

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Debbie Foster
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Date of last inspection	16 December 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

Care and accommodation provided at the home is for one young person aged between eight to 17 years. The home is a detached house with an enclosed rear garden. The ground floor has a lounge, kitchen/dining room, conservatory and family sized bathroom. On the first floor there are three bedrooms. Two bedrooms are used as a staff sleep in room/office and the other larger bedroom is used by the young person living there.

The home is situated in a residential area and is near to local shops. Local bus routes are accessible which provide easy access to the town centre with its larger shops and leisure facilities.

Summary

This was an unannounced key inspection focusing upon 25 key National Minimum Standards (NMS) under the Every Child Matters outcomes for children and young people.

The two actions and five recommendations made on the last inspection in December 2008 have also been checked to see if they have been implemented.

The health needs of young people are promoted well and they have access to a health professionals. Although, a health assessment has not been reviewed. The safety of young people is a high priority and good strategies to support young people are in place. This has resulted in the safety of young people significantly improving. Since the last inspection the provision of education has improved and young people are making good progress, building on there achievement for adulthood.

A good care planning system is in place to support young people. However, aspects of this lack detail in how it is to be implemented with young people. A young person said they are consulted on all areas of their lives, this empowers them and builds self confidence. They are developing independence skills appropriate to their age which will helps them in preparing for adulthood. Young people live in a positive environment, the home is decorated and furnished to a good standard.

Staff do have opportunities to undertake mandatory and other training relating to current child care practices. However, the target set in the NMS, of 80% of the work force achieving the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) level 3 in caring for children and young people is not met. Good monitoring systems are in place to check young people living at the home are well cared for.

A young person has taken part in the inspection process.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

The setting has taken steps to address all of the areas identified at the last inspection.

When recruiting staff their full employment history, together with any written explanation of any gaps in employment is obtained to check they are suitable to work with children. Young

people have education placements in place to ensure their attainment is promoted and they are making progress to support their futures. One member of staff has completed a more comprehensive, four day first aid training course to ensure staff are suitably trained to respond appropriately to medical emergencies. The safe handling and administration of medication policy has been reviewed to build further on the policy promoting clearer guidance for staff to follow. All staff have received refresher training in safe guarding young people. The home's statement of purpose has been reviewed and amended to include all the details required by Schedule 1 of the Regulations. Training dates have been included in training records to assist planning for updating and undertaking new training.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people are encouraged to eat healthily and their suggestions are included in the weekly menu. Healthy and varied food options are available for meals and snacks. Planning, shopping for and prepare meals and snacks are actively encouraged. A young person said they enjoyed cooking.

Overall health needs of young people are identified and services provided to ensure that their health is well promoted and maintained. There is good access to a number of healthcare professionals, including advice and guidance for young people. However, an updated health assessment has not been undertaken even though staff have made a request to the Looked After Children's nurse. Although, staff have pursued the health needs of the young person, one area requires further specialist input.

The medication is suitably administered, recorded and securely stored. Staff are trained on how to administer medication and on medication related issues. The administration of medicines and treatments are provided safely to the young people through the home's policies, procedures and practices of staff. The medication policy has been reviewed since the last inspection.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The young peoples' privacy is respected and information confidentially handled. Staff knock and wait before entering young people's bedrooms. Records are securely stored and staff are clear on how to keep information confidential.

There is a clear complaints policy and procedure. Young people are aware of the procedure for how to complain. Two complaints have been made since the last inspection. The records show that prompt action is taken and the outcome is recorded, which indicates complainant concerns are taken seriously.

Young people's safety at the home is a priority. A number of measures are in place to keep young people safe and the outcomes for individual young people in this area have improved significantly. The safe guarding procedures are available for staff to refer to and use. Safe guarding training including refresher training has been provided to staff recently and they are aware of the procedures to follow.

A clear policy and procedures on managing bullying is in place. Staff and young people are aware that bullying is not tolerated. Young people are monitored closely and given support

when required. A young person said there is no bullying occurring. Therefore, young people are protected from bullying, through the home's policies, procedures and the practice of the staff.

Staff respond appropriately when young people go missing without authority, notifying all the appropriate persons including the police in line with policies and procedures. Staff explain the dangers to the young people and other professionals are giving support and advise to young people too. Incidents of young people going missing have reduced significantly in the last five months.

Good behaviour is a priority within the home. Staff's approach to caring for young people is to have clear boundaries in place. Boundaries are discussed and agreed with the young people individually. Rewards and incentives are in place to encourage positive and acceptable behaviour. Young people have been part of the decision making for the rewards in place and this has empowered them. A young person said they can talk to staff and they are fair.

Minimum sanctions have been made since the last inspection and no physical intervention has taken place. Those made have been reasonable for the behaviour presented. These records are centrally held and contain the required information.

Young people's safety is promoted through the practices and support from staff. There are risk assessments in place, which cover the relevant areas, and are in sufficient detail supporting safety measures for staff to follow to reduce risks identified for individual young people to keep them safe. However, it is not always clear when some risk assessments have been reviewed.

Fire records indicate that regular checks on the system and appropriate fire instruction, drills and training have taken place. Health and safety areas are monitored by the manager to support keeping young people safe.

Thorough vetting and recruitment procedures for staff ensure young people are prevented from being cared for by unsuitable persons. The organisation undertakes the required and relevant checks on the staff recruited. This includes the Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) check, references from the previous employer and having a full employment history of the worker.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The home has positive links with a number of outside agencies and professionals, such as safeguarding board and other health care professionals which assists in supporting individual young people well.

Education is priority for young people. This is demonstrated in their commitment of the staff to ensure good attendance and the progress made by the young people. The young person attends school on a full-time basis which has recently been put in place. The young person's attendance at school has improved significantly since the last inspection. There are positive links with school. A Personal Education Plans is in place. Although, it does not have clear education target identified for the individual young person to assist in them making further progress.

Activities and hobbies for young people is developing. A young person said they enjoyed going horse riding, going to the gym and spending time with friends and family. They did say they would like to do more which staff said is great news and what they have been working towards.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff are able to verbalise the specific care they provide to young people in detail to meet their individual needs. Young people's needs are assessed and documented within their care plans and supporting documents to outline, in the main, what their needs are. However, some identified areas are less detailed than others. They do not always specifically state in full how these needs will be met and when they will be implemented.

Young people said they attend their care reviews. Reviews take place at the correct frequency and the young people are positively involved. Minutes from reviews are held on case files. This ensures young people's progress is being monitored and built upon.

Constructive contact with family members and significant others is actively encourage and facilitated by staff to ensure young people maintain important links with their family and communities. A young person said they meet regularly with family and friends.

Good support and encouragement is given to young people to make decisions about their lives and the running of the home. There are positive relationships and good communication between young people and the staff. This is evident in the way young people and staff discuss the day's events and activities. A young person said they can talk to all staff and feel they listen to them. They are involved in making decisions about the food they eat, the decoration in the home, weekly activities and plans for their future when attending statutory reviews.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Young people are being appropriately supported, to develop independent living skills appropriate to their age and understanding. Young people are involved in a number of areas and undertake practical daily living tasks. These include such tasks as cleaning their own bedrooms, planning of meals, preparing and cooking some meals. Therefore, this assists young people in gradually achieving the necessary independence skills to support them into adulthood.

The accommodation is decorated and furnished to a good standard, providing a positive and domestic environment for the young people to live in. The home is clean and tidy. There are good repair and maintenance programmes in place. A young person's bedroom and hallway have recently been redecorated since the last inspection. Bedrooms are personalised and well equipped with a good range of furniture. A computer has been installed for the young person to use for education and leisure.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The statement of purpose informs others of what to expect from the home and how young people are cared for. This is to enable and assist in the appropriate admissions to the home and ensure individual needs can be met. This has been reviewed in February 2009.

Staff are well supported and guided in promoting young people's welfare. They receive formal supervision at regular intervals. There are staff meetings and daily handovers. Staff said they work well as a staff team. They are all aware of the needs and boundaries in place for the young person and this assists them in providing a consistent care approach. A caring attitude and approach is evident when staff spoke about their work with young people.

Young people receive care from competent and experienced staff who can meet their needs. The morning shift was worked by one senior staff member and one residential care worker. The people in these positions have all the relevant experience to undertake their duties. Although the target set in the NMS, of 80% of the work force has not yet been achieved, over 60% of staff have completed the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) training at level 3 in care. This has recently been affected by three new staff being employed.

The staff have access to a wide selection of training in current childcare practices to ensure they are competent to meet the needs of the young people. Staff have opportunities to undertake mandatory and other training in a number of areas, such as attachment and loss, substance misuse, life story work, equality and diversity. The training records now record the date on which training was attended which assists in monitoring and keeping staff members training update. Although, the majority of training is provided by the provider, some courses have to be attended and staff are not paid to attend, this included safe guarding training.

Young people receive an individual service which is tailored to meet their personal needs. The staff have a good knowledge of the young people's needs and are working with them to ensure the right support and care is being provided. The promotion of equality and diversity is good. This is evidenced through practice, supporting policies, procedures and the individual placement plans.

Monthly monitoring visits take place to check how care is provided in the home in the main this is carried out in detail. There are a few occasions when action points identified are not reported on in the following month to establish if this has been progressed. Further monitoring is undertaken by the manager. Overall, this contributes to the good monitoring system to ensure the young people living at the home are well cared for and National Minimum Standards and regulations are being 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
2	ensure care plan detail specifically how and when the identified areas of care and support are to be achieved with the young people (Regulation 12)	28 June 2009

Recommendations

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

- ensure health assessments are reviewed, updated and all identified areas implemented (NMS12)
- ensure risk assessments are reviewed at regular intervals and the record indicates when this has been undertaken (NMS26)
- ensure Personal Education Plans contain relevant target for young people and where appropriate these are incorporated into the care plan (NMS14)
- ensure that the minimum ratios of 80% of all care staff complete their NVQ level 3 in the Caring for Children and Young People. (NMS 29)