

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	29 May 2009
Inspector	Jacqui Gosling
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	20 March 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 is a four-bedded home that provides medium to long-term care and accommodation for young people aged between 12 to 16 years and is one of a number of homes operated by the same provider. Young people are referred to the home from a local authority as part of a contractual agreement.

The ground floor consists of a lounge, dining room, kitchen, utility room, toilet and two offices. The first floor consists of four bedrooms for young people, a bathroom and staff sleep-in room. There is a rear garden with sufficient space for ball games and a games room is accessible from the garden. The location of the home is very close to the city centre and a range of amenities. Public transport is easily accessed from the home.

Summary

This unannounced key inspection concentrates on key National Minimum Standards. Four young people living at the home were present during part of the visit. Three of them participated in some of the inspection process. The inspection focused on the outcome areas of Being Healthy, Staying Safe, Enjoying and Achieving, Making a Positive Contribution, Achieving Economic Wellbeing. How staffing and management arrangements support the operation of the home is also considered.

The home is judged as good overall with five outcome areas being judged as outstanding. Young people are receiving an excellent level of care and support because staff are enthusiastic, dedicated and well informed about their needs and circumstances. Young people are clearly benefiting from living in a home that has a strong emphasis on promoting their health, welfare and safety. They are fully consulted and involved in their care and living arrangements. The manager and senior staff provide effective, practical leadership that supports the staff to deliver consistent care and support.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

No actions or recommendations were made following the last inspection that took place in March 2009.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people enjoy healthy, nutritious meals that meet their dietary and health needs. They say they are encouraged to be involved in planning, shopping and cooking according to their abilities, interests and as their preparation for independent living. Staff complete training in food hygiene as required.

The health and care needs of young people are identified and updated regularly. A clear plan for each young person details how their specific and general health issues are to be addressed. For example, during placement planning meetings, staff discuss the dangers of sexual exploitation and sexual activity. All young people are registered with the required health

professionals and staff are proactive in gathering health information when it is not known, for example, the immunisation history of young people and this ensures their health needs are effectively met.

Staff, in partnership with the person with parental responsibility, actively seek out further services when required to meet the needs of the young people. For example, the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) and local services that address. Some young people as part of their independent living plans are encouraged and supported by staff to make their own medical appointments. This means the young people receive care that actively promotes their wellbeing and health.

Staff encourage young people to participate to exercise and take part in activities and young people talk of attending the gym, playing football and going ten pin bowling.

The files for the young people contain signed medical consent forms from the person with parental responsibility for vaccinations, preventative inoculations and for all but one young person include the administration of household medication and first aid. The wellbeing of young people is further promoted by staff undertaking training in first aid.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Information held on behalf of all young people is correctly stored in lockable facilities. Staff are aware of their responsibilities to promote privacy and confidentiality and their practice is consistent with the organisation's policies and procedures. The facilities and arrangements for showering and bathing ensure the young people have their privacy respected.

The welfare of young people is promoted by a clear robust complaints policy. There is an effective system in place to record any concerns made known by young people. The organisation ensures staff are equipped and trained with the knowledge and understanding to fulfil their role and responsibilities regarding protection and safeguarding. The procedures in the home fully comply with the local Safeguarding Children Board procedures.

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 they feel safe living 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 abscond.

Young people are assisted to develop appropriate behaviour through the encouragement of acceptable behaviour and constructive staff responses to inappropriate behaviour. Behaviour management policies are robust and strategies have as their prime objective the creation of a safe, supportive environment. Staff have completed the required training to ensure if physical intervention is necessary it is consistent with guidance. Records demonstrate that very few physical interventions occur.

There is positive and effective interaction between staff and the young people and lots of friendly banter. Staff appear very comfortable with their role and observation and records identify they clearly understand the need for boundaries while maintaining a high quality relationship between themselves and young people.

Young people live in a home that provides for their physical safety and security. There are robust risk assessments for all aspects of the safety of the premises and grounds including serious incident planning; the behaviour of the young people and their activities, which are updated as required.

The records kept in the home show that robust procedures are in place to protect young people from fire. There are records to show that all the fire systems are regularly tested. Staff and young people undertake fire drills in excess of requirements. Relevant certificates show that regular servicing and maintenance is completed on all gas and electrical equipment. Certificates of Public and Employer liability are displayed as required.

All visitors to the home are informed of the fire exits and any planned fire drills on arrival, they are also monitored by being asked to show evidence of their identity and required to sign in the visitor's book. These very efficient procedures ensure all young people living here are protected from potential risks.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

The progress and development of young people is well documented in their files and show how young people are supported throughout their stay. For example, young people are provided with regular opportunities to spend individual time with their key worker. The home's records show that these sessions provide young people with the opportunity to talk about particular issues relevant to them as individuals and to receive support and guidance consistent with their needs. Staff know young people well and are able to respond to them in a way that considers and respects them as individuals. External services are requested as necessary to meet the needs of individual young people.

The educational progress of young people in mainstream schools and colleges is actively promoted, supported and encouraged by the staff. When young people have not been attending school prior to being accommodated at the home or are reluctant to re-engage with education, staff are proactive in liaising with the local authority education department and Looked After Child in Education Service (LACES) and other agencies to ensure all young people receive an education in line with their age, educational needs, interests and potential. All files contain Personal Education Plans, Individual Education Plans and Statements of Special Education Needs if appropriate. Records show that staff value, promote and encourage young people to make the best of their educational opportunities.

All young people are supported and encouraged to participate in hobbies and activities of their choice within and outside of the home. Staff ensure that is a correct balance between supervised and unsupervised time in the day as appropriate for individual young people that is risk assessed and takes into consideration the age, gender, abilities and interests of the young people.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Young people say they are encouraged and supported to make decisions about their lives and to influence the way the home is run. Records show young people are actively encouraged to communicate their views in regular discussions with their key carers, during group meetings

and on an informal basis every day. In discussion, staff clearly demonstrate that they value the views and opinions of young people

Young people have their needs fully assessed and the written plans are comprehensive and informative. The home produces a detailed range of information about the progress and development of each young person which is then communicated at formal review meetings.

Records show that staff respect and value equality and diversity and there is clear evidence throughout the young people's placement plans that their individual needs are identified and addressed. Staff have a proactive approach to working with external agencies, social workers and other professionals. Consequently, all young people receive the individualised care they need.

In discussion, the manager and senior staff are clearly able to show that all young people are appropriately placed. However, there are no written records available to show that impact assessments are completed before any young people are placed in the home as required.

In accordance with their care plans all young people are encouraged to maintain contact with members of their families. Staff clearly understand how important communication and contact with their family is for the young people and support their contact arrangements. The records indicate and young people confirm that none of them feel isolated from their family.

Significant time is taken to build relationships between the staff and young people. Staff have clear expectations of appropriate behaviour and young people are observed to freely initiate interaction and seek help from the various staff members on duty. They clearly benefit from receiving support from staff that is focused on their needs and achievements.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is outstanding.

Young people say they are being supported to develop their life skills and learn about independent living. They are provided with a range of opportunities, which include practical activities and domestic routines to help them develop their independent living skills. Pathway Meetings are held as required. The home has also put together a pack for young people, which contains extremely useful information about paying bills, how to contact trades people and suppliers, local telephone numbers of the police and other agencies, and other information that will assist and support them to be prepared for living independently.

Young people live in a very comfortable home that is decorated and furnished to a good standard. Photographs of the young people and collages of their trips and activities are displayed throughout the home and this creates a pleasant domestic style environment that provides ample space for the number, age and gender of the young people living here.

The design, layout and use of the accommodation allow young people to receive individual care and privacy. All young people have single bedrooms where they keep their personal belongings. They are able to exercise choice in personalising their own room and have a say in how the home is decorated and furnished which helps them feel included and involved in how the service is managed.

Regulation 33 reports clearly identify when maintenance work is needed to upgrade or repair the property and action plans record when the work is completed. Both the interior and exterior of the home are maintained in a good state of structural and decorative repair.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Young people, parents, staff and placing authorities have access to a Statement of Purpose and Young People's guide, which outlines the principles, practice and the services that they can expect from the home.

There is a clear staffing structure with clear lines of accountability in the home. The Registered Manager is appropriately qualified, skilled, experienced and provides effective leadership to the staff team and young people. He is actively involved in the day-to-day operation of the home and has clear expectations that the staff team will achieve the best possible outcomes for all young people in their care. The home has clear deputising arrangements in his absence.

Staff duty rotas and the manner in which staff are deployed confirm that the home keeps sufficient staff on the duty rota at all times. Staff are supported by senior members of staff who are sufficiently experienced and competent to lead the shifts. Effective information systems are in place to ensure the team's training and development needs are met.

There are robust systems in place to monitor the daily lives of the young people currently living in the home. Regulation 33 visits are undertaken monthly to monitor the overall care and welfare of the young people. The reports are robust and thoroughly assess the records and physical environment to ensure the home is a successful and purposeful environment for young people. Staff complete an action plan to report on what action is being taken to rectify any issues identified by this visit. The manager also undertakes quality monitoring of all the files and records as required.

The individual records for the young people in the home are very comprehensive, their needs, development and progress are recorded to reflect their individuality. The promotion of their equality and diversity is outstanding. They contain a range of information about young people's history and progress, which matches the requirements set out in Schedule 3 of the Children's Homes Regulations 2001.

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
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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):

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- obtain and retain on file prior written permission from a person with parental responsibility for each child, for the administration of first aid and appropriate non-prescription medication (National Minimum Standard 13.4)
 - ensure both the needs of the child concerned and the likely effects of their admission upon the existing groups of residents are taken into account and recorded in decisions on admissions to the home (National Minimum Standard 5.7).