

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	17 November 2009
Inspector	Trevor Hall
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	20 May 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 children's home that is part of a large organisation operated by a local authority. The home provides care for up to two young people aged between 10 to under 18 years on admission who have significant, social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The home is a three bedroom semi-detached house, situated on a housing estate and the young people are able to access local leisure activities in the immediate neighbourhood. The home has transport to take the young people to those facilities that are travelling distance away. The home provides each of the young people with an individual bedroom. To the rear of the building is an enclosed garden, which provides space for a range of activities. To the front of the building is a small garden with no off road parking facilities.

Summary

This was an unannounced interim inspection that concentrated on checking all key national minimum standards (NMS) under the 'Every Child Matters' area of staying safe; it also followed up on the actions and recommendations raised on the home's previous key inspection which was conducted on the 20 May 2009. Two young people are currently living in the home.

This inspection confirmed that this home is well managed and young people benefit from living in an environment that is centred on meeting their individual needs. Young people living here receive good individual support and their education and health is encouraged and appropriately promoted. The home has well established regimes in place for the effective assessment of risk and staff take all reasonable precautions to ensure that young people, staff and visitors are safe at all times. The overall judgement for the home on this inspection is good.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Young peoples privacy has been improved; as room searches by staff are now only conducted in line with the home's stated policies, and the procedures for such searches are now followed in all cases. The recording of room searches has improved, these give details of why staff felt a search was required, whether the young person was informed or present at the search, and clearly states who has authorised the search.

The recording of sanctions has improved as staff are now completing these in line with the home's procedures; all the areas indicated on the recording format, including the reason the sanction has been applied ,and it's effectiveness, are now recorded.

The home's fire safety has been improved as the home's fire risk assessment has been updated and now reflects a true assessment of the current existing risks.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people at this home are receiving a good service that is clearly focused on their emotional well-being and health needs. Staff are actively involved in engaging with young people about a range of health related issues that result in consistent improvements to health and fitness.

Young people's good health and well-being is being successfully promoted because staff are knowledgeable and aware of each individual young person's needs. They also have agreed plans designed to encourage healthy habits and to improve young people's self-image.

Staff provide healthy, nutritious meals that meet young people's daily dietary needs. The recording, however, of both menu planning and of food actually consumed continues to lack necessary detail to enable any meaningful analysis to be made. It is acknowledged that one current resident takes most of his meals away from the home and as such accurately recording his food intake is problematic, however, planning records continue to lack detail and generic terms such as 'munchies' and 'sandwiches' continue to appear. Fruit is always available and young people are, within reason, able to make themselves hot drinks and snacks between meals.

Young people's health and well-being are well promoted by the staff within the home. The local authority that owns this home has developed clear guidance regarding promoting and safeguarding young people's health. These are known and followed by staff working in the home.

Staff take a pro-active approach to meeting young people's physical and emotional health needs. The health and care needs of young people are identified and updated regularly. The home seeks all available information regarding young people's health needs at the time of placement and registers young people with appropriate health professionals at the earliest opportunity. There are completed consent forms, signed by those with parental control for each young person, which enable staff to confidently provide medical services and first aid treatment consistent with each young person's care plan.

Young people are able to access appropriate services because the home is quick to respond to changing needs and circumstances. Young people's health needs are being well promoted because the home's records highlight the range of medical services that have been accessed. The home's manager acts as a strong advocate for the needs of young people in relation to accessing external advice and services. Young people are able to access therapeutic support to help them learn about and deal with specific emotional issues that are affecting their lives.

Young people's health and safety is also promoted through this home's policies and procedures for the safe storage and administration of medication, particularly the storage of controlled medication. Administration records demonstrate that staff are following pharmacy instructions in relation to the health needs of individual young people. Staff are able to respond to accidents and unforeseen medical needs because they have access to first aid boxes and have been trained in basic first aid skills. Young people's health and safety is further promoted by managers who monitor all accidents and injuries that occur in the home.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The welfare and safety of young people is promoted by the local authority's policies and procedures and the home's established systems for keeping young people safe. The stability of the home and stable core staff team enhance the way in which young people can be protected. Staff receive ongoing training in child protection and behaviour management that helps underpin safe day-to-day practice.

Young people's privacy and confidentiality is promoted by sound guidance and good staff practice. Staff ensure that they do not enter young peoples' rooms without knocking. Young people's administrative records are maintained securely and contents are not discussed inappropriately. Staff are aware of the young people's right to privacy and how this may be safely promoted. Policies and procedures on staff searching young people's bedrooms make the criteria for such searches clear and the home's records now show that these procedures have been followed whenever such a search has taken place

Young people are actively encouraged to improve their awareness and understanding about how to keep themselves safe and to develop strategies for improving behaviour and coping with difficult situations. As a result physical intervention is infrequently used. Staff are well equipped to support young people through difficult emotional times because they receive comprehensive mandatory training that includes de-escalation and physical intervention training.

The young people living at this home are aware of the reason they are being looked after and how staff will promote their safety and protection within the home and in public places. Staff are fully aware of the types of behaviour which young people may display and accordingly develop risk assessments that minimise the potential for young people to subject themselves or others to harm. Staff know how to respond to challenging behaviours and in circumstances where young people may abscond. Young people are encouraged to reflect on the consequences of their behaviour after such incidents to learn how to help themselves to be safe and behave responsibly.

There are clear policies, procedures and staff guidance on promoting safeguarding and privacy, managing challenging behaviour, preventing absence without permission and addressing concerns and incidents of bullying. These policies and an established programme of training underpins strong working practices that keep young people safe.

Young people are encouraged and supported by their carers to behave in ways that will help prepare them for rehabilitation home or eventual independence. Staff help young people identify and maintain safe behavioural boundaries that will help their personal development.

Staff have a strong understanding of the need to ensure safety whilst promoting and developing independence. Risk assessments are very comprehensive and regularly reviewed and audited by the home. All staff are appropriately trained in health and safety matters including first aid and fire awareness. Procedures of fire safety and the appropriate records of equipment tests and evacuations are well maintained.

The home has robust procedures in place for the monitoring of visitors to the home. All visitors to the home are monitored and are required to provide evidence of their identity and to sign a visitors' book.

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 not judged.

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

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

- ensure that the record of menus (as served) demonstrates provision of a suitable and varied diet. (This refers to ensuring that menu records are sufficiently detailed to enable a proper assessment of the menu's nutritional content to be undertaken and that these records of meals actually taken are recorded as well as those that are planned) (NMS 10.4)
- ensure that all external complaints about the home are properly recorded. (NMS 16.4)