

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC366343
Inspection date	14 December 2009
Inspector	Sue Winson
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	13 August 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 home is a large detached property situated in a residential area. The home has five bedrooms and sufficient communal space for the number of young people. The home is situated close to public transport, local schools and amenities.

Summary

This unannounced random inspection took place over one day. Three outcome areas were considered, Being healthy, staying safe and organisation. Additional standards related to recommendations made at the last inspection were also included.

This is a good service with some outstanding aspects. The staff know the young people well, respect their views and work with them to achieve positive outcomes. Healthy living is promoted and young people benefit from involvement in menu planning and making meals. The home can demonstrate that their physical and emotional health needs are being met. Young people are safeguarded and protected by the practices in the home and staff work with them to minimise risks. There is an appropriate balance between allowing older young people some independence and safety issues. The manager and staff responded to bullying taking place in the house in a robust manner which benefits all the young people.

Young people receive consistent care from a committed staff group who are well managed and supported in their work by the manager and deputy, who demonstrate positive leadership. Effective systems are in place to monitor the functioning of the home.

No actions or recommendations have been made as a result of this inspection.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

The home has acted on all five recommendations made at the last inspection. The managers sign and date that they have verified the reasons, with referees, why employment with children or vulnerable adults ended, as part of the recruitment process. The staff have been active in requesting full written information to inform care planning for the young people, through a variety of means. The second staff sleep in room is no longer in a room used by the young people. Staff supervision is taking place and all staff have had appraisals which identify their training and development needs. Systems for the supervision of bank staff, employed by the company, are also in place. Improved file auditing has ensured that young people's files contain full and accurate information which is dated and signed.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Young people enjoy a healthy and nutritious diet and are involved in shopping and preparing meals and make their own snacks and drinks. Staff take opportunities as they arise to discuss balanced diets and kitchen hygiene and encourage them to choose healthy options. Individual diets are continuously monitored. There is sufficient dining space and meals are social occasions.

Young people's placement plans include their health needs and how they will be met. Staff have been persistent in requesting written health information from placing authorities with varying degrees of success. There is a focus on emotional health in addition to physical health and the staff team work with other professionals for the benefit of the young people. Where there are identified needs for specialist health services the home ensures these are available. Staff promote healthy living through encouraging and informing young people of the benefits of exercise and regular health check ups. When young people are resistant to visiting the dentist or the optician staff make appointments and offer incentives for attendance.

Policies and practices for the administration of medication safeguard the young people. Medicines are safely stored, full records are maintained and stock checks take place. Appropriate permissions for medical treatment and non-prescription medicines are in place. Staff have received training on medication from a local nurse.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Young people's privacy is respected and information is confidentially handled. Staff knock on bedroom doors and wait for a response before entering. The policy on searching rooms is followed in practice and young people are invited to sign and comment on the documentation. They are informed of the reason for the search. Records demonstrate that this has only been done for health and safety reasons. Staff sign confidentiality agreements and all personal files and records are securely stored. Young people can make telephone calls or see visitors in private.

The welfare of the young people is promoted. The home's policies and practices in respect of complaints, safeguarding, bullying and missing from home serve to protect them. Young people know of their right to complain and how to do so. There have been no complaints since the last inspection. Staff receive training on safeguarding and related issues and are committed to helping young people to stay safe when out in the community. Individual work focuses on safety issues and they remind young people when they are leaving the home. Staff know the policies and procedures and carry out safe caring strategies.

Young people are protected by bullying. There have been some recent incidents which were handled in an appropriate manner, and work was carried out with all the young people. As a result the anti-bullying policy has been revised and provides through guidance to staff. Anti-bullying strategies have been introduced and are used routinely to inform the young people of their rights, empower them to tell staff if they are being bullied and provide better monitoring following any incidents. Young people know that bullying is unacceptable and that they have a right to be protected.

Young people who are missing from home are protected in accordance with written guidance and are responded to positively on return. Risk assessments are in place which inform staff on when to report a young person missing. They are usually seen by the police on return and individual work is carried out by staff on safety issues. The staff have been successful in reducing the number of occasions of young people missing from home. Where there are serious concerns multi-agency meetings take place to discuss how young people can be protected.

Positive behaviour management is practiced and young people are encouraged and supported to take responsibility for their actions. Staff are fully trained and are encouraged to reflect on their practice. Individual behaviour plans and reward charts are monitored and reviews and

staff communicate well to provide a consistent approach. The reward system is based on achieving a small number of goals which are agreed with each young person. These are available for young people in their personal files so they can check where they are up to. Rules are reasonable and known to the young people. Few sanctions are used and records demonstrate that they are relevant to the behaviour and short lived. There have been no incidents of physical intervention.

A range of generic and individual risk assessments are in place which clearly outline the risks and include action planning to reduce or minimise risks. All gas and electrical checks are in place and fire drills take place at the required frequency. All the young people have had the opportunity to practice evacuating the building. The home has appropriate and up to date insurance.

The system for selection and vetting of staff largely serves to protect the young people. All the required checks are undertaken prior to staff starting employment, including references and Criminal Record Bureau checks. Applicants attend for interview and have an induction period where they are extraneous to the shift complement, so that they can get to know the young people.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is not judged.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is not judged.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is not judged.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. Young people are encouraged to be involved in care planning, sign records and make choices about their future and their care. Alternative methods of communication are used to help young people talk about how they feel. They have memory boxes for mementos, life story books and diaries which they take with them when they leave. Policies are in place to inform staff practice and they have been provided with training. The managers and staff work to enable young people to reach their potential and ensure that they are provided with a range of opportunities to do so.

Young people receive holistic care from staff who are competent and experienced and who are focussed on achieving positive outcomes. Staff retention is good and the home is fully staffed. Bank staff, employed by the company and known to the young people, are used to cover sickness and leave. Consistency of care is maintained. Over 80% of staff have gained National Vocational Qualification (NVQ's) in the care of children and young people. Staff meetings take place regularly and are open meetings where staff can express their views and opinions. Staff are very much involved in the home's improvement agenda. Training and development is encouraged and staff value the range and quality of the training. They are well supervised and have annual appraisals. Staff were positive about the manager and deputy manager's availability, support and leadership.

The home is effectively and efficiently managed. Visits under Regulation 33 take place monthly and comprehensive reports inform the manager's monitoring systems. She and the deputy manager monitor the home through supervision, file audits, reading of the records and direct observation. The home has a development plan which has identified areas for future development or improvement and they can demonstrate that they are working on this.

Young people's needs, development and progress are recorded to reflect their individuality. Their files are well ordered information can be easily found. Information for young people to take with them when they leave is written in clear, sensitive and appropriate language and provides a record of their time at the home which includes personal information for them in later life.

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

There are no recommendations.