

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	20 August 2009
Inspector	Elaine Clare
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	13 February 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

This home is a private children's home owned and managed by a family partnership. It is situated in a small industrial town close to local amenities. It is registered to provide accommodation for up to four young males, aged from 10 years old up to 17 years old, with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Their overall aim is to offer a family atmosphere and environment, which will allow vulnerable young people in crisis the stability and care, giving them an opportunity to settle and achieve.

Summary

This unannounced key inspection was undertaken to assess all the key standards in all outcome areas and to consider the response of the provider in relation to the requirements and recommendations made at the last inspection.

Young people are well looked after when they stay at the home. Their health needs are well met and their education is supported. They are provided with a range of activities, toys and equipment, to help them to enjoy their stay at the home and to help them to develop their skills.

Staff are qualified and properly trained to meet the diverse needs of the young people who use the service. They work well together to support young people and keep them safe. Leadership in the home is good.

The building is suitable for its purpose and is well maintained, so that young people have the benefit of being cared for in a pleasant environment.

Recommendations have been made at this inspection in relation to obtaining written consent for the surveillance in the home, inserting the address of Ofsted within the complaints procedure and increasing the number of staff with an NVQ qualification.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Following the last inspection there were four actions that were required to be completed and six recommendations to improve the practice within the home. All have been met.

The registered manager has completed a relevant qualification and the statement of purpose has been updated to include what is listed within the schedule. Sanction records have all the details that are required and all members of staff are trained in Team Teach, a course that the staff have completed recently.

The manager has improved on the recording of supervision sessions and written a development plan. A new member of staff has been employed who will deputise in the manager's absence. Staff files are kept on the premises and are readily available for inspection.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Young people living at the home are provided with healthy, well-prepared and freshly cooked food. Staff are in regular contact with the young people to ensure that feedback and regular consultation is taken seriously and likes and dislikes are known. The young people help prepare the food and it is served as a family unit around a large table. Extra care is taken to record menus well in advance and provide choices at each meal. Young people spoke favourably about the food and enjoyed helping out in the kitchen. The young people are often taken out to celebrate events in their lives and the young people choose where they would like to eat.

Young people on special diets are catered for and all the young people have the opportunity to visit the specialist butchers to see how the meat is prepared. This provides the young people of an experience to explore another culture, which in turn prompts them to ask questions.

The ongoing assessment of health care and therapeutic need is at the heart of the home's approach. Weekly meetings attempt to provide all the staff with an in depth understanding of young people's complex developmental needs. They are clear that young people benefit directly from their insight and in depth understanding of their needs.

Systems fundamental to safe caring are good, including the administration and safe storage of medication and the recording of significant medical events.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The young people's privacy is respected and any information about them is handled with sensitivity. Any room searching, entering rooms or sharing of personal information is underpinned by robust policies. The young people each have their own rooms and use their mobile phones for making private calls, but they can also use the home's phone should they wish. Wherever possible a mixed staff group is on duty giving the boys the opportunity to have positive female role models.

An alarm system has been installed to monitor when a young person's bedroom door is opened at night. This is being used as a security measure, however, it has not been noted in the statement of purpose and consent has not been sought from the appropriate adult for the young people.

All of the young people know how to formally complain and will receive support from the home's delegated member of staff if they so wish. There are good systems to record and follow up internal and external complaints. The address and procedure of how and when to contact Ofsted needs to be included within the complaints policy and the statement of purpose.

The home's approach to safeguarding and protecting young people from abuse benefits from the strong leadership of the delegated child protection officer. Staff receive regular and updated guidance on child protection issues and excellent internal training.

Possible bullying behaviours are explored in line with the home's therapeutic ethos. Young people benefit from the many one-to-one sessions, which aim to help examine and inform their behaviours.

Staff teams are well briefed on collective and agreed responses to challenging behaviours. The home's approach to behaviour management is positive and proactive. Young people feel treated fairly and know the rules and behavioural expectations of staff. All staff are trained in de-escalation and safe holding techniques and their approach is regularly refreshed through training, debate and assessment of need.

Environmental, fire safety and health and safety related issues are monitored daily and problems quickly remedied by the home's own team of maintenance staff. Essential recording of fire equipment checks and evacuation procedures is good.

The senior management team follows safe and careful recruitment and vetting procedures. The process involves all checks and follows the requirements of the relevant regulations.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Suitable staffing levels ensure young people are provided with good individual support when necessary. All young people have key workers whom they meet with weekly and senior staff members act as case managers to oversee work carried out with individual young people. Staff are very knowledgeable about young people's individual needs. Young people said they can go to 'any member of staff for help'. Young people receive excellent individual specialist advice and support when required and professionals from various agencies and support teams visit the home regularly to work with them.

All young people have full educational programmes and formal education placements at schools. All have good attendance records at their various placements. The home has good working links with education establishments young people attend and files contain good details of their personal educational programmes and educational progress. Staff actively encourage and support young people's educational placements, attending meetings, reviews and other events and assisting and advising with homework. Young people can study in private if they wish, with two well-equipped rooms in the home specifically set out for this. Young people have access to the internet to help them with their studies through computers with suitable restrictors installed to prevent access to unsuitable sites. These actions show young people's educational needs are being very well addressed.

The staff encourage some group activities but they also spend individual time with the young people to address their specific needs. Trips out are organised most weekends, using the home's vehicle. The young people continue to learn cooking and food preparation, shopping and laundry. By being involved with local community projects, as well as activities, such as swimming, walks and visiting the local café, they enjoy all that the home has to offer. The young people spoke about their next holiday with enthusiasm and commented how much they had enjoyed their holiday in Turkey.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

The home's admission and placement planning is outstanding. The exceptional standard of care planning is maintained through a wide range of participation from professionals and excellent key working by care staff. Plans are well known to care staff.

The statutory reviewing process is well supported by the community. Young people feel they are part of the assessment and reviewing process and are regularly consulted and informed.

Young people's needs and relevant placement targets and outcomes are systematically assessed as part of a rigorous process of admission.

Young people enjoy positive relationships with staff based on mutual respect and understanding. Young people are clear that they are enjoying their time at this home.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is outstanding.

Young people benefit from being cared for in an environment that is set up to run as a large family home, that is clean and brightly decorated, comfortably furnished and has a warm and welcoming atmosphere. The home has two lounges where young people can relax and play games, do artwork, watch television or use the computer. The kitchen/dining area is large enough to enable all the children to eat together with staff and there is small garden area to the rear. Bathrooms and bedrooms are decorated for the diverse needs of young people and enable them to have appropriate privacy. Individual tastes of all of the young people are respected and they own a range of modern clothes and toiletries of their choice.

Staff are keen to help every young person to enjoy their stay at the home and to help them to develop skills that are appropriate to their individual needs and abilities and that will benefit them later in life. For example, some young people are able to make drinks and snacks and help staff with shopping or cooking activities.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The home has a comprehensive statement of purpose. Young people are provided with a range of materials on admission to inform them of the services provided. Equally, staff are provided with a range of policies and procedures for their guidance. All of these documents have recently been updated to a high standard and reflect the services provided.

Members of staff receive a wide range of support consisting of regular supervision and debriefing sessions. Teams work closely together guided by an experienced senior management team.

There is a sufficient number of staff. The home sometimes uses its own casual staff to compliment a stable and dedicated core team. This is well managed. Investment in external and internal training opportunities for staff is high. Not all staff are qualified to National Vocational Qualification level three but support is available for staff to access this course. Staff are united in praise for the levels of training and support they receive.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The home is an expert at assessing individual needs and tailoring specific care packages accordingly. Young people benefit from a diverse range of care, therapy and educational approaches. All approaches are designed to support and promote the highly specific and complex developmental needs of each individual. Placement plans are designed to detail differences and are always geared to address individual need. Young people are being regularly consulted on their dietary choices. Young people's choice of clothing is supported and respected. Leisure time is supportive of young people's needs and

individual skills and choice. Staff respect and protect privacy. Relationships between staff and young people are guided by the community's value of individual need in respect of their disability, cultural identity and gender.

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):

- create a consent form in order to gain permission for the use of surveillance equipment within the home (NMS 26)
- improve the complaint policy by including the address of Ofsted and the procedure of how and when they can be contacted (NMS 16)
- maintain a staff team with more than 80% holding relevant National Vocational Qualifications (NMS 29.5).