

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	26 July 2010
Inspector	Roy Bega
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	5 January 2010
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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 with recognising and accepting responsibility for 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 two lounges, a dining area and a spacious kitchen. The garden is mainly laid to lawn with seating areas.

Summary

This is a full unannounced inspection which looked at the key standards under all the outcome areas.

An application for registration by the acting manager is being processed at the time of this inspection.

No actions or recommendations are raised resulting from this inspection.

Young people's health care needs are comprehensively assessed, documented and met through the implementation of policies and procedures, staff training and robust monitoring.

Young people's privacy and dignity is well promoted and they are kept safe. Staff receive appropriate training and guidance and are subject to robust vetting procedures before they start working at the home.

Young people are enthusiastically supported in their education and leisure pursuits. Individual needs are assessed and well documented. Young people are encouraged to express their wishes through key working sessions and house meetings. Their independence is promoted through support with cleaning, washing, ironing and cooking.

The home is well managed; staff are supported through excellent induction, training, supervision and team meetings. Appropriate monitoring systems are in place to ensure young people receive consistently good support and care.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

No actions or recommendations were raised resulting from the previous inspection.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Records and discussions show the home ensures young people's individual dietary needs are met. Staff place much importance on providing young people with a choice of nutritious meals to lead healthy lifestyles. Young people confirm they are actively involved in planning, preparing and shopping for food. Staff receive training in food hygiene and nutrition. Comments from young people include, 'I have a choice in the menu', 'I sometimes help shop for food with staff' and 'Can have snacks and drinks whenever'.

Detailed health records are in place. Discussions show staff have excellent knowledge in respect of young people's health needs. Young people benefit from interventions and support provided by the organisation's specialist therapeutic staff. Care staff are well supported in continuing the therapeutic work on a daily basis.

Records confirm young people's mental and emotional well-being is constantly under review. Young people are registered with local medical practitioners and effective systems ensure they receive good health care. Young people confirm they benefit from interventions and support provided by external and the organisation's specialist therapeutic staff.

Young people are actively encouraged in taking an interest in their personal health and healthy ways of living. The home provides appropriate age related information regarding health, safety and social issues. Discussions and documented evidence shows young people are fully consulted regarding health matters. Comments received include, 'I can talk with my key worker about my health problems' and 'I get taken to appointments'.

The home has an effective medication policy, procedure and practice guidance which includes the use of non-prescribed medication. Staff receive training in the administration of medication. Well maintained records are kept in respect of all medication, treatment and first aid given to young people. Prior to admission written permission is obtained from the person with parental responsibility for each young person for the administration of first aid and appropriate non-prescribed medication.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Young people's privacy is respected and any information about them is handled with due regard to confidentiality. The acting manager and staff are very clear about the importance of respecting young people's space and the circumstances when the safety of the young person may override that guiding principle. Clear policies and procedures underpin these arrangements and give appropriate guidance to staff. Young people have access to a private telephone or can use the cordless office telephone in private to speak with social workers. Staff are clear that they keep any information about young people in the home confidential, whilst being aware that this may need to be shared within the staff group or with other professionals.

The complaints procedure, which also gives numbers of external contacts as well as the internal procedure, is on display in the home and is in the young person's guide providing clear

information about how to raise any concerns. Staff are clearly aware of the importance of listening to young people's concerns and how to record them so they can be dealt with effectively. Weekly house meetings also give young people the opportunity to raise any issues with the manager. Records and discussions show however there have not been any complaints raised since the previous inspection.

Young people's welfare is of paramount importance which is promoted through staff training, clear information on how to deal with allegations of abuse or bullying and a non-punitive ethos. The safeguarding procedures of the relevant local authority are readily available and these are underpinned by the home's own clear guidance. All staff receive induction training and regular refresher courses on all aspects of safeguarding. Young people confirm that bullying is not a problem and staff deal effectively with any incident that takes place.

The home has excellent policies and procedures in place regarding young people becoming absent without authority. Staff spoken with are clearly aware of what action to take for individuals if required which affords young people good protection. Records and discussions show that there have not been any incidents subsequent to the previous inspection.

Young people are assisted to develop socially acceptable behaviour. The ethos of the home in relation to managing behaviour is very impressive. Staff are given clear direction from the acting manager that a system of positive rewards is more effective than a punitive approach and the number and type of sanctions which are recorded give testament to the effectiveness of this ethos. Staff are trained in appropriate methods of managing challenging behaviour who confirm that this is about de-escalating situations and preventing the use of physical intervention. Staff manage difficult situations by talking to the young people and using principles of restorative practice. This was observed during the visit. There is very clear written guidance to staff on when the police should be called to the home. Young people are praised for positive behaviour and may receive spontaneous treats such as one to one time with staff, small financial rewards or extra activities.

Young people live in a home which provides safety and security. Young people said that staff tell them about fire safety and give advice on other safety issues. A member of staff has designated responsibility for overseeing all health and safety arrangements which are also monitored regularly by the acting manager. All the maintenance records indicate that appropriate checks are undertaken at the required frequency.

Young people are appropriately safeguarded by the organisation's robust and stringent recruitment procedures. Good quality internal monitoring and audits of recruitment files are undertaken to ensure that all appropriate checks within Schedule 2 children's homes national minimum standards and regulations are sought prior to staff commencing employment.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Young people's individual needs are explicitly identified and comprehensively met by their placement plan. Discussions and records show staff ensure one to one sessions with young people are well planned. Young people commented they like having the one to one sessions and weekly house meetings as they help get things sorted. There are well established and very effective links and partnerships with internal and external therapeutic practitioners.

The organisation have a registered school that young people attend where tuition is on a one to one basis or small groups. Young people's education is very well promoted with excellent communication and cooperation between school and care staff. Young people are assessed on their ability and educational needs to ensure a package is implemented which takes into account each individual's ability. Comments from young people include, 'I enjoy doing music' and 'I'm doing a lot better than before'.

Staff enthusiastically encourage and support the young people to become involved in community, sport and leisure activities. Staff get to know about each young person's interests and help them find clubs and organisations that meet their individual needs and wishes. The home also provides group activities and holidays which discussion shows are enjoyed by the young people. Comments include, 'I get the chance to do a lot of things I've never done before' and 'I enjoy going away to do things'.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Young people have their needs assessed effectively and comprehensively. Each young person has an extremely detailed and comprehensive care plan in place. These plans are reviewed regularly and are of a high standard. All looked after children's documentation is in place. Young people are encouraged to take part in their reviews and do so pro-actively. Monthly reports by key workers recognise how young people have progressed or in what areas they may need more support. Targets for achievements are identified in care plans. Guidelines and goals for each young person, written under the every child matter outcomes are regularly reviewed and include areas such as addressing negative behaviour, contact with family and friends and maintaining good relationships with staff. All contact details are clearly recorded with restrictions also noted. Staff are fully supportive of facilitating contact arrangements with, if necessary supervisory status.

There is a clear written procedure in place which sets out a structure for introductions to the home for new admission. The process is clearly explained in the Statement of Purpose. Visits take place prior to young people moving in.

Records seen and discussions show young people have numerous opportunities to make decisions about the running of the home and how they are being cared for. It is clear that young people's views and opinions are valued. Key worker sessions are held weekly and provide the opportunity for young people to express their views and wishes. The acting manager is highly visible and approachable. The young people are confident in expressing their views which is encouraged by the staff team. Advocates are pro-actively sought for young people if appropriate. Comments received include, 'I'm asked what I think', 'I have a say about what goes on in the home', 'I get a lot of time to speak with my key worker' and 'Can speak with any staff'.

Discussions and records show it is clear that young people are encouraged to make decisions of their own, assisted by risk assessments and support from staff. Observations and discussions show relationships between staff and young people are warm and respectful. Comments from young people show they are happy at the home and complimentary about the staff. Discussions and observations show staff portray high professional practices and competencies in carrying out their roles and responsibilities.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Leaving care pathway planning is not appropriate for current young people. However, appropriate policies and procedures are in place to enable such planning to be undertaken. Discussions and records show young people are supported to learn life skills, such as budgeting, menu planning, cooking, domestic duties, and management of their personal allowances.

Observation and discussion show the standard of the young people's clothing is very high enabling them to feel proud of their appearance among their friends and peer group. Young people informed the inspector they are 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 through normal shopping arrangements. Records of personal allowances paid to the young people are maintained to a high standard but avoid an institutional approach.

The home is decorated and furnished to a standard which creates a pleasant domestic environment. Discussions show young people are actively involved in the choice of décor and show pride in their bedrooms by personalising them with possessions and posters.

There is a good maintenance and repair programme for the building. The organisation employs their own maintenance staff to ensure faults are rectified as soon as possible.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The service provided by the home is clearly and accurately described in the Statement of Purpose and young people's guide. Discussions show young people are well informed about what to expect from the staff team and what is expected from them. The guide provides a good description of the home's commitment to promoting young people's rights which is carried out in practice.

Young people benefit from living in a home that is effectively managed. Discussion and records show the staff team are organised and supported in a way that ensures the needs of young people are comprehensively met. Staff are very committed to the care of young people and the work of the home. Comments from young people include, 'Staff seem to know their job' and 'They help me do things'.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. Young people benefit from living in a home where the acting manager and staff team are committed to shaping the service in meeting individual need. The quality and detail of each young person's plan of care supports this commitment. Staff are led by a conscientious acting manager who promotes young people's diverse needs as being important. As a consequence of this, discussions show staff have an excellent knowledge and awareness of how to work with each individual.

Records and discussions show the number of staff on duty is always appropriate in meeting young people's needs and welfare. There is an induction, training and support programme that provides staff with the skills and knowledge to comprehensively help young people through their placement. The staff team are either qualified to National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People or are working towards this. The inspector had

the opportunity to speak with staff who commented they are currently being well supported in studying for NVQ level 4. Discussions and information shows the manager evaluates performance through a system of appraisal so staff know how well they are working with young people. Young people's case files seen are kept securely and contain an appropriate range of information about their history and progress which matches the necessary requirements set out in legislation. Comments received from young people include, 'There are always enough staff on duty to do things with' and 'I always know who is coming on duty by looking at the rosta and being told'.

The organisation has well established systems in place to monitor the operation of the home. These systems include regular scrutiny visits from representatives of the organisation through to the acting manager's own monitoring activities. Information is clearly available to inform the home about how well young people's needs are being met.

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.