

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC357468
Inspection date	23 September 2009
Inspector	Anthony Kyem
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	20 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 home provides care and accommodation for one young person of either sex aged between 11 and 17 years. The home is a detached property situated in a private residential area. There is a local bus service providing access to the town centre.

The accommodation provided for young people includes a lounge, kitchen, dining area and three separate bedrooms, one of which is also used as an office. The young person has their own bedroom with en suite facilities. There is a bathroom on the first floor and a separate toilet on the ground floor. To the rear of the property is an enclosed garden with patio area.

Summary

The inspection of the home was unannounced, all key national minimum standards were inspected. The visit was used to assess the home's capacity to meet the outcome areas for young people in relation to being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution, achieving economic well-being and organisation.

The home provides care for young people to a satisfactory standard. Care planning documentation is detailed and young people receive good levels of personal support. Young people speak highly of the support provided to them. They have the opportunity to develop trusting relationships with staff, as staff provide young people with continuity of care.

Overall, health and safety matters are managed well. However, the home's building risk assessment is insufficiently detailed, as it doesn't cover potential risks within the home. Key working whilst very supportive, is not creatively used or focussed on areas for improvement. For example, there is no evidence of any direct work undertaken with young people. Some staff have not completed mandatory training courses or completed a recognised qualification in social care.

As a result of this inspection a number of actions and recommendations have been made for the registered person to address, to improve the quality of care.

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Following the home's previous inspection an important decision was taken to end a young person's placement as the home was, at that time, unable to meet that particular young person's needs. Care is now delivered in a planned and organised way, in accordance with the new young person resident.

There are no safeguarding concerns with the home able to provide care safely. This means the welfare, health and safety of young people is sufficiently promoted and young people are kept safe from significant harm.

Young people's rights to privacy and dignity is respected and positive steps are taken to promote fire safety within the home. Staff's suitability to work with children is carefully assessed and

they are vetted prior to their employment. Such checks promote the welfare and safety of vulnerable children.

The day to day operations of the home are monitored and staffing arrangements are made in accordance with the assessed needs of those resident.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Meals provided for young people take account of their individual likes and dislikes in relation to foods. Overall, a well balanced diet is provided for them. Specialist advice has been sought from a dietician which enables staff to understand young people's special dietary needs. Staff encourage young people to eat healthily and they monitor the consumption of foods to ensure that unhealthy foods are not consumed too often.

The food menu whilst varied and nutritionally balanced contains one particular item of food, which is not considered healthy. For example, chips are consumed by young people too often. Some, but not all staff are trained in the safe preparation of foods.

Young people's health needs are sufficiently promoted. They are registered with local health services and are encouraged to attend their medical appointments at suitable intervals. Specialist health appointments are made for young people, where required.

Generally, the written information available on health is good and this enables staff, to meet young people's identified health needs. Whilst the young person resident has had a health needs assessment completed, the assessment report is not available to instruct staff on any matters that require their attention.

Staff are trained in first aid and there are provisions available for them to administer emergency treatment, if required. Medical consent is in place so that staff have the authority needed to attend to young people's health needs. All medication kept within the home is stored and administered safely.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Young people's private records are securely stored for their own protection and privacy. Washing facilities provided for young people to use, enable them to do so independently and in private. Young people spoken to confirmed that staff treat them fairly, with dignity and respect.

Staff protect young people from coming to harm. Welfare issues such as unauthorised absences are managed appropriately, to promote young people's welfare and safety. There are no current concerns in relation to safeguarding and there are no issues with young people suffering bullying. No complaints or restraints have occurred since the home's previous inspection.

Relationships between young people and staff are extremely positive. Staff are trained to manage difficult behaviour and sanctions used by them are rare and fairly applied. Financial incentives are used to reward compliance to the home's rules, however, socially acceptable behaviour is not creatively rewarded.

Young people's behaviours are clearly assessed, however, the risk assessment which covers the use of restraint, is not clearly recorded. Whilst staff are trained in care and control, not all are currently trained in child protection. Without such training staff are unable to undertake their safeguarding duties effectively.

Health and safety matters are generally managed well. There are regular fire evacuation tests and safety inspections undertaken to the home's fire fighting equipment, gas and portable electrical appliances. Environmental hazards, however, are not covered within the home's building risk assessment. Hazards identified with the premises, were discussed with the Registered Manager. For example, the speed at which the home's self closing fire doors close, is potentially hazardous and dangerous cooking utensils are not stored safely.

Staff recruitment practices were assessed and the systems used to recruit new staff were found to be robust and in keeping with good practice guidance. However, it was identified that explanations had not been sought prior to the appointment of one member of staff, in terms of gaps in their employment history. Satisfactory checks have since been undertaken.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff actively encourage young people to attend school, so that young people benefit from the educational opportunities provided to them. The company has it's own school to educate those young people unable to attend mainstream education. Young people whilst receiving education, do not benefit from having up to date personal education plans which describe their particular educational needs, achievements and aspirations.

Young people have designated key workers with whom they are able to turn to for support. They receive good support through regular key working. The primary focus of this work, whilst very positive, is focussed on young people's feelings and views. Staff provide encouragement, reassurance and support for young people to air their concerns or anxieties. Whilst key working is highly beneficial, there was little evidence of planned direct work being undertaken to enhance the development of life skills, or review young people's needs or individual progress.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Young people's needs are formally assessed and staff have good information available to them, which they use to meet young people's needs. Residential placements plans, looked after children's documentation as well as other relevant information, is all used to provide young people with care. A care plan has been requested from the placing authority, as this is currently outstanding.

Young people have their placement plans reviewed at suitable intervals to ensure that plans made for them reflect their changing needs and personal circumstances. Young people's needs are formally reviewed as part of the statutory review process. The home produces written reports for review meetings and has requested outstanding minutes of meetings held. This will enable young people to reflect on important decisions made about their lives.

Young people are supported in maintaining contact with those people they consider closest to them. They receive support to maintain their familiar links. Young people's feelings and views

are routinely sought on a whole range of issues and key worker sessions provide regular opportunities for young people to be listened to and consulted.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

The young person resident has yet to reach an age where they are ready to begin the process of preparing for life within the adult world. Their free time is closely supervised but this limits their ability to take some controlled risks. Such restrictions hinder the young person's independence. The young person's independence time is currently being reviewed, which may afford them better opportunities to do things for themselves in the near future.

The accommodation provided for young people is decorated and furnished to good standards. The young person is provided with a personal computer, which they are able to use for recreational purposes. Young people are able to personalise their own bedrooms and have their own personal possessions and belongings as they chose. The home is not physically distinguishable as children's home, therefore young people are not stigmatised by their physical surroundings.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The home has a written Statement of Purpose together with a children's guide. Both documents provide young people, their families and social workers with useful information about the home, such as the manner in which care will be provided. The statement does not include any information about the experience or qualifications of the staff team and it was identified that less than 80% of staff hold a relevant qualification (NVQ) level 3, in working with children and young people.

The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. Young people are treated by staff as individuals. They are treated fairly, with dignity and respect and are looked after by staff of the same gender and ethnicity. Staff are not trained in equality and diversity but training on diversity is available to them. Young people's opportunities to take controlled risks are hindered due to the stringent supervisory arrangements in place.

Staffing arrangements are assessed, so that staffing levels are delivered in accordance with the assessed needs of those resident within the home. Continuity of care is provided so that young people are able to develop and sustain trusting relationships with the same staff. There is a programme in place for staff to receive regular supervision and training to help them in the work they perform. Such training enables staff to develop their individual skills, knowledge and experience.

Staff meetings whilst held more often, are not being held often enough. This limits the opportunities for staff to share their collective views about the daily operations of the home. Staff meetings also serve to provide an opportunity for young people to be formally consulted and involved in decisions made about the home.

There are systems in place to ensure that the home's performance is monitored consistently. The manager of the home routinely checks the home's administrative systems to ensure that

what staff do, they do in accordance with the home's policies and procedures. External monitoring also occurs within the required timescales, to provide additional quality assurance.

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
17	provide staff with training on how to respond to any safeguarding concerns of which they become aware (Regulation 27 4a)	27 November 2009
26	ensure that the home has a comprehensive building risk assessment, which identifies potential hazards and actions taken to reduce or eliminate identified risks (Regulation 23 c)	1 October 2009
26	ensure all parts of the home to which young people have access are free from potential hazards to their safety (Regulation 23.a)	1 September 2009
27	obtain for all staff, before they start work at the home, all the information set out in Schedule 2, specifically in relation to any gaps in employment history (Regulation 26)	1 October 2009
1	include in the Statement of Purpose details of the current staff group, their individual qualifications and experience (Regulation 4.1)	9 October 2009
29	ensure that 80% of the work force are qualified to NVQ level 3.	15 April 2010

Recommendations

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

- ensure all staff are trained in food hygiene (NMS 10.9)
- ensure meals provided for young people are healthy, wholesome and nutritious (NMS 10.1)
- ensure a copy of the young person's annual health needs assessment is obtained from the placing authority (NMS 12.1)
- consider the need to be more creative in rewarding young people's positive behaviours and individual achievements (NMS 22)
- ensure the circumstances where the use of physical restraint may be permitted are clearly recorded (NMS 22.7)
- ensure that key working is used more creatively to provide young people with better support, guidance and advice. (NMS 7.1)
- ensure that the young person has a (Pep) Personal Educational Plan (NMS 14.2)

- ensure that a copy of the placing authorities care plan for those resident is obtained (NMS 2.1)
- ensure staff meetings occur at least monthly (NMS 28.10)