

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC387784
Inspection date	17 February 2010
Inspector	Carole Moore
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	30 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 is one of a number of children's homes operated by the local authority. The home provides care for up to two young people aged between 10 to 18 years, who have social and emotional difficulties. There must be no more than a four year age gap between the young people living at the home. Admissions to the home are usually planned.

The home is a three bedroom semi-detached house, situated in a housing estate in a quiet cul-de-sac, within easy reach of bus routes to the town centre. It has a garden to the front and rear of the property. However, plans are in place to provide a parking area in the front garden so that staff cars do not block the movement of other cars in the neighbourhood.

Summary

This interim inspection was unannounced and focused on the key standards in the Every Child Matters outcome group of staying safe, one standard in enjoy and achieve and one standard in organisation. It also looked at progress to rectify the one action and three recommendations raised at the last inspection that took place in July 2009. One young person was present during this inspection.

The last inspection found the service to be good in all areas of practice and this inspection makes no change to that judgement. One recommendation has been raised in relation to consulting young people following any safe handling.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

The management and staff responded positively to the recommendations that were made at the previous key inspection.

The home was asked to ensure that records were maintained more fully and staff are supported by appropriate timely supervisions.

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.

Young people are living in a stable and safe environment where their welfare and protection is paramount. The home has clear procedures and staff guidance in place that are communicated effectively to promote practices that keep young people safe. Staff receive regular training in a range of areas to do with safeguarding young people which helps them fulfil their role and responsibilities.

There are policies and procedures covering privacy and confidentiality. The staff are able to demonstrate a good knowledge and understanding of them in their day-to-day practice. Young people's privacy is respected and they are able to enjoy their own private space. Confidential

information is shared appropriately with regard to child protection and information regarding the young people is stored in a secure location.

The home has clear procedures for responding to child protection concerns and a copy of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board procedures is kept in the home. All staff have been trained in child protection and this is regularly updated on-line. Staff monitor all visitors to the home, who are required to provide evidence of their identity and sign a visitors' book and this ensures young people are not being exposed to potential risks.

The home has good systems in place to deal with complaints and concerns. Young people know how to complain and feel that they are listened to and taken seriously. The home manages complaints and concerns quickly to achieve outcomes that are acceptable to young people.

Young people living in the home are particularly vulnerable if absent on their own. Staff understand the procedures to be implemented to protect them in the case of absence. However, due to the levels of supervision within and outside the home, there have been no instances of absence since the last inspection.

Young people are encouraged to behave well, to establish, achieve and maintain levels of behaviour that are socially acceptable and that will sustain them in their communities. For example, the home's records not only detail sanctions used for inappropriate behaviour but also positive consequences and rewards for behaviour that deserves congratulations and praise. Staff are acutely aware of the need to balance their interventions with positive feedback about young people's achievements. All staff are trained in managing actual potential aggression and this is regularly updated. Records will in future demonstrate the effectiveness of interventions used, and staff adhere to the behaviour management policy. However young people are not invited to contribute to these records formally.

Positive steps are taken to keep young people, staff and visitors safe from fire and other hazards in the home. For example, risk assessments are completed in relation to fire and potential environmental hazards. Frequent checks are undertaken on fire equipment and fire drills are regularly undertaken. The Registered Manager ensures that utilities, domestic equipment and vehicles are checked to ensure they are safe to use and this provides physical safety and security for the young people who live in the home.

Staff recruitment records were not inspected on this occasion.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people are receiving a considerable amount of individual support from staff and other professionals. The home works in partnership with other agencies and services to ensure young people's needs are met in a coordinated and effective way. Risks are assessed which help staff to support young people in achieving some independence and changes to their behaviour. Young people are receiving a service that can respond to their changing needs and circumstances because care and support is delivered by a committed staff team that know the young people well. Records are now in place demonstrating how the home can help young people develop individual identity in relation to gender, disability, religious, racial, cultural or linguistic background or sexual orientation.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is not judged.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is not judged.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Staff are themselves supported well and now receive regular supervision and annual appraisals. In addition to supervision, there is an open-door policy so staff feel able to share opinions or ask advice at any time. Staff shift handovers are well-planned to ensure all information is exchanged and shared. Staff meetings are held on a monthly basis and form a valuable communication tool for staff to maintain their consistent approach and sort out any concerns and discrepancies. The manager clearly demonstrate how they continually strive for further improvement through reflective practice.

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

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

- ensure all children are given the opportunity to discuss incidents and express their views and to have their views recorded and sign their names against them, if possible, in the records by the home (NMS22.14).