

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC373941
Inspection date	12 February 2010
Inspector	Liz Daniels
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	26 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 home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to four young people who have suffered disruption in their lives and display difficult behaviour as a result. It is a detached property set in a corner plot, in a residential part of the town. There is car parking for several vehicles to the front of the property and a large garden with a lawn and patio to the side and rear. The home has four single bedrooms and a sleep-in room for staff. A dining room, study and lounge all provide communal relaxation space and a conservatory enables the young people to enjoy some quiet time. In addition, there is a well-fitted kitchen and utility room as well as two bathrooms and a shower room.

Summary

This unannounced inspection was the second visit to the home for the year April 2009 to March 2010. The service was judged as good at the key inspection, undertaken in June 2009: the aim of this inspection was to inspect those standards that ensure the young people are safe and to inspect the progress made in implementing the actions and recommendations previously made. The visit provided the opportunity to meet with the manager, some of the young people and the care staff.

The staff are proactive in ensuring the young people are kept safe and always reflect on the strategies in place to ensure they continue to meet each young person's individual needs; their wellbeing is at the heart of how the home is run.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Two actions were issued at the last inspection, both of which have been implemented. This is resulting in comprehensive record keeping for physical interventions as well as a safer environment for all the young people.

Similarly, two recommendations were made; these two have been met. The records for sanctions are now more detailed and also include the young people's views about the consequences set. Similarly, the staff are alert as to the food the young people are eating whereby the reasons for weight gain or loss can be more easily explored.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The young people continue to enjoy a choice of meals that are varied and healthy, whereby their good health is promoted. The staff encourage the young people to eat healthily and use a monitoring form to clearly determine whether they are eating appropriately. The young people's growth and development is regularly discussed amongst the staff team and the manager also reviews food as part of the monitoring to fulfil regulation 34. The staff are therefore able to fully explore the reasons for weight gain or loss. Meal times continue to be happy sociable occasions when the staff and young people eat together in the home's pleasant dining room; it provides an ideal opportunity for them to share views, or discuss the day's events. All the

staff are trained in food hygiene and ensure the young people have a basic knowledge as to how food should be managed safely.

The standards in this outcome group have not all been fully inspected; however, discussions during this inspection confirmed that the good practices found to be in place at the last inspection, continue. The judgement for this group of standards therefore remains as found at the full inspection in June.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The young people's privacy is respected and confidentiality is maintained. Information about the young people is stored safely in the staff office and they know how to deal with information in confidence. Any room searching and entering of bedrooms continues to be underpinned by comprehensive procedural guidance. Each young person has a lockable, single room and if they prefer, can have their own key to maintain their privacy. They and the staff understand the need to knock before entering bedrooms, to respect each other's space. The young people can use the unit's cordless phone or their own mobile phone to make private calls. Wherever possible a mixed staff team is rostered to be on duty, enabling sensitivity to gender issues.

All concerns and complaints are taken seriously, well recorded and investigated. Details of the complaints procedure are well publicised for the young people. Formal complaints continue to be well managed through the local authority complaints officer. Similarly, the staff believe all incidental concerns raised by the young people must be listened to and acted upon; the outcome of any action taken is discussed and used to inform future practice. Good monitoring continues through the home's quality assurance, enabling trends and themes to be identified.

The staff respond appropriately to safeguarding concerns and robust policies underpin the home's procedures. The Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) procedures are also readily available for staff to reference. Staff recruitment includes an enhanced Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) disclosure prior to employment and staff training in safeguarding is mandatory. A tight 'net nanny' is in place for the home's computers and the staff are diligent in exploring their history of use, as well as preventing inappropriate access through proxy sites. In the event of any safeguarding concerns, the staff know the procedures to follow and an 'on call' rota of senior managers provides additional support.

The staff are alert as to what constitutes bullying and respond appropriately. They promote that bullying is unacceptable and remain diligent in following through any incident with the individuals concerned. Staff meetings are a forum for regular discussions about bullying; these enable reflection on practice and for new strategies to be explored, to meet each young person's needs. Details of who the young people can go to for support if they feel intimidated are well publicised.

Clear strategies by the home ensure the staff are responsive to absence without authority. Close liaison with the local police results in them being appropriately involved when a young person goes missing. The staff treat them positively when they return, encouraging them to talk with their key worker or another staff member. In addition, they are offered the chance to meet with their social worker although there remains inconsistent recording as to whether or not that meeting takes place. A representative from the National Youth Advocacy Service

(NYAS) regularly visits the home and the young people know how they can contact them if required. In general, good records are maintained.

The staff promote socially acceptable behaviour within the home but also respond constructively when the young people demonstrate inappropriate behaviour. The reward system continues to be used to endorse good behaviour and the recent changes to focus it towards activities rather than money, is having a very positive effect. Sanctions are used appropriately and are now very well recorded. These excellent measures are resulting in a very low incidence of physical interventions with only one record since the last inspection; a new log promotes comprehensive records of such events. Both behaviour management logs are included in the home's quality assurance monitoring and the staff are well trained in behaviour management techniques.

Good measures continue, to maintain the safety and security of the young people. The required checks of equipment are undertaken and the necessary contracts remain in place. Positive steps are taken to protect against the risk of fire and other hazards; however, the fire door into the lounge is regularly propped open. The staff and young people continue to be involved in fire drills although as the time of drills has only recently been recorded it is unclear whether they are carried out throughout the 24 hour period. Appropriate risk assessments are undertaken and daily checks of the home now ensure personal items which may present a risk to the other young people are not left in communal areas.

Visitors are well vetted and the manager is fully aware of the measures that must be in place for the safe recruitment of staff. Staff files are held by the local authority's personnel department and the manager continues to oversee the recruitment of new staff. However, as there has been no recruitment since the last inspection, files for new starters could not be scrutinised to fully inspect this standard.

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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26	ensure that any fire doors which are held open will self close when the fire alarm is activated. (NMS 26)	12 March 2010
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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 the reasons why a young person does not see their social worker or a person independent of the home when they return from unauthorised absence, are recorded (NMS 19)
- ensure the staff and young people undertake fire drills throughout the 24 hour period. (NMS 26)