

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	21 July 2009
Inspector	Jackie Callaghan
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	9 January 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

The primary aim of the home is to provide an environment that enables all children and young people within their care to feel valued, secure and respected.

The home is a semi-detached house in a quiet multicultural residential setting. The home is registered as a two-bedded unit, to be used as a facility for children and young people of either gender aged 10 to 17 years old at the time of admission. It provides, two single occupancy children and or young people's bedrooms and is situated within easy access of local bus routes and other local transportation. There are local amenities nearby, such as shops, supermarkets, leisure centre and parks.

There is one young person currently living at the home who was present for most of this inspection.

Summary

This was an unannounced full inspection that concentrated on the key National Minimum Standards. This is a satisfactory service with some good aspects. Medical health needs of young people are managed well. Education and individual support for young people is good. The home works closely with a variety of agencies in order to meet the full range of young people's needs.

There are a number of shortfalls to improve the quality of its service. For example, staff supervisions are not taking place within the required frequency. Behaviour management and the searching of young people's bedrooms documentation are not always completed fully or appropriately. Staffs' suitability is not robustly checked before they start employment. However, checks that have come through after their start date are clear.

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the manager was asked to update the smoking policy and ensure that prior written permission for medical consent is obtained.

The smoking policy now reflects staff practice on promoting the health of young people and staff have permission to administer first aid and non-prescribed medication. As a result, young people's welfare is promoted.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people are receiving a good service that is focused on their emotional wellbeing and health needs. Staff are actively involved in engaging with young people about a range of health related issues and plans are designed to encourage healthy habits and to improve young people's self-image.

Young people in preparation for independence are encouraged by staff to plan their meals with a suitable degree of nutritional forethought. The young people feel that the food is 'ok'. As a

result, young people gain a good understanding about the benefits of healthy living. Young people's health and welfare is safeguarded as staff receive training in the safe handling and administration of medication.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Young people's privacy and confidentiality is compromised as staff are not recording all the information required when searching the young people's bedrooms. Several complaints have been raised since the last inspection. However, the home has appropriate processes in place to manage complaints and concerns quickly in order to resolve issues in a manner that young people both understand and can agree with.

The welfare of young people is promoted through procedures and liaison with other agencies. Appropriate responses are made to any allegation or suspicion of abuse. For example, young people are protected very well from bullying. Also, young people who are absent without authority are sufficiently protected in accordance with the written guidance.

Young people who exhibit any behaviour that may challenge them in the environment are supported through positive reinforcement to make changes that will enable them to maintain levels of behaviour that are socially acceptable and that will sustain them in the wider community. However, both the sanctions and restraints log pages need to be numbered to prevent any pages being torn out and/or going missing. Young people are not being overtly encouraged to sign nor have their views recorded in any of the behaviour management documentation.

Positive steps are taken to keep young people, staff and visitors safe from fire and other hazards in the home. For example, records indicate that risk assessments are completed in relation to fire and potential environmental hazards. Frequent checks are undertaken on fire equipment, emergency lighting and fire evacuation practises.

The home operates a staff vetting procedure that potentially compromises young people's safety. One file did not hold evidence of recruitment checks having taken place prior to staff being deployed. This includes an appropriate enhanced Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) disclosure. Some files were also missing a second reference which contradicts the homes policy and procedures.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people are supported by a well-informed team who ensure the home maintains a flexible approach to providing care. Staff demonstrate an appropriate knowledge and understanding of the potentially damaging effects of discrimination, stereotyping and prejudice and consistently take positive steps to allow young people to develop their identity and place in society.

A key worker system is in operation where a member of staff takes responsibility for the delivery and monitoring of a young person's care and support. Records also take account of potential needs in relation to a young person's diversity such as identity, race, culture and religion. Although some individual support is delivered through key worker arrangements, this process is not promoted to the exclusion of other staff offering support. It is clear that staff in the home work as a team and young people are able to approach all staff for help and support.

The education of young people is actively promoted as valuable in itself and as part of their preparation for adulthood. It is supported well by staff and there have been achievements and attainments of various sorts.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Young people are supported by clear care plans which detail their needs and wishes. Plans are reflective of the identified needs outlined in the Looked After Children (LAC) plans and are reviewed and updated regularly to reflect the ever changing needs of the young people.

Young people are able to maintain good relationships with family and friends because staff support and help facilitate visits. Young people's contact arrangements are consistent with their agreed plans and confirmed that staff support them to stay in touch with significant people in a way that is agreed.

Staff demonstrate that they value the views and opinions of young people because they involve young people in all aspects of their care. For example, young people are supported to attend LAC review meetings with staff to discuss their needs. Seeking young people's opinions and helping them make decisions about matters that affect them are fully integrated into the care practices of the home.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is satisfactory.

Young people receive satisfactory care which helps to prepare them for adulthood. There is routine attention to issues relating to independence including domestic chores and certain aspects of budgeting, such as purchasing their own toiletries and clothing. Subsequently, a systematic approach is used in conjunction with the local authority when young people are planning to leave care.

When young people get angry and damage the home they have to pay towards replacing the broken items. The amount taken is appropriate, however, there is disparity between different documentation as to the amounts taken. The young people sign the pocket money sheet, but not the sanctions log which also details the amount deducted as a consequence.

The home provides a comfortable environment for young people which assists them with domestic style living. Young people enjoy homely accommodation which is decorated, furnished and maintained to a satisfactory standard providing adequate facilities for their use. The home provides the right environment to ensure the social and personal needs of each young person are being met.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Young people are guided through and know what services they can expect from the home, how they will be cared for and who they will live with. A satisfactory statement on how the home operates is available for parents and others needing this information.

A staff training package is continuing to develop staff's skills and, staff benefit from regular meetings. However, staff's support processes are weakened because they are not receiving

regular formal supervision that helps them to develop their knowledge base on the diverse aspects of care. New staff receive an appropriate induction which prepares them for their role and the company remain committed to ensuring staff undertake appropriate National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ).

There is continuity of staffing with young people having allocated staff for the duration of a shift. The manager is near completion of the National Vocational Qualification 4 (NVQ) and he is suitably experienced for the role providing satisfactory leadership for the staff group. Consequently, young people receive consistent care.

The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. All of the home's recording systems take account of potential needs in relation to a young person's diversity such as identity, race, culture and religion.

Regulation 33 visits are meeting regulations. This promotes young people's safety, welfare and care because regular external quality assurance monitoring evaluates and assesses areas of development in order to improve the service. Young people's needs, development and progress are recorded in suitable files to which they can have access.

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
27	obtain for all staff, before they start work at the home, all the information set out in Regulation 26, Schedule 2	21 September 2009
28	ensure that all persons receive appropriate supervision. (regulation 27.4 (a))	21 August 2009

Recommendations

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

- ensure that all searches of the young person's bedroom are documented, recording all areas of NMS 9.8
- ensure the record of restraint and sanctions logs are numbered and all young people are encouraged to write or have their views recorded and where possible sign their name (NMS 22.10 & 14)
- ensure all pocket money deductions are fully recorded to clearly show the reasons why money is being withheld. (NMS 11.9)