

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	9 March 2010
Inspector	Liz Daniels
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	5 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 registered to provide care and accommodation for up to four young people from within the local authority who have suffered disruption in their lives and display difficult behaviour as a result. It is a detached property set in its own grounds, in a residential part of the town. There is car parking for two vehicles at the front of the property and an enclosed garden with a lawn and patio to the rear. The home has four single bedrooms and a sleep in room for staff. A dining room, study, lounge and conservatory all provide communal relaxation space. In addition, there is a well-fitted kitchen and a utility room as well as a bathroom and a shower room.

Summary

This unannounced interim inspection was the second visit to the home for the year April 2009 to March 2010. The service was judged as satisfactory at the key inspection, undertaken in August 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 was facilitated by the deputy manager and provided the opportunity to meet with the manager, some of the young people and the care staff.

This setting continues to provide a comfortable home for the young people and a caring staff team support them; meeting the young people's individual needs is at the heart of how the home runs. There continue to be some good arrangements in place to keep the young people safe and the staff have worked hard to ensure the young people's good health is promoted.

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 required from the last inspection of which three have been met. As a result, the setting now smells pleasant and fresh, medications are well monitored and recorded, and there has been some very positive work to encourage the young people in not smoking.

However, although most of the areas required by Schedule 6 are now being monitored, complaints and those staff involved in fire drills are not always included in the home's quality assurance.

Six recommendations were also made at the last inspection, four of which have been met. As a result, the young people are generally receiving a varied diet that is healthy and nutritious. In addition, the required information is held about household products that are used and there is now a recorded stock balance for medications held at the home. Also, a copy of the report from the monthly monitoring visits is now available for the staff to read and respond to.

However, not all staff who regularly work at the home have taken part in a fire drill during the last 12 months and although there has been progress, the training needs have not yet been identified for all staff who work in the home.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The young people are provided with a choice of meals that are varied and generally nutritious, whereby their good health is promoted. They can choose to help with the shopping and meal preparation. The staff encourage them to eat healthily and monitor whether they eat an adequate wholesome diet. Meal times continue to be sociable occasions when the staff and young people eat together, enabling them to share views and discuss the day's events. Food is appropriately labelled when stored and most of the staff are trained in food hygiene.

The staff continue to promote good health by encouraging exercise and outside activities. In addition, they now actively discourage the young people from smoking, promoting a no smoking environment and support through smoking cessation. A representative from the child and adolescent mental health service (CAMHS) continues to attend staff meetings regularly to provide advice and support.

Medications are safely stored in locked cupboards in the office and are administered by appropriately trained staff. Good monitoring systems have been introduced and accurate records are kept. All of the staff are trained in the management of medications and some in the administration of first aid.

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. Therefore, with the improvements seen at this inspection, the judgement for this group of standards has been changed from that found at the full inspection in August.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The home has comprehensive policies to guide staff in how to respect the young people's privacy and maintain confidentiality. The young people each have their own rooms which are lockable; they can choose to have their own key and have lockable space within, for personal items. The use of the home's phone or their own mobile phone enables them to make private calls.

Complaints are taken seriously and investigated appropriately. The young people's guide confirms who the young people can talk to if they wish to complain and details are well publicised in the home. An independent person regularly visits the home and can advocate for the young people if they wish. Most of the staff have had training in managing complaints as part of their training for the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) and complaints are monitored as part of the monthly visits to fulfil regulation 33. However they are not always included in the monitoring required by regulation 34.

The staff recognise safeguarding concerns and respond appropriately. The home's safeguarding policies as well as the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures are readily available for staff to reference. All staff have an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) disclosure before employment and all the staff are trained in child protection.

The staff promote that bullying is unacceptable. They recognise those young people who are likely to bully as well as those who are vulnerable. By intervening promptly when there are any signs of intimidation they prevent situations from escalating. Bullying is also discussed amongst the staff, enabling trends to be identified; strategies are then put in place to reduce the risk of it continuing.

Clear strategies by the home ensure the staff are responsive to unauthorised absence. The police are involved appropriately and the young people are treated positively when they return. Appropriate records are maintained and the young person's social worker informed; where possible they visit within a day or two of their return. A representative from the National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS) also regularly visits the home and the young people know how they can be contacted if required.

The staff promote acceptable behaviour by the young people and respond constructively to them when their behaviour is inappropriate. Restorative justice techniques are starting to be used but poor behaviour is appropriately managed through sanctions if a restorative approach is not possible. However, records suggest some sanctions are open ended whereby it is unclear how long they are being used for. Physical intervention is used when there is a risk to individuals. Good records of such incidents are maintained and both logs are monitored as part of the home's internal monitoring. All staff are trained in behaviour management techniques.

Good measures are in place to maintain the safety and security of the young people. The setting is appropriately insured, the required checks of equipment continue and the necessary contracts remain in place. Positive steps are taken to protect against the risk of fire and other hazards. Fire drills continue to be undertaken regularly; however, records suggest that some staff have not practised fire evacuation for almost two years. Substances hazardous to health are appropriately stored; all the correct information about them has been well collated and is readily available for staff to access whereby the home now complies with the 'Control of Substances Hazardous to Health' (COSHH) requirements.

Visitors and contractors continue to be well monitored. They are required to show evidence of identification, to sign the visitors' book and are supervised while on site. The procedures for the recruitment of staff are comprehensive; all the necessary information is received prior to employment and any agency staff employed are required to have a current CRB disclosure.

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 good.

This detached house continues to provide a comfortable home for the young people. They each have their own bedroom which they have personalised to suit their tastes. A lounge, dining room, study room and conservatory provide sufficient communal space. The home is suitably decorated and furnished, repairs continue to be undertaken promptly and in general the home is well maintained. The offensive odour present at the last inspection is no longer apparent, whereby the environment is now fresh and pleasant.

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. Therefore, with the improvements seen at this inspection, the judgement for this group of standards has been changed from that found at the full inspection in August.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Sufficient staff are rostered to care for the young people and meet the home's Statement of Purpose with enough time for the completion of records and hand over of information. Sessional staff usually cover any shortfalls in staff numbers, whereby minimal agency staff are used. Training needs are identified for staff through supervision and appraisals. Overall there has been progress in identifying the training needs of most of the sessional staff and the staff are beginning to co-ordinate how that training is managed across all the local authority homes.

Quality assurance processes continue, to monitor the care of the young people and the home's performance against its Statement of Purpose. However, there remain some aspects of Schedule 6 which are not included in the monitoring undertaken to comply with regulation 34. Thorough monthly monitoring visits continue to be undertaken by an independent person on behalf of the local authority. A comprehensive report then directs the manager towards areas for improvement and this is now shared with the deputy manager who takes the lead in the day to day running of the home.

The standards in this outcome group have not all been fully inspected; however, discussions during this inspection confirmed that the satisfactory 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 August.

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
16	include complaints in the monthly monitoring to fulfil regulation 34 (Regulation 34, Schedule 6)	30 April 2010
26	ensure by means of fire drills and evacuation practises at suitable intervals, that all the staff are aware of the procedure to be followed in case of fire. (Regulation 32)	30 April 2010

Recommendations

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

- ensure there is a definite time frame for any sanctions given. (NMS 22)