

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC386505
Inspection date	10 November 2009
Inspector	Norma Welsby
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	11 June 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 service is a private children's home, registered to care for up to two children between the ages of 10 years and 17 years of age. The service was re-registered during the summer and this is the first key inspection.

The property is a large terraced house, domestic in character and well-maintained. There are four bedrooms located on the first floor; two are used by young people and two by sleeping in night staff. There is a bathroom, with shower facility, and a separate toilet. The office is situated on the ground floor, along with the lounge, kitchen and separate dining room.

Throughout, the property is comfortable, domestic and homely. There is good access to a wide range of local amenities, which are used routinely by young people and staff.

Summary

At this unannounced key inspection all key national minimum standards were examined. This is a good children's home with the staff team working well to achieve good outcomes for young people. The service provides a nurturing, positive and stable environment. Young people participated in this inspection and were very complimentary about the care and support they receive from the staff team.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

There were no previous actions or recommendations, as this is the first key inspection post registration.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The service promotes healthy lifestyles for young people and achieves this to a good standard.

Young people benefit from a healthy and nutritious diet. Meals are home cooked and young people are involved in menu planning. A diverse range of meals are provided and young people are encouraged to try new recipes to develop a healthy and balanced diet. There is good recognition of the social importance of mealtimes and young people are provided with opportunities to develop social skills and confidence in a variety of settings.

Young people have their health needs thoroughly addressed and recorded in an individual health plan. The service can access a range of specialist services, such as counselling, if needed, either through the organisation or via local services. Good records are maintained reflecting assessed individual needs and the range of health services accessed by young people. Staff encourage young people to take regular exercise and participate in a wide range of physical activities, such as horse riding and swimming.

Appropriate procedures are in place in respect of the management and administration of medication and staff are provided with suitable training. All staff have ongoing first aid training and there is always a first aid member of staff on duty.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The service has policies and procedures in place to ensure that young people are safe and staff work hard to encourage young people to develop personal responsibility.

Staff promote the privacy of young people and respect the right of young people to have personal information treated confidentially.

The service has an established complaints procedure. This is known to the young people, who confirm that they would feel confident in raising any concerns with staff. Staff and young people have established a very open and positive rapport and demonstrate a mutual respect for each other. The quality of their relations means that any issues can be raised more easily and resolved quickly.

Comprehensive child protection procedures are in place and staff demonstrate a good awareness. A recent incident was dealt with appropriately, although the service failed to notify Ofsted as required under Regulation 30. Ongoing staff training is provided and important issues such as safeguarding are routinely discussed in staff meetings.

A policy to counter bullying is in place and young people are aware that bullying is not acceptable. Young people are provided with written information and have access to helpline telephone numbers. Staff work hard to help young people develop a better understanding of what constitutes bullying and what action they should take if they are bullied.

Individual risk assessments are in place in respect of young people being absent from care, along with an agreed protocol of the action staff must take. Records relating to specific recent incidents are satisfactory. Young people have access to independent specialist workers who engage with them to identify and discourage behaviours that places themselves at risk.

Staff encourage young people to develop socially acceptable behaviour through clear and consistent guidance. Relationships between staff and young people are based on honesty and mutual respect and young people know what standard of behaviour is expected from them. Staff use a system of consequences and incentives to encourage young people to develop acceptable behaviour. There are detailed risk assessments in place that are reviewed and updated monthly. The home's policy regarding physical intervention is based primarily on de-escalation techniques. Several staff have recently had refresher training and remaining staff have training scheduled. There have been no incidents of restraint used in respect of young people currently living at the service.

The home is well maintained, including routine maintenance, servicing and health and safety checks. Young people are involved in fire safety procedures and there is a no smoking policy in operation.

Comprehensive staff recruitment and vetting procedures are in place ensuring young people are supported by staff who have had suitable checks.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Staff support young people to develop skills and confidence in a range of social, domestic and learning settings.

Young people are supported by a key worker system and one to one staffing. Staff are skilled at developing an open and positive rapport with young people and young people know what is expected of them and the reason why acceptable boundaries are in place. For example, the staff team have worked hard to enable young people to have some free time with peers and young people have respected the safeguards that staff have put in place. Young people feel well supported and are respectful of the commitment staff have towards them.

The education of young people is actively and positively promoted. Young people have access to mainstream school, home tutoring and a range of extra curricular activities.

The service also provides young people with many opportunities to enjoy a range of social and leisure activities, based on known interests as well as providing new experiences.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Young people are provided with opportunities to make a positive contribution while living at the service and staff work hard to enable them to achieve good outcomes from their placement.

The service has recently reviewed and consolidated its assessment and admission procedures to ensure best practice is maintained. Each young person has a detailed placement plan. A new format has recently been introduced which is comprehensive and organised. Young people are involved in their plan of care and are encouraged to attend review meetings.

Individual contact arrangements are in place and staff support contact with family and friends through visits, telephone and letters.

Young people feel well consulted and confirm that they are encouraged and supported to make decisions about their lives.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Staff work hard to promote the economic wellbeing of young people who also benefit from a well maintained and homely environment. The home is comfortable, domestic and well equipped. Young people have a single bedroom, which they personalise to their own tastes.

Young people are encouraged to learn skills appropriate to their age and which will prepare them for adulthood.

Staff encourage young people to save for bigger personal items, or to achieve these through an incentive scheme and young people like this approach. Young people receive appropriate pocket money and individual allocation of monies for routine expenses such as clothing, hair and gifts.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

This home provides a comfortable, stable and nurturing environment and achieves good outcomes for young people.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The young people receive very personalised care and support to meet their needs. Placement places are detailed and recognise equality and diversity. For example, recent changes have been made to the staff team to provide positive role models and meet the needs of current young people. Evidence also supports that the service has a commitment to further improve equality and diversity within the service to enhance outcomes for young people.

The service has a written statement of purpose and a separate service user guide, both of which are informative and up-to-date.

There is a full staffing compliment, flexibly deployed to meet the needs of young people. All staff are highly motivated and committed to achieving good outcomes for young people in their care. Regular supervision, staff meetings and management meetings take place.

All policies and procedures have been reviewed during recent months and staff have access to these. The service also operates a 'policy of the week' system, which enables all staff to refresh on key policies and procedures and during this inspection the policy was 'family contact'. The standard of recording is good, but the home's official children's register does not include all the necessary details as outlined in Schedule 4.

A comprehensive rolling programme of training is provided and several staff confirmed that they had benefited from a range of recent training in such areas as behaviour management, first aid and supervision. There have been recent improvements in staff training records, both in respect of training undertaken and the identification of timescales for refresher training.

The service has a Registered Manager who was approved during the summer of 2009. The manager is part way through the National Vocational Qualification Level 4 in Leadership and Management of care services and hopes to complete by the end of the summer 2010. The Registered Manager undertakes a monthly quality audit and is line managed by an area manager who also has responsibility for quality monitoring visits. Regulation 33 visits are routinely undertaken and detailed reports compiled, but at the time of the inspection these had not been received by Ofsted.

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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20	notify Ofsted without delay the matters set out in Schedule 5, including any safeguarding referrals (NMS 16, Regulation 30, Schedule 5)	30 November 2009
35	ensure that a detailed register is maintained in respect of each child accommodated in the home (NMS 35, Regulation 29, Schedule 4)	30 November 2009
33	submit monthly Regulation 33 reports to Ofsted in a timely way. (NMS 32, Regulation 33)	30 November 2009

Recommendations

There are no recommendations.