

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	13 January 2010
Inspector	Norma Welsby
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	22 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 children's home is a detached house, domestic in character and situation in a busy residential area. The home is registered for three children and young people between the ages of 10 years and 17 years of age. As well as long stay placements, the service also provides one respite place.

The location of the home provides good access to a wide range of community facilities. Young people have their own bedroom and access to good standard of communal space and outdoor gardens and equipment.

Summary

During this unannounced interim inspection staying safe was examined and judged to be good. The two actions and five recommendations from the previous inspection were also examined and the service has responded positively.

This is a good service, with some outstanding features. Young people benefit from their placement at this children's home, which provides a safe, secure and nurturing environment.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the key inspection in July 2009, two actions and five recommendations were made. The first action required that the Registered Manager ensure that staff files fully evidence that safe recruiting procedures are followed in respect of all staff working at the home. The manager has made improvements to staff files and a sample were examined and found to be satisfactory. The second action required that the home's Statement of Purpose includes a description of its respite service, which is now detailed.

A recommendation was made under being healthy and related to the service initiating procedures to enable young people to self medicate and safely store prescribed medication within their own bedroom. The service has positively embraced this good practice recommendation and is working well with a young person to improve their personal skills and responsibility.

Under staying safe a recommendation was made that fire drill records distinguish staff and young person names, which they now do. A further recommendation was made under this outcome area, namely that all staff with responsibility for driving young people in the home's car are assessed as suitable and competent. Several of the staff have recently completed competency training and remaining staff are scheduled to do in the near future. It is envisaged that this training will be provided annually or sooner if there is a particular incident.

The fourth area identified, recommended that the service provided staff with written guidance to assist them in the diverse subjects covered in key worker sessions. This matter has been taken to the training department within the company so that a corporate approach can be taken and is ongoing. The final recommendation identified the need for young person's risk assessments to be signed and dated each time they are reviewed and an examination of a sample of these records confirmed that this was now being done.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

At the last key inspection a recommendation was made that the service should initiate procedures to enable young people to self medicate and safely store prescribed medication within their own bedroom. The service has positively embraced this good practice recommendation and is working well with a young person to improve their personal skills and responsibility and this will help to prepare them for and support them into adulthood.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The service has comprehensive policies and procedures in place to ensure that young people are safe. Staff are thorough and competent in their practices and work in a flexible and imaginative way to support young people.

Staff promote the privacy of young people well. They are very respectful of young people's need for personal space and their right to have personal information treated in a confidential way. Staff recognise the differing needs of each young person. For example, in respect of differences in age, gender and health needs. Young people can lock their bedroom door, enjoy personal space and all have a safe in their bedroom to keep personal items secure and private. Staff also work hard to encourage young people to respect and support each other.

The service has an established and thorough complaints procedure. It is accessible to young people, their families, neighbours and professionals. Staff ensure that young people know how to complain and provide reassurance that they will respond appropriately to any concerns. Young people know they can contact senior staff outside of the home if necessary. Young people are very confident and articulate in their communication and staff seek to resolve matters quickly.

Robust child protection procedures are in place. Staff treat the safety and welfare of young people very seriously. Staff have appropriate ongoing training and have access to written procedures. The home has established very good links with the local safeguarding team and liaise openly with them and the young person's social worker when any issues arise. Staff use key worker sessions and one to one discussions with young people to reiterate the importance of staying safe and healthy and to develop the young person's own sense of personal responsibility.

Staff are familiar with the home's policy to counter bullying. Young people are aware that bullying is not acceptable. Staff promote positive role models and encourage young people to manage difficult situations in a mature and considered way and to develop their coping skills and tolerance.

The service has appropriate systems in place to protect young people should they go missing from home, including individual protocols that have been agreed with relevant agencies. Staff are very open with young people about the procedures they need to follow if this occurs and young people benefit from having this awareness.

Young people are encouraged to develop socially acceptable behaviour through clear and considered staff guidance. The staff team work closely together and communicate well, ensuring

consistent practice across the team. Staff receive regular training in positive handling strategies and meet regularly to discuss and review progress. Staff and young people enjoy a very good rapport and their relationships are built on honesty and mutual respect. Staff also encourage and assist young people to enjoy positive relationships with their friends and family, supporting contact in a practical and flexible way to best meet the needs of the young person.

The home is very well maintained and affords a comfortable and domestic environment. A comprehensive programme of maintenance and servicing is in place. Extensive risk assessments are also in place, for example, in respect of fire safety and risks associated with gas and electrical equipment. At the key last inspection a recommendation was made that fire drill records distinguish staff and young person names, which is now detailed in records. A further recommendation was made under this outcome area, namely that all staff with responsibility for driving young people in the home's car are assessed as suitable and competent. Several of the staff have recently completed competency training and remaining staff are scheduled to do in the near future. It is envisaged that this training will be provided to all staff annually or sooner if there is a particular incident and this improvement further helps to promote the safety and wellbeing of young people.

Comprehensive staff recruitment procedures, including clearance checks, are followed with all checks having to be in place and signed off before a new member of staff starts working with young people. Staff files maintained in the home evidence that safe recruiting procedures have been followed.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

The service continues to work very positively with young people. Staff provide young people with highly personalised support, for example through key working sessions, which meets their assessed needs and promotes their confidence and personal skills. This is important in enabling young people to prepare for their future and independence. At the last key inspection a recommendation was made that the service provided staff with written guidance to assist them in the diverse subjects covered in key worker sessions. This matter has been taken to the training department within the company to address, so that a corporate approach can be taken.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Young people make a positive contribution and are achieving excellent outcomes from their placement at this service. At the key inspection a good practice recommendation identified the need for young person's risk assessments to be signed and dated each time they are reviewed and an examination of a sample of these records during this interim inspection confirmed that this was now being done.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is not judged.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

At the key inspection in July 2009, two actions were identified. The first action required that the Registered Manager ensure that staff files fully evidence that safe recruiting procedures are followed in respect of all staff working at the home. The manager has made improvements to staff files and a sample were examined during this interim inspection and found to be satisfactory. The second action required that the home's Statement of Purpose includes a description of its respite service, which is now detailed.

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.