

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC374268
Inspection date	20 November 2009
Inspector	Christy Wannop
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	1 July 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 offers care for three children aged between 10 years and under 18 years of age who have emotional and behavioural difficulties. It is operated by a large national provider of children's residential care.

Children live in a detached house with a garden, on a main road, near local shopping and leisure facilities. There are three bedrooms for children, one staff sleeping room, bathrooms, a private room for small meetings and therapy on the first floor, and two separate living rooms on the ground floor. There is a kitchen dining room and ground floor toilet and utility room.

The service has changed its purpose and no longer provides care for children in an emergency. Two young people currently live at the home and one was present and contributed their views. The Registered Manager was also present.

Summary

This was an unannounced interim inspection and covered the key national minimum standards in the Every Child Matters area of staying safe. It also looked at the progress made to meet the three actions made at the previous inspection in July 2009, when the judgement was good. The Registered Manager has taken action to meet these regulatory shortfalls, as well as making improvements in other areas.

This service continues to strengthen the focus on ensuring positive outcomes for children. There are some strong features in this service. For example, the organisation's own quality standards linked to Every Child Matters outcomes, the therapeutic support given to both children and staff, good child-centred care planning and key working systems.

Children at this home are well cared for by a young, sensitive staff team staff who have good relationships with them. They are encouraged to lead healthy lifestyles, their individual needs are promoted and they have a good level of individualised care. They are listened to and respected by the manager, who has a strong child focus and is firmly committed to anti-discriminatory practice. Management is effective and there is strong support from the provider.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

The previous inspection had found shortfalls in safe management of medication. Staff work with psychiatrists and prescribing GP's to reduce unnecessary medication, and health records now show where there is a plan to reduce dosage. Staff now hold copies of prescription advice to confirm the verbal instructions given by prescribing doctors. This means that children always get the correct dosage of medication.

The service had not always organised education in local schools for children at admission, and was not able to provide this in its own school because it had not yet achieved registration with the Department for Children, Schools and Families. There is now a positive picture of enhanced child development supported by the provision for education. All children are now in full time,

local mainstream secondary education or further education college. They are supported heavily by additional staffing to ensure they maximise learning opportunities. In addition the organisation now operates a registered Department for Children, Schools and Families school nearby.

Previously some parts of the house were very well furnished and maintained, but other parts were not. Repairs were not effectively or promptly carried out. Children and staff report that new maintenance arrangements keep the house in better repair and this is apparent. Staff and children's bathrooms are being improved, have blinds for privacy, heating and water systems are mended and there is now garden furniture. Staff say they want to make the house more child-friendly.

Children now have more opportunities to make local friends through football and youth club membership. Staff have encouraged children to form friendships and extend opportunities for meeting and mixing.

One child had commented that sometimes staff previously prioritised paperwork over children; this is not the case anymore and staff make time to help children settle down for the night with improved care routines.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is not judged.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are safe and sound at this home because there is well thought out policy, procedure and safe care practice that is reinforced by an effective management structure.

The Registered Manager has established good working relationships with the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) and takes prompt action when there are safeguarding allegations or concerns. Children have run away and staff have increased the support and care they give to children when there is a likelihood of this happening. This close attention has seen a reduction in absconding. Children say they like living at the home and know they get the attention and care they need from staff.

Arrangements for protecting children's privacy and confidentiality, dealing with complaints from children and adults, and reducing the impact of bullying are good. There is a positive, considered approach to managing behaviour, promoted by visiting therapeutic practitioners employed by the organisation. The Registered Manager is effective in monitoring how staff relate to children, including the imposition of consequences or sanctions when children behave angrily or in a way that harms themselves or others; and when they need to be restrained for safety. Children do have challenging needs and the skills and experience of the staff team has been a focus for improvement to ensure that children benefit from a consistent, confident and qualified adult approach.

The manager ensures that the building, the way staff work, children's activities and the risks from their behaviour are managed to make them as safe as possible. Staff balance children's need for independence and to take responsibility for their actions as they grow up with the need to protect vulnerable children from specific risks in the community.

Children are also protected because all staff who work at the home, or adults who have contact with the children, have been judged safe through a careful recruitment procedure. This process is managed at the organisation's head office, but the final responsibility for deciding fitness to work with children lies with the Registered Manager.

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

There are no recommendations.