

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	16 December 2009
Inspector	Dawn Taylor
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	25 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 children's home is registered to accommodate one young person, male or female, with an age range from 10 up until their 18th birthday.

It is rurally situated in a village. The detached house is set back from a main road and has been upgraded and refurbished for its current purpose. The home is set in its own enclosed garden.

The home is intended to provide a high degree of personalised care for one young person. It operates a permanent one-to-one staffing ratio.

Summary

This inspection was a key, unannounced inspection visit. The outcome groups relating to being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, positive contribution, economic well-being and organisation were assessed.

As a newly registered service this home would normally be judged as satisfactory but due to the company's established policies and comprehensive staff training, and the young people's view that this home is outstanding, it has been judged as good. The outcome groups relating to being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, positive contribution, economic well-being and organisation were all assessed as good. This service is effectively meeting the individual needs of the young people placed in line with their placement plans and with their proactive involvement.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

This is the first time this home has been inspected since being registered with Ofsted.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Health care and healthy lifestyles are strongly promoted by the company and the home. Professional staff practice is underpinned by the company's commitment to detailed policies, procedures and guidance and a comprehensive programme of staff induction and training. The company also have established links with independent health agencies who provide guidance and training to staff as well as direct confidential support to all young people.

Good quality health care plans mean that staff are well informed about young people's historical and current medical and health needs. Young people feel that those needs are met by a sensitive, sympathetic staff team who provide good guidance, advice and support on health and personal issues.

Young people enjoy healthy, nutritious meals that meet their dietary needs. Young people are encouraged to be involved in planning, shopping for and preparing meals. The staff team actively promote healthy options and working towards catering independently.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The home achieves its aim, 'to promote the right of every young person to live in a safe, warm and nurturing environment with the best care, ensuring that young people are not only protected from potentially abusive individuals, but also from self-destructive reactive behaviours'.

There are policies, procedures and staff guidance on promoting safeguarding and privacy, managing challenging behaviour, preventing absence without permission and addressing concerns and incidents of bullying. These established policies, and an extensive programme of training, underpin strong working practices that keep young people safe. For example, the company has made a commitment to ensure all their Registered Managers complete local authority training for designated safeguarding officers. The company's training department has also been proactive in coordinating staff training with the local authority for all independent sector children's services, and key staff are being trained to run safeguarding courses with the local authority.

Safeguarding concerns are appropriately reported and addressed. However, records do not effectively evidence the actions taken as a result of a concern. This makes it difficult for a manager, or the company, to monitor if actions are appropriate and if there are any patterns and trends.

Staff are well equipped to support young people through difficult emotional times because they receive comprehensive mandatory training which includes transactional analysis, attachment disorder and cognitive behavioural therapy as well as de-escalation and physical intervention training. Young people and staff are further supported by a team of therapists, employed by the company, who have a therapeutic base but will also visit young people in their home and who attend all staff meetings. Consequently staff practice promotes a safe learning environment where mistakes are discussed and successes rewarded. There have been no physical interventions since the home opened and consequences are rarely used.

Young people's safety is promoted by a clear health and safety policy, which ensures risks are identified and appropriate action is taken to manage and reduce them. Young people and staff are involved in fire drills and there are regular checks on all fire and electrical equipment to ensure it is in good working order. All staff are appropriately trained in health and safety matters including first aid and fire awareness.

Records relating to staff recruitment and selection were checked at the company's headquarters in October 2009. The company's recruitment and selection process is robust and the procedure includes checks over and above those required in the children's homes regulations. The staff appointed to work at this home are all experienced and have been working within the company for some time.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

There are good systems in place to provide individualised support to young people living in the home. Any specific services assessed to be required by a young person are identified in their placement plan and monitored through key worker sessions and by the Registered Manager.

There is a small dedicated team of staff who work specifically with the young person placed at this home and all are available to support and listen to the young person at any time.

Education is actively promoted. Each young person has an individual education plan drawn up within four weeks of admission and this highlights specific targets to be achieved. Young people are supported to attend the education facilities assessed to meet their needs, for example, the company's registered school or a mainstream school. Staff liaise with all educational facilities on a regular basis and progress is monitored and achievements celebrated. Each young person's file contains a copy of their personal education plan and other relevant documents so that staff are familiar with their educational histories and able to support their current needs.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The staff team are good at identifying aims and goals in partnership with the young people. These are detailed in placement plans prepared by the home. These plans are in line with plans for the young people prepared by their placing authority. Each young person's plan is monitored by their staff team, the Registered Manager and regulation 33 visitor to ensure the effectiveness and appropriateness of the placement. Young people are proactively supported to be involved in this process by the staff team. They consult with young people on a regular basis and support them to attend and participate in review meetings. Young people are also consulted with regard to the running of their home and their individual lives, both formally and informally, through key worker sessions, house meetings and day-to-day discussions.

The staff team provide strong support to young people to help them maintain constructive contact with their families and develop new relationships with peers. Young people are able to maintain contact with significant people via the phone, e-mail, text and visits. Staff sensitively supervise contact where appropriate and assist with travel arrangements.

There are established procedures for supporting young people to move into and leave the home. These provide staff with clear guidance and practical options that ensure the most appropriate and sensitive approach can be implemented for each individual young person depending upon their circumstances. Young people feel they have a real say in how the home is run and in their future. They feel the company and staff team are good at involving young people in their placement from the very beginning, even prior to them arriving at the home. They feel staff share detailed information about the home and have found out a lot about them prior to placement.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

The organisation has policies and procedures, that are known to staff, which help prepare young people for, and support them into, adulthood. When a young person reaches the appropriate age they are involved in developing a comprehensive plan to leave care. They are also supported to work towards semi-independence plans. The organisation's ethos is that even before a young person reaches the age to work on a more formal plan they will be encouraged to develop life skills appropriate to their age, ability and interest.

The home meets its stated aim 'to provide the young person with a living environment which is suited to their individual needs and which reflects the value the home places upon him or

her'. Young people live in a home that is decorated and furnished to a high standard. It is a welcoming environment where young people feel relaxed and safe. There is an effective maintenance and repair programme for the building, furniture and equipment. Young people are able to personalise the home to reflect their identity and personal taste. They feel comfortable in their surroundings and are regularly involved in household chores and domestic routines which help them to develop their life skills in preparation for leaving care and independence.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The home has a Statement of Purpose and a children's guide, which accurately describe what the home sets out to do for young people it accommodates and the manner in which care is provided.

A key strength of this service is the small consistent staff team. They are well respected by the young people for whom they provide a service. They work in a positive and effective way to ensure young people's needs are being met and that beneficial outcomes are achieved. The Registered Manager provides clear, effective and knowledgeable leadership to the staff team regarding the aims and objectives of the service. The home's staffing arrangements are organised around young people's needs and changing circumstances. This demonstrates that the staff team are flexible and work in partnership with each other for the benefit of young people.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Staff receive training that helps them to understand the company's policies. This is linked to the legislation relating to equality and diversity and helps staff to develop professionally.

The company continues to place a high priority on staff training. There is a designated training coordinator who organises regular training events, for example, child development, drug awareness, working with young people who self-injure, autism and Asperger's syndrome and promoting children's rights. Three out of the four staff in the team are qualified to National Vocational Qualification at level 3 and higher. The remaining staff member is currently working towards completing the programme of training.

The standard of care provided to young people in the home is effectively monitored in light of the information gathered through regulation 34 and regulation 33 visits and reports.

Young people's needs, development and progress are appropriately recorded to reflect their individuality. Each young person has a permanent, private and secure record of their history and are made aware that they may read them.

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
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17	ensure written records are kept of the action taken in response to any allegation of abuse. (NMS 16 and regulation 16 (2) (d))	31 January 2010
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Recommendations

There are no recommendations.