

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC356565
Inspection date	27 May 2010
Inspector	Jackie Callaghan
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	11 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

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 for two young people of either gender aged 10 to 17 years old. It provides two single occupancy 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 are two young people currently living at the home.

Summary

This unannounced key inspection focuses on all five outcome areas. The inspection also considers whether the recommendations made during the previous inspection have been addressed. Two young people spoke about the support they receive from staff and their experience of living here. The Registered Manager post is currently vacant. The home has recruited a new manager who has been in post for one week.

Overall, the home is providing a satisfactory standard of care for young people. Relationships between staff and young people are extremely positive. Young people's health needs are well met and they are encouraged and supported to pursue their education, so that they can achieve and make plans for their future.

Two actions and one recommendation have been raised as a result of this inspection. This visit found that there are significant issues relating to recruitment and selection of staff. However, due to the swift action taken by the registered individual upon finding these shortfalls risks have been notably reduced. Because of this intervention a proportionate view has been taken and this inspection judgement remains as satisfactory. The new manager is aware that there is no room for error at their next inspection. If the changes made to the recruitment process are not embedded in practice this will significantly affect their overall quality judgement.

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 Registered Manager was asked to ensure all staff receive training in physical intervention and to improve the recruitment records so as to evidence that all checks, as required by Schedule 2, are carried out before staff start employment.

All staff have now received physical intervention training. This training has enabled staff to respond in a coordinated way, helping to reduce the likelihood of injury and thus safeguarding young people's welfare. Weaknesses still remain within the recruitment and selection processes. An action has been raised at this visit to address this shortfall.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people enjoy healthy, nutritious meals that meet their dietary and health needs. They go shopping with staff to buy their food and occasionally help to prepare their own meals and snacks. The promotion of independence in this area is a strong feature of how the home works with young people to develop skills and self-confidence. One young person commented that the 'food is good. I choose what I want to eat and we shop on Mondays.'

The good health of young people is promoted because staff have a good knowledge of their individual and specific health needs. A clear plan for each young person details how their specific and general health issues are to be addressed. All young people are registered with the required health care professionals.

Young people's files contain signed medical consent forms from the person with parental responsibility for the administration of household medication and first aid. Medication recording is clear and records support consistent administration. The well-being of young people is further promoted by staff undertaking training in first aid and basic medication administration.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff respect the privacy of young people and they make sure that their information is kept confidential. Young people say that staff always knock on their doors and do not go into their bedrooms without permission. Young people confirm they are able to raise concerns and complaints with staff. The home takes complaints from young people seriously and deals with them quickly and effectively.

Young people's welfare and safety is positively promoted. Staff have a good understanding of the needs of young people and how to safeguard them. Staff receive child protection training as well as behaviour management and physical intervention training which supports their day-to-day practice. However, a recent sanction to address a young person's inappropriate behaviour meant that the withdrawal of privileges took place five days after the incident. The gap between the incident and the sanction is too long for young people to truly understand the consequence.

Young people know that bullying is not tolerated and they are confident that staff will intervene to ensure they are protected from bullying by others should the need arise. Young people say 'I am happy here.' Their safety is further promoted when their whereabouts are unknown as staff follow the agreed reporting procedures for these circumstances. This results in practices that are consistent with wider police protocols for reporting young people who go missing without consent.

Health and safety matters are well managed in the home. Individual and general risk assessments enable staff to put in place appropriate plans to lessen or eliminate risk, in order to protect young people and the environment. All risk assessments are regularly reviewed to ensure that information is kept up to date and that it accurately reflects the changing needs of young people. Fire and electrical equipment is regularly checked and young people take part in evacuation drills so that they know what to do in an emergency. The home is kept appropriately secure to prevent unauthorised individuals gaining access.

There are significant weaknesses in the recruitment and selection of staff. However, recent intervention by the registered individual has helped to minimise the risks associated with this

practice. Two staff members have begun employment before their Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) check for the home has come through. The previous Registered Manager had excepted existing CRB checks and had not fully checked references or evidenced gaps in employment. The registered individual, when undertaking a Regulation 33 visit identified this weakness and has now chased up the outstanding checks. These include a new CRB, written references, direct contact with the counter signatory from the last CRB and total assurance that these staff members are being supervised at all times.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people receive a very good level of individual support from staff. This enables them to feel safe and secure in the home and to make good progress. Young people's cultural, religious and racial identities are respected and staff endeavour to engage the additional support they need for mental, emotional or physical health needs.

Each young person has an identified key worker and individual key working sessions take place regularly. These sessions provide young people with the opportunity to talk about particular issues relevant to them and to receive support and guidance that is consistent with their needs.

Young people's educational achievement is promoted and valued and is seen as part of their preparation for adulthood. All are encouraged to fully participate in education at college or alternative training locally. Staff are working hard to ensure that all of the young people have an education provision that is appropriate to their needs. At times when young people are excluded from school, staff make sure that there are good arrangements in place to continue education in the home.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Young people are supported by care plans which reflect their individual needs. Care plans include risk assessments which ensure that young people maintain their levels of independence in a safe manner. The plans also address the support necessary for education, relationships and the management of behaviours.

Young people are introduced to the home in a way that meets their individual needs. Most admissions are on a planned basis, although the home does accept emergency admissions when there has been a breakdown in young people's care arrangements. Information about the home is available for young people in accessible formats such as easy read. Young people are encouraged to bring familiar possessions with them and staff help them customise their bedrooms.

Staff understand the importance to young people of maintaining contact with family and friends. They work closely with placing authorities to ensure that young people are able to keep in touch with people outside the home who are important to them, in line with agreed contact plans.

Young people are well supported to make choices and decisions which affect their lives. For example, what they wear, what they eat and where they want to go. Staff clearly demonstrate that they value the views and opinions of young people.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

The daily life of the home ensures that young people are able to develop the knowledge and skills which will help them prepare for adulthood. For example, young people are encouraged to keep their own rooms clean and tidy, plan menus, shop for and cook meals. Staff communicate well with placing authorities to ensure that pathway plans are in place at an appropriate stage in the young person's placement.

Young people benefit from living in a homely environment. The service is suitably located in a residential area and provides young people with an appropriate amount of private and communal space. It is comfortably furnished, well maintained internally and externally and is clean and tidy. A young person commented that 'I am personalising my room which is really nice.' Both the interior and exterior of the home are maintained in a good state of structural and decorative repair with an ongoing maintenance programme.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The home is currently managed by a manager who is not registered by Ofsted. This person has only been in post a week. The organisation and this manager are actively submitting an application for her to become a Registered Manager.

The service provides young people, their families and placing social workers with good written information about how the home works, in the form of a detailed Statement of Purpose and young person's guide. Both documents are regularly reviewed and updated.

Young people are cared for by a staff team who are increasing in experience and skills. Staff benefit from regular staff meetings. However, the staff support processes are weakened because they are not receiving regular formal supervision or annual appraisals to help them to develop their knowledge on the diverse aspects of care.

Staff receive a programme of training to ensure they are able to maintain the safety of the young people. The home remains committed to providing National Vocational Qualification training to all staff. New staff have been enrolled and are due to commence this training within the three month timescale defined by national minimum standards.

The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. Policy, training and care practice helps young people to know that their individual needs on the basis of race, ethnicity, sexuality, gender, age and religion are valued. Staff and the service are able to meet young people's diverse needs in everyday life while they reside in the home.

Management systems are effective in monitoring the work of the home and the standard of care that is given to young people. The manager checks and signs all documents regularly and produces reports on the findings. An independent person visits the home every month to complete checks on the care of young people and reports of these visits are made available to the manager and to Ofsted. These reports confirm that any issues identified are attended to promptly, to ensure that standards of care remain satisfactory.

Young people's files and other records are well maintained and secure. Records are appropriately cross referenced and confirm the satisfactory care practices that are in the home. Young people access their records when undertaking keyworker sessions.

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	27 June 2010
28	ensure that staff receive appropriate supervision and appraisal. (Regulation 4(a))	27 June 2010

Recommendations

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

- ensure that sanctions applied are not excessive or unreasonable. (NMS 22.6)