

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Monica Farrimond
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	17 June 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 service is a private children's home registered to care for four young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The service was registered in January 2008.

The home provides a variety of recreational spaces for the young people within the property and grounds, and a registered in-house school facility is also included on site. The home is situated on the outskirts of a residential and retail town development.

There were three young people resident at the time of the visit, who all contributed towards the inspection.

Summary

At this unannounced full inspection, all key standards were inspected. In addition, the actions and recommendations made at the previous inspection were reviewed. Young people's welfare is enhanced by positive relationships that exist between experienced staff and young people and between young people and their peers. Young people are encouraged to eat healthily, they are kept safe and they are provided with support from professional services outside the home. The home's management and staff are working effectively and have a strong commitment and focus on improvement. Documentation in relation to the home's complaint procedure and placement plans have been highlighted as needing improvement, and not all staff have received refresher training in safeguarding. The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory throughout the standards inspected.

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

A significant number of actions and recommendations were made following the last inspection in June 2009. These have mainly been addressed; these actions were in relation to management of the home, safe recruitment procedures, risk assessments in relation to a safe environment and correct use of statutory documentation. A new Manager was employed following the last inspection and he has been monitoring and working at the home since July 2009, however the home is once again without a registered manager in place. There are significant improvements to the standard of care offered to the young people.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Young people's dietary needs are catered for in a way that promotes good health. Young people are actively involved in choosing food for the weekly menu. Fresh produce is used in the preparation of meals and fresh fruit and drinks are always available. Activities encouraged by the staff for young people, emphasise to them positively about the importance of eating well and taking regular exercise. All staff are trained in food hygiene. Effective monitoring and detailed records, ensures young people receive adequate quantities of wholesome and nutritious food, which is properly prepared and served in an attractive manner. Young people's health needs are identified through regular assessments carried out by staff. Health plans are detailed and provide staff with a clear understanding of the needs and support young people require;

however health plans are out of date which does not promote fulfilment, or oversight of health needs. Professional services assist young people to understand and to deal with specific health issues. Young people attend regular appointments with local health services.

Staff are trained in the administration of medication, ensuring young people's health needs are safeguarded. The medication is stored securely, preventing young people from unnecessary access. Clear records ensure all medication is accountable, administered appropriately and disposed of safely. All staff are trained in first aid and can respond to minor injuries, prior to seeking professional medical advice.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

There are sound procedures and good care practices, which keep young people safe in the home.

Staff demonstrate a strong commitment to preserving the dignity and privacy of young people and they have a good understanding of safeguarding issues, which ensures that young people are protected from abuse. However some staff have not completed refresher training in safeguarding to ensure that the welfare of the young people is protected and promoted.

The service has a well developed complaints procedure and all complaints are responded to promptly. However, recordings of complaints by the young people are not clear and do not always record the outcome following a complaint being made; this does not make it clear that a complaint has been dealt with appropriately. Young people know the complaints procedure and they are confident that any complaint will be taken seriously. There are complaints raised by the young people in their meetings and these are followed up appropriately by the manager and staff. This ensures that young people feel that their concerns and opinions are valued.

Staff are quick to intervene, should a bullying situation arise and any issues relating to bullying are handled well, ensuring young people feel safe. Good staffing levels ensure that young people are well supervised. Individual risk assessments and placement plans, allows staff to manage any concerns that might arise between young people. Staff demonstrate a sound knowledge of young people's personalities, which enables them to diffuse negative behaviour at an early stage. There is a clear protocol for staff to follow, in the event of an unauthorised absence, which ensures that young people are properly protected. Currently, there are no issues of young people being absent from the home without authority.

Relationships between young people and staff are good. Staff have a positive view of the young people they work with. They promote and reward positive behaviour and support young people well, so that they are protected as much as possible from incidents developing into episodes of challenging behaviour. All staff are trained to diffuse difficult situations. Individual risk management and placement plans, clearly show how staff will work to promote behaviour that is positive and to lessen the risk of behaviour becoming challenging. Restraints are only ever used as a last resort and in very clearly defined situations. The infrequency of such incidents indicates that the strategies that staff use work well and that young people benefit from the way in which they are cared for.

Health and safety matters are managed well, so that young people benefit from being cared for in an environment that is safe. Risk assessments on the environment and on activities, as

well as on individual young people, are regularly reviewed so that information is kept up to date and accurate.

The home's procedures for the recruitment and selection of staff are robust. All staff are thoroughly vetted before they are appointed, to ensure that they are safe to work with vulnerable children and young people.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

The comprehensive knowledge that staff gain about a young person prior to placement in the home, means that they are able to provide young people with good levels of individual support. Full information about all young people is obtained prior to placement and is developed into care and support plans. Staff work very closely with parents and with other professionals, so that care is consistent.

Staff have a positive attitude towards the value of education and make sure that young people's educational needs are promoted when they use this service. The home is registered as a school, and there is good communication and exchange of information and support from staff at the home with educational facilities. Care staff attend education together with the young people, ensuring consistency of care. Staff also provide young people with opportunities to extend their learning, through activities during their stay at the home.

Young people benefit from being involved in a number of activities and holidays, thus promoting the young people's confidence and experiences. The needs and wishes of each young person are taken into account when activities are planned, thus promoting equality and diversity.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Assessments and risk assessments are undertaken on young people before they stay at the home. From this information, staff in consultation with parents and placing social workers, develop detailed care and support plans. All plans are thorough, but not regularly reviewed; thus it is not possible to accurately monitor the progress of a young person's development, and therefore demonstrate that needs are being met.

The admissions process is very thorough, so that placements can be planned, with due regard to the needs of all young people currently accommodated. This ensures that the home is the appropriate placement for any individual young person and that the home itself runs smoothly. Staff also work closely with parents and agencies who are concerned with the care of a young person, to support young people when they move on from a placement at the home.

Staff know the children and young people very well and they are able to communicate effectively with them. This enables them to make sure that young people can make their views known in key work sessions and in the interactions of daily life and supports young people to make choices about all aspects of their care. Staff have regular communication with parents and families and welcome them into the home, so that parents feel they are fully involved. Contact with family or significant people in the young people's lives is promoted.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is outstanding.

Young people are provided with opportunities to develop their independent living skills to enable them to be as independent as possible, and progress in these skills is documented in independence progress plans. Consequently, it is possible to assess the young people's progress in developing independent living skills, and the home does this well. Young people are encouraged to take a pride in their achievements and this is rewarded by staff and the manager, both in education and everyday home life. The home provides a homely environment for young people, within the limitations of an large building. Furnishings and décor are of a good standard and young people are able to personalise their own rooms and be involved in the general decoration of the home.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The service has a clear statement of purpose, that sets out how young people will be cared for when they stay at the home. The young person's guide to the service is produced in a child-friendly format, giving young people a clear and detailed picture of how the home works and who will be looking after them during their stay.

The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. The manager of the home is experienced and appropriately qualified, but an application to register the manager has not yet been received by Ofsted. Staff are provided with a good range of training, including mandatory courses in safeguarding, first aid and the administration of medication. All staff appointed to work at the home are required to have, or to work towards a qualification in caring for children and young people.

Staffing levels are good, which ensures that young people are properly supervised and they are able to take part in activities. Rotas allow staff sufficient time to undertake individual work with young people, to attend regular team meetings and to complete necessary paperwork. Staff, including education staff, demonstrate a clear determination to promote inclusion for young people and to encourage them to develop their skills. Staffing levels support this.

The manager and staff demonstrate a strong commitment to reviewing and improving the service that is offered to young people and their families. Team meetings are used to look at practice issues and the needs of the young people. There is discussion with parents and professionals from other agencies about the care that young people are given and there are robust systems in place, which enables managers within the home and the wider organisation to monitor the quality of care that is given to young people. However, management responsibilities in relation to oversight of placement plans, including the monitoring of health plans, is not robust. Information that is held on young people is thorough, but is not regularly updated so that their needs can be fully met. All information that is sensitive is securely stored, so that confidentiality can be maintained. Information is easily accessible to all staff, which ensures that care is consistent and in line with the young person's care plan.

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
16	maintain a record of all complaints made by children and young people in the home and actions taken as a result (Regulation 24 (5))	3 February 2010
2	ensure that there is an up to date placement plan for each child or young person accommodated at the home setting out how he or she will be cared for, their welfare safeguarded and promoted in the home, arrangements for their health care and education and any arrangements made for contact with parents relatives and friends. (Regulation 12 (1))	3 February 2010
3	undertake regular reviews of each child's placement plan, including the arrangements made for his health care and education (Regulation 12 (1) (b))	3 February 2010
35	ensure that all children's files contain the information as identified in Schedule 3 of the Children's Homes Regulations 2001 (Regulation 28 (1) (a)(b)).	3 February 2010
34	provide a Registered Manager for the home. (Regulation 7).	3 February 2010

Recommendations

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

- ensure the provision of training for all staff, including ancillary staff, agency staff and volunteers, in the prevention of abuse, recognition of abuse, dealing with disclosures or suspicion of abuse, and the home's child protection procedures (NMS 17.8).