

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Caroline Wilson
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	3 March 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 care for five children of either sex from the ages of 11 to 18 years. The home believes that young people have the right to equal opportunities and to progress and make a positive contribution to society. As such, it sets out to treat young people with respect and dignity.

The home prepares young people for the future by assisting them to achieve their full potential. It aims to provide a high standard of care irrespective of race, culture, gender and sexuality. The home aims to provide a person-centred approach, using a solution focused therapeutic method of intervention to help young people.

Summary

This unannounced inspection looked at the key standards relating to the Children's Homes Regulations 2001. Young people and staff were spoken to and relevant documentation was perused to inform this inspection report.

Overall this service is providing a very good service to young people in its care. Proformas are robust and enable staff to get a good understanding of history of young people as well as a fuller understanding of their needs. However, staff do not always make full use of these. For instance, records of key work sessions are not an accurate reflection of the sessions undertaken with young people. Young people enjoy good relationships with staff. Young people are also regularly consulted on a range of issues that affect their everyday lives and their futures.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

The bullying policies and procedures have been updated to provide staff with information about the various forms of bullying. The outcome of complaints are now recorded in the complaints book.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people enjoy healthy, nutritious meals that meet their dietary and cultural needs. While some young people find the menus varied others say that at times there is only one choice of meat over the course of a few days. However, the meat is cooked in different ways which provides young people with some variety. Young people are consulted on the choice of food and menus and have the opportunity to go shopping with staff.

Young people live in a healthy environment in which their health needs are identified and met. They are registered with health professionals whom meet their needs. Young people with particular health needs are provided with appropriate services and support.

Young people's welfare is met and their welfare safeguarded by the home's procedures for the administering of medicines and providing treatment. Staff are trained in first aid, therefore can provide primary care in the event of a medical emergency.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Concerns or complaints from young people and the community are taken seriously and carefully investigated. The acting manager is easily accessible should a neighbour wish to make a complaint. Persons making a complaint are kept informed of the process and outcome of any investigation that takes place. However, records do not set out the dates when complaints are addressed in order to ascertain whether they are addressed within relevant timescales.

Young people are assisted to develop socially acceptable behaviour. Much emphasis is placed on rewarding positive behaviour rather than sanctioning inappropriate behaviour. Young people have the opportunity to earn rewards on a group as well as an individual basis. Sanctions given are used appropriately and responsibly.

The welfare of young people is promoted in order to protect them from abuse. Appropriate responses are made to allegations or suspicions of abuse in accordance with relevant guidance and policies and procedures. Staff have a good understanding of their duties in relation to protecting young people from harm and what they need to do to fulfil these.

There is careful monitoring of visitors to prevent children being exposed to potential abusers. There are positive relationships between young people in the home.

The risk of bullying is managed and reduced; there are clear prevention strategies known and understood by staff. Work also undertaken to help raise young people's self-esteem where appropriate.

The welfare and safety of young people who go missing is protected. Appropriate action is taken to ensure young people are safe and receive suitable support on their return to the home.

Young people live in a home that provides a safe and secure environment. Action is taken to help ensure hazards and risks are managed safely. There is an annual inspection by an external agency, to ensure that safe working practices are established and maintained. Fire safety systems are routinely checked and serviced.

Young people are satisfied their privacy is respected. Young people's rooms are respected as their own personal space and staff knock and announce themselves before entering. Any room searches are undertaken in accordance with relevant policies and procedures.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people receive individual support when they need it. Staff work to establish and maintain effective relationships with young people and seek to engage with them in positive ways. Young people receive regular and frequent one to one time to cover any aspect of their support and development needs. However, documentation of key work sessions are remiss and not a true reflection of the good work undertaken by staff with young people. Young people have a named key worker though they may also approach any member of staff about anything they wish to share.

Education is actively promoted in itself and as part of the preparation for adulthood. A strong emphasis is placed on young people achieving their full potential, generally, and in terms of their education. Communication between the home and education providers is frequent and regular. The handover of information is managed well.

Young people have the opportunity to participate in leisure activities to meet their needs, wishes and aptitudes. All young people have access to activities. They have the opportunity to regularly participate in an enhanced level of activity through the displaying of positive behaviours.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Young people benefit from a well managed referral, assessment and admission process. The home seeks to work in partnership with young people's social workers and to consult with and involve young people in the process. Planned placements have been well managed and provide examples of good practice such as pre placement visits and careful consideration of the likely effects of admission upon the existing group of residents.

Placement plans clearly inform practice and the focus of individual support. Placement objectives and the contribution to be made by staff towards meeting these are clearly specified and known by staff. Progress towards meeting placement objectives is reviewed with young people and shared with the appropriate agencies at regular intervals. The home contributes to and encourages the participation of young people in their statutory reviews and to be involved in decisions made about them.

Young people have the opportunity to have a say about and influence day to day matters in the home. Activities and menus, use of buildings and space, décor and facilities are all areas in which young people voice during regular residents meetings. The frequency of these are increased if any specific areas of concerns require addressing.

Young people are able to maintain constructive contact with their families, friends and other people who play a significant role in their lives. Staff are clear about their role in promoting safe contact and the involvement of parents, relatives and friends.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Young people receive care which helps to prepare them for and support them into adulthood. The home has their own comprehensive pathway plans that enables young people to have an understanding of the challenges that life may bring to them. The daily life of the home provides opportunities for all young people in the home, appropriate to their age and needs, for the development of knowledge and skills needed by them for future independent living.

Young people enjoy homely accommodation, decorated, furnished and maintained to a good standard, providing adequate facilities for their use. The home is decorated and furnished to a standard which creates a pleasant domestic environment. The interior and exterior of the home are maintained in a good state of structural and decorative repair. Gardens and hard play areas are well maintained and safe. Each young person has their own bedroom which they may personalise. Bedrooms are suitably equipped and furnished.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Young people's individual needs are assessed and included in their care plans and staff support young people to follow their interests. Staff meet the cultural needs of individual young people and consider individual preferences

There is a clear statement of how the home operates. Young people are guided through and know what services they can expect from the home and how they will be cared for. However, although this documentation is visually appealing for young people, it is not written in a way that is appropriate to the age and understanding of all young people placed. Young people's needs, development and progress are recorded to reflect their individuality. Not all young people have a permanent private and secure record of their history and progress. This is not remiss on the part of staff, but due to some young people being placed without the support of an allocated social worker from their placing authority.

Young people are looked after by staff who are themselves supported and guided in carrying out their work. Staff and the registered person of the home are properly managed, supported and understand to whom they are accountable. Supervision is held regularly and includes discussion of both the home's work in caring for individual young people and the management of the resident group, together with review of the home's practices.

Young people receive the care and services they need from trained and competent staff. Staff are sufficient in number, experience and qualification to meet the needs of the children. Staff members who are placed in charge of the home and other staff at particular times are suitably experienced. The home has appointed a manager to the home, but are awaiting the clearance of background checks prior to them commencing their position. Interim management arrangements are good, which ensure continuity of care to young people.

Ongoing monitoring of the quality of care by the manager and the registered provider help to ensure shortfalls in practice are quickly identified. Action is taken if necessary in relation to any concentration, trend or pattern in recorded issues or events to improve the safeguarding and promotion of the welfare of children and the quality of care in the home.

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 Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

Standard	Action	Due date
7	ensure that the registered person shall maintain the records specified in Schedule 4 and that these are kept up to date (Regulation 29 (1))	30 November 2009
16	ensure that a written record is made of any complaint and the action taken in response (Regulation 24 (5) (b))	31 December 2009

1	ensure that the children guide is produced in a form appropriate to the needs of the young people placed. (Regulation 4 (4))	31 December 2009
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Recommendations

There are no recommendations.