

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	12 August 2009
Inspector	Roy Bega
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Date of last inspection	15 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

A private company owns and operates this children's home. It is located in a village within close proximity of community services. The organisation also has similar services in the area.

The setting accommodates a maximum of two young people of either sex between the ages of 12 and 17 years who have complex emotional, behavioural and educational difficulties.

Through various approaches the home seeks to enable young people in recognising and accepting responsibility of their inappropriate behaviours. It then encourages the development of more socially acceptable sustainable behaviours to improve young people's quality of life towards independence.

The organisation employs a range of professional specialist staff in meeting young people's assessed needs and has well-established links with external supporting agencies.

Young people have their own bedroom and designated bathroom facilities. Communal space comprises of two lounges, a dining area and a spacious kitchen.

The garden is mainly laid to lawn with seating areas.

Summary

This was an unannounced full key inspection.

Young people are provided with wholesome and nutritious food. Attention is paid to specific diets and allergies. The menus are varied and reflect different cultures and needs.

Staff portray excellent awareness of the young people's complex health needs and maintain detailed records relating to interventions and response. Guidance, advice and support in respect of health and personal care issues are provided appropriate to young people's age and cultural needs.

Robust recruitment procedures ensure young people are appropriately safeguarded. Young people's privacy and confidentiality is respected as is consistent with good parenting and their welfare is effectively promoted. Young people benefit from being cared for by staff who possess sound knowledge and understanding of their responsibilities regarding safeguarding. Staff provide good support and direction for young people to develop socially acceptable behaviour.

Education is actively promoted as valuable in itself and as part of preparation for adulthood. Each young person has access to educational facilities and work experience opportunities in line with their age, aptitude, needs, interests and potential.

Comprehensive care plans linked to the Every Child Matters outcome headings are in place which contain the views of young people and are subject to regular review. Young people are able to converse freely with staff and express their views and opinions openly.

There are clear lines of management accountability with staff being well supported by shift leaders. The staff team is very competent having a wide range of experience among its members.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

There were not any actions or recommendations raised from the previous inspection.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Young people are provided with wholesome and nutritious food. Attention is paid to specific diets and allergies. The menus are varied and reflect different cultures and needs. Young people have opportunity to participate in menu planning, shop and where appropriate assist in meal preparation. Healthy eating and food preparation forms part of a holistic approach to care and is linked with the organisation's education unit.

The home provides care and support for young people who have complex emotional, behavioural and educational difficulties. Young people's emotional and health needs are identified as part of a comprehensive assessment process. Specific agreed intervention programmes are put in place by the organisation's specialist therapeutic staff and form part of the looked after plan. Care staff are fully supported and enabled to continue the work in daily practice. Where appropriate, links are forged with Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services.

Staff portray excellent awareness of the young people's complex health needs and maintain detailed records relating to interventions and response. Young people are actively encouraged to and are involved in monthly reviews of their health needs. Comments received from the young people include, 'They are helping me to sort my head out' and 'I don't lose it like I did'.

Staff are proactive in providing young people with guidance, advice and support on health and personal care issues appropriate to their age and cultural needs.

Young people are actively discouraged from unhealthy activities and given opportunities to discuss issues openly and honestly with staff and peers.

Robust medication policies and procedures are in place. All medication is suitably stored and records well maintained.

Parental consent for emergency medical treatment, first aid and administration of medication is in place. Regular medication monitoring reviews are completed. Staff receive training in the administration of medication and first aid.

Young people's social workers describe being impressed with the promotion of healthy foods and support provided in meeting their clients' physical and emotional health needs.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Young people's privacy is well respected. Bathroom and toilet facilities offer good levels of privacy. Each young person has their own bedroom which they can lock. Written and verbal information is managed and exchanged with attention to preserving confidentiality. Policy and guidance informs good practice.

Young people are enabled to make complaints in relation to the home. Information about how to do so is provided to them at the time of their admission and is available on request. Complaints are treated seriously and are investigated within clear timescales and the progress and outcome shared with young people. Adherence to the complaints procedure is monitored as part of regular quality assurance visits.

Young people benefit from being cared for by staff who possess sound knowledge and understanding of their responsibilities regarding safeguarding. Management and staff are fully conversant with the practice guidelines in relation to reporting and dealing with allegations. Safeguarding awareness is covered as part of staff induction and is included in the annual training programme.

Young people are protected by the home's robust anti-bullying policy and practices. The home's position in relation to bullying is clear and known by young people and staff. Good staff supervision and awareness of young people's activities and location help counter incidents and reduce the risk of bullying. Placement support plans incorporate any specific work to be undertaken in relation to bullying.

The safety and welfare of young people that are missing is promoted. Where there is an identified risk measures to reduce and counter this are agreed on and included in placement plans and support. Staff are aware of, and do not exceed, the measures they can take to prevent a young person leaving without permission. When incidents occur staff take action to promote the young person's safety and return to the home. Records and discussions show one incident has occurred since the last visit.

Young people are assisted to develop socially acceptable behaviour through encouragement of acceptable behaviour and constructive staff response to inappropriate behaviour. Care plans and risk assessments set out the support to be provided to young people in relation to promoting positive behaviour and encouraging acceptable behaviour. Behaviour is discussed on a regular basis in key working sessions. Staff set consistent and understandable boundaries for young people in relation to acceptable behaviour. Unacceptable behaviour is responded to by constructive, known and agreed disciplinary measures. With emphasis remaining on promoting acceptable behaviour, sanctions for unacceptable behaviour are also imposed and at times restraint is considered necessary to keep young people safe. Both elements of practice are based on written policy and guidance supported by good recording. Staff undergo training in relation to these areas of practice. Managerial monitoring and regular quality audits help to ensure standards and expectations are met. Since the last visit, there has been a relatively high number of recorded incidents requiring physical intervention. Young people's social workers describe being impressed with their client learning to respect boundaries and the good links with themselves and others. Also there are clear strategies for dealing with behaviour.

Young people live in a home that provides good physical safety and security. Damages are repaired as and when required. Maintenance and repairs have been ongoing. Environmental risk management strategies contribute to keeping young people safe around the home. Supervised and unsupervised activities take into account the safety of young people at all times and where substantial or unusual hazards are involved, a recorded risk management plan is made. Gas and electrical safety checks are carried out at recommended intervals. Fire safety systems are installed and maintained. The organisation has an external contract to provide

advice and guidance regarding fire safety and training. Food storage and preparation areas are clean.

The staff recruitment process is robust and helps to ensure only suitable people are employed to work in the home.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Young people receive individual support and are able to approach and discuss issues with their key workers on a one to one basis or any member of staff. Young people make use of their surroundings and the local community. Young people are treated as individuals and their choices are respected. Young people have access to pocket money and a clothing allowance. Young people are treated equally without favouritism or antipathy. Staff meetings are effective in keeping the team up to date with the young people's needs and to generate discussion and ideas about the support provided.

Education is actively promoted as valuable in itself and as part of preparation for adulthood. Each young person has access to educational facilities and work experience opportunities in line with their age, aptitude, needs, interests and potential. For young people who are not able to access mainstream schools the organisation provides an approved behavioural approach to education known as, 'Award Scheme for Development and Accreditation Network'. Designated facilities are provided and appropriately trained staff are employed to deliver the scheme. Young people are given the opportunity of gaining additional experience and confidence by attending extra curricular courses which include helping out on the organisation's 'animal small holding'. Staff routinely liaise with and attend events and meetings at schools to support young people's development and progress.

Young people are able to pursue their particular interests, develop confidence in their skills and are supported and encouraged by staff to engage in leisure activities. Opportunities to participate in a range of activities in and away from the home are available. Daily notes and team meetings indicate staff have worked hard to engage young people in constructive activities with some success.

Young people's social workers describe being impressed with their clients developing self-confidence and also being encouraged to engage in education leisure activities and part time employment.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Young people being admitted to the home have phased transitions which provide opportunities to meet with staff and young people already living there.

Comprehensive care plans linked to the Every Child Matters outcome headings are in place which contain the views of young people and are subject to regular review. Plans clearly identify objectives, action needed and those responsible for taking action. Regular summaries of young people's progress in relation to their plan are completed, with copies forwarded to placing social workers. Records and discussions show young people currently being cared for at the home are appropriately placed.

Statutory reviews are held at the required intervals with young people being able to attend and contribute to the process. Reviews are independently chaired with parents/carers, staff from the home, young people's social workers, and involved professionals invited to attend and contribute.

Contact arrangements for young people are clearly recorded within their case records. Staff provide appropriate support as necessary in enabling them to maintain contact with their families and friends. Young people's families and friends are made welcome at the home. There is a telephone available within the home for the use of young people who also have their own mobile phones. Young people's social workers describe having very good communication with staff at the home and being appropriately consulted and kept informed.

Young people are able to converse freely with staff at the home and express their views and opinions openly. Seeking the views of young people is integral to how the home operates and positive relationships between young people and staff help to facilitate this process.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is outstanding.

The organisation's philosophy is to provide a holistic approach and continuum of care. Part of this is preparing young people to leave care, provide suitable accommodation and staffing support. Links are established with leaving care teams enabling young people to discuss this aspect of their looked after pathway plans. Management actively negotiate with placing authorities on behalf of young people to secure continued funding, keeping them and parents informed of developments.

Placement plans cover the promotion of independent living skills. Weekly and monthly summaries indicate support and encouragement in this area is being provided, for example, self care, budgeting, domestic duties and relationships. Young people's social workers describe being impressed with their clients being supported to find employment, budget and save for specific items by using bank accounts.

The standard of the young person's clothing is very high enabling them to feel proud of their appearance among their peer group. The young person is fully involved in planning the spending of the budget allocated to their personal clothing and toiletries. They are enabled to exercise choice in the clothes and personal requisites that they buy through normal shopping arrangements. Records of personal allowances paid to the young person are maintained to a high standard, but avoid an institutional approach.

Young people enjoy homely accommodation, decorated, furnished and maintained to a good standard. Young people are given opportunities to have a say in the general décor, furnishings and upkeep of the home if they wish. Young people are able and encouraged to personalise their bedrooms. The organisation employs its own maintenance team to ensure any defects are rectified promptly.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The manager's position is currently pending. The acting manager overseeing the day to day running of the home is in the process of applying for registration.

Management and staff create an atmosphere and ethos where meeting individual needs is paramount. The promotion of equality and diversity in the home is good.

The aims and objectives of the home and how they are to be provided are clearly set out in the annually reviewed statement of purpose. Young people are provided with a copy in an easily understood format before they move into the home.

The management systems are effective, ensuring that the young people benefit from a well run and efficient home.

Young people further benefit from a home that is sufficiently staffed by trained and competent staff. All staff have either completed or due to complete the National Vocational Qualification Level 3 in Caring for children and young people. Management provide the opportunity and actively encourage staff to attend specific training to meet the needs of the young people accommodated. For example, anger management, preparing for independence and restorative justice. The organisation also employs specialised therapist professionals to work alongside care staff and young people.

The staff team has a balanced mix of male and female members. Staff duty rotas indicate there are sufficient staff on duty at all times. It is ensured specific time is allocated for quality time with young people, administration and handover. The organisation has its own bank staff to cover sickness and leave which causes minimum disruption for the young people.

Accountability in the home is clear with shift leaders having responsibilities in ensuring records are maintained and daily needs of the young people are met. Staff are well supported in carrying out their work and receive monthly one to one supervision.

Thorough monthly monitoring visits are carried out forming part of the quality assurance system of the home. It is centred on the experience of young people and whether the home is meeting their needs. Staff are fully involved in this process and confirm action is taken on any points raised.

Young people's individual case files are stored in a secure cabinet and are arranged in a manner that makes them readily useable by staff and accessible to young people.

Young people's social workers describe the organisation as doing a commendable job, having a high standard of communication, the ability to listen to other professionals and receptive to their clients needs.

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

There are no recommendations.