

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Debbie Foster
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	3 December 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

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 in the home.

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 under the Every Child Matters outcomes for children and young people. The one recommendation made on the last inspection in December 2009 has also been checked to see if it has been implemented.

A young person has taken part in the inspection process.

Overall health needs of young people are promoted well and they have access to a selection of health professionals. The safety of young people is a high priority and good strategies to support young people are in place. The outcomes for young people's safety continue to be maintained to a high standard. Young people are making good progress, building on their achievements in education supported well by the staff.

A good care planning system is in place to support young people. A young person said they are consulted on all areas of their lives; this empowers them and builds self-confidence. Young people are developing independence skills appropriate to their age which will help them in preparing for adulthood.

Staff do have opportunities to undertake a wide selection of mandatory and other training relating to current childcare practices. Good monitoring systems are in place to check young people living at the home are well cared for.

Shortfalls have been found in the following areas: developing young people's hobbies, interests and activities further; and the daily recordings do not always reflect in full the care plan aims and objectives. The minimum target of 80% of all care staff have not yet completed their National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in the caring for children and young people.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

The home still has not met the target of 80% of the workforce gaining National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in the caring for children and young people, although, staff continue to make progress in completing the qualification.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

A healthy and balanced diet is provided to young people. Young people are actively involved in making choices for the week's menu. Healthy food options are available for meals and snacks. The menu includes a wide selection of meal options. Young people help to shop, prepare snacks and meals to assist in living a healthy lifestyle and promote independence skills. A young person said they are good at cooking.

The health needs of young people are given high importance. A number of services have been identified and provided to young people to ensure that their health is well promoted and maintained. These include the looked after children's nurse and children's mental health support team. Additional training in areas, such as sexual health, self-harm, drugs and alcohol awareness have been undertaken by the majority of staff. Young people said they are always supported by the staff to attend health appointments. However, young people are not actively undertaking regular physical activities which could be supporting their health.

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 is suitably administered, recorded and securely stored. Staff are trained on how to administer medication and in first aid.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Young people said staff knock and wait before entering their bedroom. Records are securely stored and staff are clear on how to keep information confidential. Therefore, young people's privacy is respected and information is handled confidentially.

There is a clear complaints policy and procedure and young people are aware of how to complain. One complaint has been made since the last inspection. The records show that prompt action is taken to investigate the complaint and the outcome is recorded. The complainant was kept informed of the progress. The records indicate that the complainant is satisfied with the outcome of the investigation into their complaint. This shows complainant concerns are taken seriously by the service.

The safety of young people at the home is paramount. A number of measures are in place to keep young people safe and the outcomes for individual young people in this area have continued to have significantly improved. A wealth of focused work has taken place with young people to assist in keeping them safe. The safeguarding procedures are available for staff to refer to and use. Safeguarding training, including annual refresher training, has been provided to staff and they are aware of the procedures to follow.

Young people are protected from bullying, through the home's policies, procedures and the practice of the staff. Staff and young people are aware of the policy and procedures on bullying. All stated that bullying is not tolerated. High staffing levels assist in monitoring young people closely and support given when required. A young person said there is no bullying. When young people were being bullied at school, staff supported them and went into school to help sort it out.

Staff respond appropriately when young people go missing without authority, notifying all the appropriate people, including the police, in line with policies and procedures. Incidents of young people going missing are minimal. Staff's continued focused work with individual young people on the risks and dangers of being absent or going missing have assisted in such incidents continuing to be a rare occurrence.

Promoting positive and good behaviour is a priority. There are clear boundaries in place for young people which the staff team implement consistently. Boundaries are discussed and agreed with the young people individually. Rewards and incentives are in place to encourage positive and acceptable behaviour which include young people being part of the decision-making process. This approach empowers young people and affects their life positively. A young person said they get on with all staff very well.

Minimum sanctions have been made since the last inspection and no physical intervention incidents have taken place. Sanctions made have been reasonable for the behaviour presented. A young person said staff are fair and explain why a sanction is to be given. These records are centrally held and contain the required information.

Young people's safety is actively promoted through the practices and support from staff. Fire records indicate that frequent checks on the system and appropriate fire instruction, drills and training have taken place. Young people have undertaken health and safety training and take part in fire drills.

Health and safety areas are monitored closely by the manager to support keeping young people safe on a monthly basis.

There are risk assessments in place, which cover the relevant areas, and detail specifically supporting safety measures for staff to follow to reduce risks identified for individual young people to keep them safe. The risk assessments have been reviewed on a regular basis. These have been backed up with focus, one-to-one work with individual young people on areas to support them keeping themselves safe.

Thorough vetting and recruitment procedures for staff ensure young people are prevented from being cared for by unsuitable people. 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. In addition, declarations are obtained from staff to ensure they have not been disqualified from caring for children.

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 school, social worker and other healthcare professionals, which assists in supporting individual young people well.

Education is a priority for young people. This is demonstrated in the 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. There are close and frequent communication with education and the home. Young people's personal education plans are available and up to date.

Young people are encouraged and supported by staff to pursue individual interests and hobbies. A young person said they had chosen to stop doing a number of activities recently, such as going horseriding and going to the gym. They tended to spend their time with friends. Staff explained that motivating young people to undertake physical activities and pursue hobbies has presented some difficulties in the last few months.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Young people's needs are assessed and documented within their detailed care plan and other supporting documents. These outline what the young person's needs are and how their needs will be met. Staff are able to verbalise the specific care they provide to young people in detail. They show a good understanding of young people's needs and explain how they meet their individual needs on a daily basis. This is evidence and supported by the records of focused, one-to-one work they have undertaken with young people. However, the daily recordings do not always reflect the care plan aims for individual young people.

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.

Staff ensure important links with the young people's family and community are maintained. There is constructive contact with family members and significant others on a frequent basis. Staff have worked to build additional family links and relationships with young people to ensure they maintain important links with their family. A young person said they meet regularly with family and friends.

Young people receive good support and encouragement 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 planned appointments. A young person said they can talk to all staff and they do listen to them. They are involved in making decisions about the food they eat, family contact, weekly activities and plans for their future when attending statutory reviews.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Young people are progressing to learn the necessary independence skills to support them into adulthood. They are being appropriately supported, to develop independent living skills suitable to their age and understanding. Young people are involved in a number of areas and undertake practical daily living tasks. These include tasks, such as cleaning their own bedrooms, planning of meals, preparing and cooking some meals and learning to manage their money.

The accommodation is decorated and furnished over all 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. The kitchen and conservatory have been redecorated and have new soft furnishings and floor coverings since the last inspection. Young people's 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. However,

the lounge decoration and furnishings are looking dated and worn. The bathroom carpet is stained.

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 January 2009.

Excellent support is given to staff to ensure they care and promote young people's welfare and safety. They receive regular formal supervision at the required intervals. There are monthly staff meetings and daily handovers. Staff said they continue to work well together 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 child-centred, 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. Good staffing levels are in place. The morning shift was worked by one senior staff member, one residential care worker and the manager. The people in these positions have all the relevant experience to undertake their duties.

The required target of 80% of the work force being qualified to National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) training at level 3 in care has not yet been achieved; over 60% of staff have completed it so far. Newly appointed staff are undertaking this training and progress is being made towards completing the qualification.

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. There are opportunities to undertake mandatory and other training in a number of areas. These include attachment and loss, drugs and alcohol awareness, self-harm, life story work, equality and diversity.

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.

A good monitoring system is in place. Monthly monitoring visits are undertaken by the provider to check on aspects of the care provided in the home. Further monitoring is undertaken by the manager on a monthly basis on aspects of the service set out in Schedule 6 of the Children's Homes Regulations 2001. In addition to this a health and safety audit is undertaken on a regular basis and contact is made with social workers to attain feedback on the service provided to young people. This assists in reviewing the service and making changes and addressing deficiencies when required.

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):

- develop further hobbies, interests and activities of young people to support their health, positive networking, to build on self-esteem and confidence (NMS 12 & 15)
- ensure the daily recordings report on and reflect in full the care plan aims and objectives for the young person to indicate the work is being undertaken and evidence the progress being made (NMS 2)
- ensure all decoration and furnishings are in good order, in particular bathroom carpets (NMS 24 & 25)
- 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)