protection. Staff understand the need to manage behaviour in a way that is fair and consistent, to work within the home's child protection procedures and to promote a bullying free environment. Young people are actively encouraged to improve their awareness and understanding about how to keep themselves safe. This work is supported by a range of policies and procedures, which are underpinned by a programme of staff training.

The home has good systems in place to deal with complaints and concerns. Young people know how to complain and feel that they are listened to and taken seriously. The home manages complaints and concerns quickly to achieve outcomes that are acceptable to young people. Young people felt that concerns were dealt with quickly by staff without having to use the formal complaints procedure unless absolutely necessary. They described a range of forums available to them to discuss concerns either privately or as a household.

Young people living in the home are particularly vulnerable if absent on their own. Staff understand the procedures to be implemented to protect them in the case of absence. However, due to the levels of supervision within and outside the home, there have been no instances of absence since the last inspection.

Young people are encouraged to behave well, to establish, achieve and maintain levels of behaviour that are socially acceptable and that will sustain them in their communities. For example, the home's records not only detail sanctions used for inappropriate behaviour but also positive consequences and rewards for behaviour that deserves congratulations and praise. Staff are acutely aware of the need to balance their interventions with positive feedback about young people's achievements. Staff are successful at trying to help young people change their behaviour for the better. All staff are trained in complete intervention training.

Positive steps are taken to keep young people, staff and visitors safe from fire and other hazards in the home. For example, risk assessments are completed in relation to fire and potential environmental hazards. Frequent checks are undertaken on fire equipment and fire drills are regularly undertaken. The Registered Manager ensures that utilities, domestic equipment and vehicles are checked to ensure they are safe to use and this provides physical safety and security for the young people who live in the home.

The vetting of staff is comprehensive and thorough with further checks being made to contact the referees and noting and verifying any gaps in the employment record of applicants. The home is selective, with the recruitment of the right person being more important than the filling of the vacancy.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people are receiving high levels of individual support that is consistently meeting their needs. The home's staff are clearly focused on providing support for young people so they can enjoy and achieve in their education, personal and social development.

Young people are receiving a considerable amount of individual support from staff and other professionals. The home works in partnership with other agencies and services to ensure young people's needs are met in a coordinated and effective way. Risks are assessed which help staff

to support young people in achieving some independence and changes to their behaviour. Young people are receiving a service that can respond to their changing needs and circumstances because care and support is delivered by a committed staff team that know the young people well.

Young people are benefiting from living in a home where education is given a high priority. Staff continually promote the value of education with young people and they are successful at supporting improved patterns of attendance and engagement. Staff are interested in young people's educational arrangements and achievements which helps them with their motivation and commitment to learn. Regular communication takes place between education settings and the home regarding young people's progress and attendance and staff attend all school meetings.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Young people have robust internal placement plans that set out how the home will meet the assessed needs and the key responsibilities of those involved. The plan addresses any areas that arise out of a young person's ethnicity, race, disability, sexuality, faith or belief. The necessary up to date Looked After Children documentation is on file and a structured reviewing process is in place to continually assess young people's changing needs and to ensure positive outcomes are achievable. There is clear detailed information about involvement and the purpose and outcome of work carried out with the young person. Staff show a sensitivity and awareness of the needs of the young people and this helps the young people develop a sense of belonging and a feeling that they are valued and included.

Staff complete a weekly developmental progress summary for each young person alongside a therapeutic report and highlights the progress made or otherwise and this is then forwarded to the placing authorities and if appropriate the parents or carers.

Young people are provided with support to maintain contact with family, friends and significant people in their lives. Staff are knowledgeable about these details and there is clear recorded information on file about the agreed contact arrangements or the circumstances in which it can take place. There is always a considered plan of support following contact.

Staff demonstrate that they value the views and opinions of young people and that young people are involved in all aspects of their day-to-day care. They are given every opportunity to contribute to their own development, activities and events that take place in and outside the home. Staff actively and formally seek the views of young people at an individual and group level and respond in a way that values their opinions. The home is proactive in ensuring that all young people are aware that they can speak to independent agencies and professionals outside of the home. The home have developed a system where staff evidence the consultation process they have with each young person. All young people are also encouraged during the monthly quality assurance visit to complete 'things I would like to change about the home' and these are looked at by the staff team and responsible individual. Seeking young people's opinions and helping them make decisions about matters that effect them is fully integrated into the home's care practices and there is clear evidence that this is taking place.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

The young people's environment is furnished and equipped to a good standard and feels welcoming and homely. There has been extensive redecoration to the house and this has improved its homeliness. Young people have been involved in decisions over choices of colour and in personalising their own bedrooms.

The home's location, design and size are in keeping with its purpose and function. The home provides ample space for communal and individual activity, for young people to be creative and for relaxation.

The attic has been redecorated by the young people providing them with extra space to play or just chill out.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The home is effectively managed and young people are cared for by a motivated, committed and enthusiastic team of staff who understand their role and responsibilities well. The Registered Manager and the deputy manager provide good day-to-day support to individual shifts and as a result they are well informed about daily routines, events and the progress of each young person. The commitment from staff is a strength of the home and most absences are covered from the existing team who are already known by the young people and this ensures their continuity of care.

The home provides a wide range of information about its stated aims and purpose. Young people are given a handbook that is in an appropriate format to help them learn about what the home provides. The number of staff on duty is always enough to meet the needs of young people which supports their welfare and protection. There is an induction, core training programme and support system in place that helps to provide staff with the necessary skills and knowledge to support and care for young people. Although the staff team do not as yet meet the requirement that 80% of staff are qualified to National Vocational Qualification Level 3, there is a clear commitment from the organisation that staff are all enrolled on the programme following their probationary period.

Staff are themselves well supported and receive regular supervision and annual appraisals. In addition to supervision there is an open door policy so staff feel able to share opinions or ask advice at any time. Staff shift handovers are well planned to ensure all information is exchanged and shared. Staff meetings are held on a monthly basis and form a valuable communication tool for staff to maintain their consistent approach and sort out any concerns and discrepancies. The managers clearly demonstrate how they continually strive for further improvement through reflective practice.

The Manager has a clear organisational process in place to monitor and audit the quality of care being provided. Monthly monitoring reports are produced to summarise areas of the home's operation. Managers take an active role in the evaluation of the service and the impact the home is having on the care of young people. They confirmed that their views are sought by the manager when she looks at the quality of care.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The environment represents the individual and diverse identities of young people and uniqueness is celebrated in a way that promotes awareness and understanding. There is a clear commitment to improve equality and diversity

in practice and training in this area is on the agenda. The quality and detail of young people's overall plans and key worker sessions supports this commitment. Young people receive an individual service which is designed to meet their personal needs. The current staff team have a good knowledge of the young people they are working with ensuring their needs are consistently met.

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

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

- ensure that 80% of the staff team have completed their National Vocational Qualification Level 3 in the caring for children and young people (NMS 29.5).