

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Caroline Wilson
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	3 February 2010
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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's ethos is 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 key unannounced inspection looked at the key standards in relation to the Children's Homes Regulations 2001. Young people and staff were consulted with and relevant documentation was examined to inform this inspection report.

Young people were generally happy about the level of care that they receive. They showed good knowledge of the processes that are in place and they participated regularly in education as well as leisure activities. Staff were knowledgeable about young people's needs and provided individualised care to promote the well-being of the young people that they cared for.

However, there were some significant gaps in certain processes such as recruitment, the overall monitoring of the home and the management of complaints. These are serious breaches within safeguarding which could lead to a detrimental impact on the welfare of young people. Therefore, while the home performs well in a number of areas, judgements that relate to the safeguarding of young people are inadequate and this is reflected in the overall judgement given for the home.

The overall quality rating is inadequate.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Improvements have been made in relation to the reporting of safeguarding concerns. Policies relating to young people who are missing have been updated and staff have received training in relation to this. Young people are now knowledgeable of occasions where staff may enter their rooms without permission.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Essential information is available about young people which enables staff to ensure that they are aware of young people's medical histories to prevent, for instance, any allergic reactions. However, the administration of controlled medication is not undertaken in accordance with relevant guidance and may impact on the welfare of young people.

The weekly planning of menus enables young people to have foods which reflect their individual preferences and meet their diverse needs. On occasions, some young people find that food

does not meet their individual tastes. However, staff are aware of this and take steps to accommodate each individual young person's needs. Staff encourage young people to enjoy food that is healthy and nutritious. They also provide young people with the opportunity to get involved in all aspects of food purchasing and preparation.

Young people are provided with information and support which enables them to live a healthy lifestyle. Young people who are of a suitable age and level of understanding are provided with information which enables them to take informed risks and choices in relation to their health needs. Staff consult relevant health professionals for advice and assistance where appropriate.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is inadequate.

The recruitment system does not evidence that full and satisfactory information is gathered for all staff before they begin work. Staff vetting processes do not satisfactorily ensure that staff are carefully vetted to prevent young people being exposed to potential abusers.

The complaints process does not evidence that young people's complaints are taken seriously or that attempts are made to investigate them in accordance with relevant policies and procedures. The complaints policy has been updated to include the details of the regulatory body, should young people wish to make a complaint to an external body.

Young people who are missing are satisfactorily protected in line with written guidance. Updated policies are in place to ensure that efforts are concentrated on looking for young people who are genuinely missing, rather than those who out stay their curfews. Documentation relating to this is not consistently filled out in order to ensure that agencies who are searching for young people have all the necessary background information to make an accurate assessment of risk.

Policies relating to bullying do not provide staff with information about the various types of bullying. However, despite this, staff take appropriate action where instances occur where young people act in a discriminatory manner towards others.

Sanctions given are reasonable and are in line with the rules that have been broken. Records of restraints are mostly filled in appropriately, however, there are some omissions where the person monitoring cannot tell whether restraints used were appropriate or not.

Appropriate responses are made to any allegations or suspicions of abuse. New processes are in place that enable the home to monitor any themes and patterns relation to the safeguarding and promotion of young people's welfare.

Health and safety inspections and checks are completed within relevant timescales which ensure that young people live in a home which provides physical safety and security.

Young people's privacy is respected and young people are aware of instances in which staff can access their rooms in situations which are consistent with good parenting and protection needs.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The education of young people is taken seriously. Staff work in partnership with young people and the education service, in order to provide individualised support that will enable young people to reach their full potential. Staff support young people to remain in mainstream schooling and where this is not possible young people are provided with a good standard of education on site.

Young people's experiences of key work sessions differ. Some sessions are formal, others informal. Young people agree that they find informal key work sessions more meaningful and effective. This is because the focus is on building a trusting relationship with key workers which enables young people to be more open about matters that are going on in their everyday lives.

Young people have the opportunity to be involved in a range of activities that meet their individual interests and needs. These include structured activities during school holidays where young people have the choice as to whether they participate or not.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Young people are supported and feel confident in participating in review meetings where plans are made in respect of their future. Staff contribute and advocate on young people's behalf and report on the young person's progress during the preceding months.

Contact arrangements are promoted in accordance with plans set by the placing authority.

Young people are supported by staff to influence and make decisions about the way that the house is run. This is done via weekly residents meetings in which young people find a beneficial way of getting their views heard.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Remedial action is taken following incidents where there have been delays in pathway planning by placing authorities, in order to ensure that young people have a successful transition into adulthood.

Young people live in homely style accommodation that is sufficient in size to meet their needs.

Organisation

The organisation is inadequate.

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.

Monitoring visits are conducted within relevant timescales and set out to evaluate how the home is performing against its Statement of Purpose. The current format is comprehensive and ensures that all aspects of the Statement of Purpose are considered. However, this method primarily focuses on whether systems are in place rather than enabling the author to provide a judgement about quality of the content that is seen. For example, although a complaints book may be available, the book might not state whether the complaints were conducted within appropriate timescales.

While the manager has the experience required to undertake this role; he has not demonstrated that he has the necessary qualifications nor has he met the requirement to apply to become a registered manager for the home as set out in the Children's Homes Regulations 2001.

Staff are aware of the importance of supervision and its purpose in ensuring that they are competent and capable of fulfilling their roles. While staff spoken to stated that they have regular supervision which is in excess of requirements; record keeping of the dates, times and duration of supervision is unsatisfactory as it does not demonstrate that supervision sessions are conducted in accordance with regulations. There are sufficient numbers of staff on duty at any one time to promote the welfare of young people.

Young people are guided through and know what services they can expect from the home and how they will be cared for. There is a clear statement on how the home operates that is available for people requiring this information.

Young people's development and progress is recorded to reflect their individuality and these records can be seen by the young person in accordance with legal requirements.

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
16	ensure that a written record is made of any complaint the action taken and the outcome of any investigation (Regulation 24 (5))	31 August 2010
27	ensure that full and satisfactory information is available for all staff (Regulation 26 (3) (d))	30 June 2010
13	ensure that suitable arrangements are made for the recording of medication (Regulation 21 (1) (2) (c))	30 May 2010
19	ensure that the home makes proper provision for the supervision of young people (Regulation 11 (1) (b))	30 May 2010
22	ensure that a written records is kept of any measure of control, restraint or discipline (regulation 17 (4) (c))	30 May 2010
28	ensure that all staff receive appropriate supervision (Regulation 27 (4) (a))	30 June 2010
29	ensure that there is full and satisfactory information available regarding the person managing the home (Regulation 8 (2) (c))	30 June 2010

Recommendations

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

- make sure that the bullying policy sets out in detail the different forms of bullying and how any incidences will be dealt with (NMS 18)
- ensure that policies and procedures are updated in accordance with relevant legislation (NMS 28).
- ensure that records of Regulation 33 visits provide staff with detailed guidance on how the home is performing against its Statement of Purpose (NMS 32)