

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	28 September 2009
Inspector	Elaine Cray
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	6 November 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

The home is registered to provide care for two young people, of either sex, between the ages 10 and 18 years with emotional, behavioural and learning difficulties. It provides medium to long-term residential care and is owned by a private company. The home is located in a residential area that has easy access to local facilities and public transport.

The house consists of a lounge, kitchen/diner, and conservatory on the ground floor. Each young person has their own bedroom with an adjacent bathroom on the first floor, where there is also a staff office. There is a front and rear garden.

Summary

This inspection is an unannounced full key inspection visit, looking at all the key national minimum standards. The outcome groups relating to being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, positive contribution, economic wellbeing and organisation are assessed and judged as good.

The overall quality rating is good. Young people receive well planned and regularly reviewed care that supports their needs. There are clear boundaries to improve behaviour and young people are prepared and supported for their transition into adulthood. Young people benefit from positive and meaningful relations with staff working at the home.

Two actions and one recommendation are set as a result of this inspection visit.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

There were no actions or recommendations set at the last inspection.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The promotion of young people's health and arrangements for medical needs are well-organised. Liaison with local agencies is very good, providing consultation for staff and additional support to young people. Staff have an excellent awareness of health issues relating to the lifestyles of young people. Young people identify improvements in their physical and emotional health and have a growing awareness of how to maintain healthier lifestyles and liaise with health care services.

Medical and health records are comprehensive and clearly show that young people's medical appointments are arranged and their health closely monitored. Staff are trained in first aid and administering medication. Although administering medication is generally well managed, a central record, in addition to the existing individual records, for recording medication given to young people is not maintained.

Healthy eating is promoted, menus are varied, discussed with young people and include choice. Young people are able to take responsibility for shopping and cooking their own meals. They

are encouraged to develop an understanding of healthy eating which also promotes their independence and life skills.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The safety and welfare of young people is placed in high priority and young people say they feel safe, secure and see improvements in their behaviour. The procedures and practices for promoting the welfare and safety of young people are well managed. Young people are looked after by staff trained in safeguarding children procedures. Staff understand the clear risk assessment and management strategies documented for each young person and about the general running of the home. They are fully aware of the procedures regarding young people going missing and who to notify about serious incidents in the home.

The home has clear policies and procedures regarding the recruitment of staff which are in line with the Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and national minimum standards. An audit undertaken by Ofsted in May 2009 identified some shortfalls in practice which the provider has been asked to address.

The privacy of young people is respected and young people enjoy their own private space. There is an anti-bullying policy and strategies are documented in risk assessments and placement care plans. Young people are protected by a clear written complaints procedure with information included in the young people's guide. The manager and staff show a good commitment to listening to young people and ensuring concerns about the home are taken seriously.

There is a written behaviour management policy and staff are trained in behaviour management and physical intervention. Staff maintain positive and interactive relationships with young people, with high levels of discreet vigilance in line with detailed risk management strategies. There have been no incidents involving physical restraint in the home. Young people say their behaviour is improved. They respond well to the structured boundaries in place and the strong emphasis placed on promoting incentives and rewarding positive and improved behaviour. Records are well maintained, but the current format for recording in the sanctions book only requires the name of the staff issuing a sanction and does not include a section for the names of other staff, young people or others present when sanctions are given.

The physical environment is well-maintained and monitored in terms of health and safety, with comprehensive and detailed documentation. Fire safety procedures are checked and monitored.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people identify with their future plans and are motivated to achieve in preparing for adulthood and employment. Young people develop confidence in their personal identities, social relationships and personal achievements.

All young people's needs are assessed on an individual basis. Appropriate support is afforded to each young person through individual key working sessions and very good liaison with appropriate agencies in terms of more specialised individual needs.

The staff provide a clear and enthusiastic commitment to supporting and encouraging young people to enjoy and achieve in both education, leisure activities and overall personal development. The manager and staff maintain good connections with local mainstream schools, colleges and employment projects. There are also education facilities, including a school and home tutoring service, available within the company who owns the home.

Some young people have had poor experiences of the education system. Young people are supported to re-engage in education and explore opportunities that will enable them to progress in their achievements. They are encouraged to develop skills and facilitate a meaningful transition into young adulthood. Young people are supported with individual education, development and independence plans that are tailored to their needs, abilities and age. Staff present an excellent commitment and flexible approach to exploring ways to best engage young people.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff have excellent knowledge of the young people's needs and provide consistent care on a day-to-day basis, resulting in improvements in the welfare, behaviour and safeguarding of young people living at the home. Individual placement care plans provide an assessment of needs and inform staff about what to do on a day-to-day basis. Young people are encouraged to read, discuss and sign their care plans and attend meetings about their placements. There are regular statutory reviews and young people are actively encouraged by the staff to contribute.

Young people are involved in decisions about their placements; they are encouraged to attend meetings, have regular key working sessions and young people know about and are involved in plans for their future. Arrangements for young people to maintain contact with families and friends are well-recorded and consistently supported by the manager and staff at the home. There are weekly young people's meetings to discuss the running of the home.

Young people are supported when they move into the home. There is a clear admissions procedure for staff to follow, including a task check list for staff and an informative young people's guide. Young people have settled well due to the support provided by staff, they understand the reason for their placements and feel part of the running of the home.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Plans to help young people develop life skills and prepare for more independent living are well supported by the staff. Independence plans are in place and young people say they are encouraged to complete daily domestic tasks, such as washing, ironing and cleaning and they also learn how to budget money, cook their own meals and liaise with agencies in the community. Young people are encouraged to engage with education, employment opportunities and a variety of activities, enabling them to develop confidence and skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being.

Young people live in a well-maintained and comfortable home. The lounge, kitchen-diner, conservatory and bedrooms are well-furnished, well-decorated and present a homely environment for young people.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The home's statement of purpose and young people's guide provides good information about the home. Young people are cared for by a small yet experienced staff team. Staffing of the home is based on lone working by staff. These arrangements are risk assessed, meet the needs of the young people and have resulted in close and meaningful relationships for the young people currently living at the home. The rota shows there is allotted time for daily handover meetings and regular team meetings. The registered manager works in addition to the staff on duty and although a weekly manager's diary is recorded, the hours worked by the manager in the home are not recorded on the staff rota.

Staff training is well organised, with an induction package, an annual training plan, with core training such as child protection, first aid and behaviour management and there is regular staff supervision. Staff are NVQ 3 trained and speak highly of the support and development provided by the manager, including updates on safeguarding procedures, child development and children with learning difficulties.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The staff team present an openness and firm commitment to assessing and understanding the individual needs of all young people and exploring ways in which these needs can be addressed. The staff team is mixed gender and meets the current needs of the young people. Discriminatory behaviour and bullying are challenged and addressed. Young people have permanent and private files, which are comprehensive, well-organised and show a clear record of their progress.

Young people are well looked after in a home that is well managed. There are clear lines of accountability with a clear focus on providing and further developing good quality care to young people. Staff understand their roles and responsibilities and feel well managed and supported by the registered manager at the home. The manager completes monthly Regulation 34 checks and the Responsible Individual delegates Regulation 33 visits to managers and assistant managers from other homes within the company and these are carried out on a monthly basis.

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 Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

Standard	Action	Due date
13	provide a central record for the receipt, disposal and administration of any medicines to any child living at the home (Regulation 29 - Schedule 6.14).	9 November 2009
29	include the manager's hours on the staff rota for persons working at the home (Regulation 29.1 - Schedule 4.11).	9 November 2009

Recommendations

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

- ensure the names of staff members, young people and any other persons present when giving a sanction are recorded the sanctions book - in addition to the member of staff issuing the sanction (NMS 22.10).