

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	21 May 2010
Inspector	Monica Farrimond
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	24 March 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

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. 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. Staff are well supported by the Registered Manager, who is effective, enthusiastic, and has a strong commitment and focus on improvement. The promotion of equality and diversity is good throughout the standards inspected. No actions and no recommendations are made following this inspection, which reflects the high standard of care offered by this home.

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 no actions or recommendations made following the last inspection.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

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. All staff are trained in food hygiene; this ensures that staff's awareness of the importance of hygiene is raised. 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. Theme nights are being held throughout the year; young people's choices of food are promoted and diversity is encouraged through studying different cultures and sampling different cultural foods. Staff encourage activities for young people which positively promote the importance of taking regular exercise.

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 support young people require. Young people are involved in the development and review of their plans. This ensures that young people have a clear understanding of the aims of the plan, and hopefully work together with staff to achieve optimum health. Professional services assist young people to understand and to deal with specific health issues. Young people attend regular appointments

with local health services. Young people's health and welfare is closely monitored by staff ensuring their good health is promoted. Staff are trained in the administration of medication, and drug awareness, ensuring young people's health needs are safeguarded and promoted. All 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. Accident records are kept within individual young people's files.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

There are sound procedures and good care practices that 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 very good understanding of safeguarding issues, which ensures that young people are protected from abuse. Training for staff is kept up to date, and detailed policies and procedures guide them in their work. Staff are sensitive to gender issues. This helps to ensure that equality and diversity is considered when caring for the young people accommodated.

The service has a well developed complaints procedure and all complaints are responded to promptly. Young people know the complaints procedure and they are confident that any complaint will be taken seriously. The manager has introduced a quality assurance document for young people, parents and social workers; this is to gain the views of all involved with the young person's placement, and identify complaints or concerns. This ensures that young people feel that their views and opinions are valued.

Staff are quick to intervene should a bullying situation arise, and 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 allow staff to manage any concerns that might arise between young people. There is a clear protocol for staff to follow in the event of an unauthorised absence, which ensures that young people are properly protected. There are very few incidents of unauthorised absence.

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, which minimises the likelihood of incidents developing into episodes of challenging behaviour. All staff are properly trained to diffuse difficult situations. Young people say that the staff are fair in the use of sanctions. Individual risk management and behaviour support 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. All staff have attended training on health and safety, thus promoting the highest possible awareness of hazards to both staff and young people. 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 behavioural support plans. These are kept up to date and are regularly reviewed; this enables staff to monitor the young people's progress towards identified goals of the placement. Each young person has a key worker who monitors the young person's progress and provides individualised support on a weekly basis; this ensures that issues affecting the young people can be safely addressed and young people are closely monitored and their wishes and feelings taken into account on a regular basis. Staff work very closely with parents and with other professionals, so that care is consistent.

The home is also registered as a school. 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. There is outstanding exchange of information and support from staff at the home with the educational staff. Appropriate work placements are sought and promoted by staff at the home and the school, ensuring that the purpose of education and work is highlighted to the young people. This further increases their confidence and broadens their experience. Care staff attend education reviews and contribute valuable information about the young person's attitudes, work patterns and any current issues that may be affecting the young person. 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. They are encouraged and enabled both financially and with the practical support of staff to take up healthy activities which include ice-skating, the gym and swimming, thus enhancing 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 outstanding.

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. The plans are thorough and comprehensive; the plans are read and agreed by social workers and young people; parents also sign to say they agree with the plans when appropriate. This ensures that everyone who is significant in the young person's life is fully aware of the goals of the placement and the assessed needs of the young person. All plans are regularly reviewed by the home and also through the formal local authority reviewing process.

The admissions process is thorough, so that placements can be carefully 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 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. The young people have regular young people's meetings; this ensures that young people have several forums to exchange their views on the care provided at the home. Staff have regular communication with parents, social workers and families and welcome their views by way of quality assurance questionnaires. This ensures that significant people in a young person's life can be involved in finding the best possible care and outcome for a young person accommodated at the home. Contact with family or significant people in the young people's lives is promoted.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

The manager and members of staff encourage and support young people to take responsibility for their actions and to develop adult responsibilities. Basic skills in relation to independence are facilitated, both in the home, and during the young people's time at the school. Independent living plans are well used at the home, and young people's progress towards independent living is closely monitored; young people are encouraged to achieve independence tasks and their efforts are rewarded both in the school environment and within the home. Young people experience an environment that is well designed and pleasant. It is decorated and furnished to a high standard. The large garden area is well maintained and used by the young people to play football, and other outdoor games.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

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 good. The manager of the home is experienced and appropriately qualified. The service is effectively managed and well run. Staff are provided with a good range of training, including mandatory courses in safeguarding, first aid and the administration of medication. This ensures that staff are able to take advantage of this knowledge to further promote the welfare of the young people. 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 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 also 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 enable managers within the home and the wider organisation to monitor the quality of care that is given to young people.

Information that is held on young people is thorough, so that their needs can be met. All information that is sensitive is securely stored, so that confidentiality is maintained. Information is easily accessible to all staff, which helps to ensure 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 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.