

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC372117
Inspection date	16 July 2009
Inspector	Lynn O'Driscoll
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	12 November 2008
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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 is a privately run and owned children's home by a company with a number of other registered homes. The responsible individual is a qualified social worker with considerable relevant child care experience.

It is registered to accommodate up to two young people of either sex from 10 to 17 years old. Its overall aim is 'to meet the needs of young people, work together to effect changes which are positive, and enable the young people to realise their potential'.

It is a detached and spacious property standing in its own private grounds, and has no distinguishing features to suggest it is a children's home. On the ground floor there is a domestic kitchen and separate utility room, an education room, dining room, a communal lounge and toileting facilities. On the second, there is a choice of baths and showers and all the bedrooms are single which young people can personalise.

Summary

This judgement is reached following an unannounced interim inspection of the home. The main purpose was to assess compliance with the actions and recommendations made at the last key inspection, and all the key National Minimum Standards (NMS) under the staying safe section. The procedures and practices in respect to admissions were also explored and contact arrangements which are reported on under the 'positive contribution' section. Young people were actively involved in this inspection process.

Young people are relatively settled at this home and staff say, 'they are doing really well. We are so proud of them'. In particular there have been no recent allegations, restraints, room searches, young people going missing from the home and incidents of bullying. Young people confirm that they get on well with each other and feel able to approach most of the staff about anything. They really like their newly decorated bedrooms describing them as 'mint', and are involved in planning menus and activities. They say their privacy is respected and they are happy with the current contact arrangements in place.

The home is sufficiently staffed to meet the assessed needs and personal preferences of the young people currently living there, and timely specialist services are provided when as necessary. Staff are very satisfied with the support and supervision they receive from their new manager who is registered with Ofsted and handover sessions after each shift ensure consistency of care.

However, young people are not happy with the number of changes in the staff team since their admissions. Moreover a number of actions and recommendations have been made in respect to the documentation in the home and to ensure all staff are suitably trained.

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Four actions were raised at the last key inspection on 12 November 2008. In response there is now clear documentary evidence of timely statutory medicals and dental and optical

appointments and monthly height and weight checks. Moreover, all staff are now trained in first aid to ensure an appropriate response to minor incidents. However, the home's internal health plan does not include all the details specified in the national minimum standards. In particular there is no medical history and the health targets section is not completed. Also, although young people's records state that immunisations are up to date, there are no specific details.

The staff induction programme includes the safe storage, administration, recording and disposal of medication. Procedures are in place which staff have to sign to acknowledge they have read and understood them and individualised care plans include specific guidelines for staff. It is also explored in the first aid and the healthy outcomes course which the majority of the team have attended. Moreover, the company has now developed a stand alone course to be rolled out to all staff from September 2009.

Sanction records have improved and show close monitoring by the manager and the opportunity for young people to comment on and sign the entries. Any concerns raised are appropriately followed up. However, they still do not include 'any other person present' as is required by the regulations. Moreover young people suggest, and records confirm, an inconsistent approach to the use of sanctions within the staff team.

There is now good documentary evidence of monthly monitoring by the manager on all the matters required by the regulations. In addition this company also undertake quarterly quality assurance visits and produce more in depth reports on the quality of care provided.

Eight recommendations were also made at the last inspection and consequently now most, but not all staff, are trained in basic food hygiene.

Menu records now include detailing any snacks consumed to better monitor individual diets. However, it is not clear if some meals are homemade or convenience foods and overall there is an over emphasis on the latter including takeaways. There is also little correlation between the planned menu and the actual food eaten. In particular a full roast dinner is planned for every Sunday, but young people actually just had chips one week, cheese on toast the next Sunday and a jacket potato on the third. They say, 'I never stick to what we planned because I don't always fancy it'.

Missing from home, sanction, restraint and room search records now suitably cross reference with other relevant documentation including the log book and critical incident reports. However, they are not all entered on separate pages or books to ensure confidentiality.

Restraint records are now in more detail in respect to the events leading up to the use of a physical intervention, but not the de escalation techniques used.

Emergency lighting is now provided at this home, the central heating is working correctly and young people have a key to their own bedrooms.

Although the manager discusses care plans with young people, their views are not recorded and they are still not asked to sign them as some acknowledgement of their understanding of, and agreement to, the contents.

At the moment 50 per cent of the current staff team have successfully completed a level three national vocational qualification in caring for children and young people. The minimum expectation is 80 per cent.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is not judged.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

It is acknowledged that there have been no recent allegations, restraints, room searches, young people going missing from the home and incidents of bullying.

Young people also confirm that their privacy is respected by the staff, including spending time in their own bedrooms if they wish, making private telephone calls and entertaining visitors in private. However, there does not appear to be written procedural guidelines in place covering all the particulars detailed in the national minimum standards.

Young people know how to complain and have exercised this right. Records show these are taken seriously, investigated and outcomes reached in a timely manner.

All the team are trained in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of looked after children, which includes countering bullying. This home also keeps Ofsted informed of any significant events, and on each occasion they have acted appropriately in respect to any safeguarding concerns.

Individualised arrangements are in place to try to keep young people safe who go missing from the home. This report particularly acknowledges that incidents have significantly reduced and there has been none at all for nearly two months.

Good behaviour and effort is actively encouraged and rewarded and it is having the desired effect. Indeed a visitor to the home particularly commented on how polite and well behaved the young people were. There are individualised intervention strategies in place in respect to constructively responding to unacceptable behaviours, and the majority of staff are trained in the home's preferred methods of positive care and control.

All the required safety certificates are in place to evidence a safe and well maintained building. A fire risk assessment is also in place and monthly fire drills are undertaken involving young people to ensure they know exactly what to do in the event of a real fire. The records of internal fire safety checks show they are undertaken at the required frequencies, with the exception of fire extinguishers and the new emergency lighting.

As personnel files are held at the company's head office, a pro forma has been produced to evidence that all the required checks and references have been undertaken prior to employment to help to ensure a safe workforce. However, these details are not all fully completed on every staff members file held in the home.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is not judged.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

On admission young people are given a personal copy of the children's guide so they know what services are provided at the home, and are clear about the expectations on them. They also have their own bedroom which have been recently decorated in their choice of colours.

Young people are enabled to contribute positively to their day to day lives and to their futures. They enjoy positive relationships and confirm that they would approach most of the staff with any concerns they have and know they would be listened to. They are unhappy, however with the constant changes in the staff team.

They also have regular individual key worker sessions where relevant issues are explored in some detail, for example, healthy eating and physical exercise, the benefits of stopping smoking, appropriate relationships, the dangers of absconding and future aspirations.

Constructive contact with family and friends is actively encouraged and supported in line with any legal directions and personal preferences, and young people are happy with the current arrangements in place.

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
13	ensure all staff are suitably trained in the safe storage, administration and recording of medication and in food hygiene (Regulation 26(3)(b))	16 October 2009
22	ensure sanction records include all the required details and there is closer monitoring to ensure a consistent approach (Regulation 17(4))	31 July 2009
10	ensure menu records evidence the provision of a varied, wholesome and nutritious diet (Regulation 13)	20 July 2009
22	ensure all staff are trained in the positive care and control of young people (Regulation 27(4)(a))	16 October 2009

26	ensure there is clear documentary evidence that the fire extinguishers and emergency lighting are checked by the home at the required frequencies (Regulation 32).	31 July 2009
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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 health plans include all the particulars specified in the national minimum standards (NMS 12.2)
- ensure sanction and restraint records enable young people to access their own records without compromising the confidentiality of others (NMS 9)
- ensure restraint records clearly detail the de escalation techniques attempted prior to the physical intervention (NMS 22)
- ensure any discussions with young people about their care plans are clearly recorded and they are asked to sign them thereby acknowledging their understanding of, and agreement to, the contents (NMS 2.5)
- ensure an ongoing training programme until at least 80 per cent of the care staff have completed a level three national vocational qualification in caring for children and young people (NMS 29.5)
- ensure a privacy policy is in place which includes all the particulars detailed in the national minimum standards (NMS 9.2)
- ensure there is clear documentary evidence in the home that all the required checks and references as detailed in Schedule 2 of the regulations are undertaken on every member of staff prior to commencing employment (NMS 27.1)
- ensure there is documentary evidence that young people's wishes and feelings are considered in regard to the changes in, and continuity of, the staff team (NMS 30.3).