

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	10 August 2009
Inspector	Andrew Hewston
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Date of last inspection	20 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

The home provides individual bedrooms for three young people, and communal areas that are downstairs including two lounge areas, a kitchen and conservatory area. The home has a pleasant garden area and field adjacent to the building.

The home is situated in a semi rural area, with limited access to public transport, but is within easy reach of a wide range of leisure activities and the organisation's school.

Young people are accommodated due to a range of issues, including behavioural and emotional difficulties.

Summary

The home offers a good robust level of care and young people benefit from a skilled and experienced staff team. Recordings are good although some developments of placement plans are necessary. Young people are kept safe through a range of systems and enjoy a variety of activities. Education is promoted within the home, and there is evidence of young people developing and achieving.

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 a new registration following the administration of the old organisation. No concerns have been raised with regard to the continuity of care to the young people as part of this change. No previous actions or recommendations of good practice are in place with regard to this registered provision.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Meals served are of a good quality and menus are developed through consultation with the young people. The majority of staff have completed appropriate training in food safety. Mealtimes are a sociable occasion for young people and staff. Staff are able to discuss differing likes and dislikes of the young people and how these are catered for.

Health planning is within the young people's placement plans. These are basic and do not fully follow the expectations of the standard, however, there is a good range of information within the health sections of files that show that staff fully support the differing health needs of the young people. The home works well with differing health professionals, both within the organisation and externally, again this needs clarification within young people's plans to show that the home is supporting all aspects of their health.

Staff are trained in the administration of medication as well as first aid. Recordings of medication administration are appropriate and auditing is completed to ensure the safety of the young people. Accidents are recorded fully, with copies of accidents within the files.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Young people's privacy is supported within the home, with each young person having their own rooms and toilet and bathroom facilities. Young people are able to use the payphone within the home, or the office wireless phone as well as their own mobile phones where appropriate. Recording systems are in place for the searching of rooms should this be necessary.

The complaints system within the home supports young people's ability to have an input into their life at the home. Complaints are well recorded and referenced within the home's systems and young people's files. Information is available on admission and within the home relating to how young people may make complaints, ensuring they are supported with areas that they are unhappy about.

Staff are trained in responding to safeguarding issues and there is a clear procedure in place for the reporting of issues, either through the organisations management structure or the local safeguarding board. Safeguarding concerns that have been raised are dealt with effectively and through constructive consultation with external bodies, ensuring the overall safety of the young people within the home.

Appropriate systems are in place regarding bullying within the home, and issues raised by the young people are responded to through the staff team and discussions with both the victim and the perpetrator. No specific issues were raised during the inspection, with young people stating that 'on the whole we get on with each other most of the time'.

Comprehensive and individualised absconding plans are in place to ensure the safety of young people. These are seen to be followed by the staff team following incidents and well recorded, with cross referencing within the home's systems.

The staff team use differing behaviour management systems to develop positive behaviours from the young people. Young people are aware of these programs and how to achieve. Sanctions and incidents needing restraints are well recorded and appropriate. These are referenced within a home based log which has changed from a previous 'three in one' system. Referencing within the three in one system had not been fully completed, including some dates that had not been done and interventions not referenced. Although the new system has not had such issues, previous mistakes have not consistently supported the safety of young people.

Health and safety checks are completed on a regular basis, including fire safety checks and drills. Risk assessments to ensure the safety of children, are updated sufficiently and hazardous substances are appropriately stored.

The organisation's staff recruitment checks were inspected on the 6th July 2009 and show that there are robust procedures in place that ensure the safety of the young people. All areas as required by the standards are appropriately checked. Where issues have arisen these are discussed within the recruitment process, responded to and recorded. The organisation has responded to a previous recommendation and now checks new staff against the disqualification for caring for children regulations.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people are well supported by a range of differing structures, both within the home and externally. Staff are able to show a high degree of awareness of the needs of the young people and how these are being worked towards being met. The home has links to professionals within the organisation, such as, a psychologist, who offers support to both the young people and the staff team where appropriate. The role of the independent visitor needs some clarification within the home, as this is purported to be a manager of another home within the organisation, although there is some information within the home about an independent listening service.

Education is promoted within the home, with the majority of the young people attending education run by the organisation, and the home's staff also supporting children attending local authority educational provision. All young people have personal education plans and educational statements of education need are also in place where appropriate. Reward structures are in place to further promote education attendance where necessary.

Young people enjoy a good range of activities within the home and externally. Records show that consideration is given to supporting young people with either attending activities on an individual basis or as a group, occasionally linking up with young people from other homes within the organisation. Young people are able to discuss activities that they have been involved with and have particularly enjoyed. Appropriate risk assessments are completed for differing activities to ensure the safety of the young people.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All young people have placement plans in place. These are basic and could be assessed as a being based on an overarching template rather than being written for specific young people's needs. Some health information that is lacking from the main placement plan is within the health section of the file and is sufficiently detailed. Placement plans are consistent with the Looked After Children documentation. Each young person has a key worker with specific responsibilities with regard to updating of plans and meeting with young people on a regular basis.

Reviews are completed on a regular basis, with the staff and young people having an input into these. The organisations reports for reviews are well written and give a clear record of the young persons achievements and progress since the previous review. Young people are invited to attend reviews, or to complete pre review documentation. Staff support young people with planning following the outcomes of reviews.

Placement plans contain contact information and the staff are able to discuss how young people are supported with attending contact. All contact sessions completed are well recorded.

Young people are listened to within the home with regard to ongoing issues. Regular young people's meetings are held and recorded. These also include some feedback from staff meetings when issues raised in the young people's meeting have been discussed. The content of the young people's meetings shows that a range of topics are discussed, including the development of menus, activity planning, behaviour within the home and celebrations of achievements.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Basic independence training is given within the home to develop skills prior to young people leaving the home. Plans develop as young people are of an age to have their pathway plan in place. The home has attempted to support young people with independence training, although recently this has not been wholly successful, the staff discuss positives that have come out of this experience with the young person.

The house is within a semi rural location with limited access to public transport. Internally all areas are well cared for, with well proportioned rooms. Young people's rooms are highly personalised and this is supported by the staff team. Communal areas are homely and comfortable and include some photographs of young people and staff. Overall this is a pleasant place for young people to live, and is sufficiently practical for the staff team.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The home has a Statement of Purpose and a children's guide to the home. Both of these are informative and contain appropriate levels of information regarding the home. The Statement of Purpose is updated on a regular basis to keep up-to-date with staffing changes. The statement contains a staffing policy that is in line with standard 30.

The home has a good range of experienced and qualified staff that are able to meet the needs of the young people. Staff are supported through regular supervisions and staff meetings, which are well recorded. The recent change in administration of the home has led to some staff not completing appraisals and personal development plans due to this being linked to pay. The manager states that they are attempting to highlight the need for appraisals to be completed to develop staff training.

Training is well organised within the home and a training matrix includes a training needs analysis to ensure staff are trained in a range of areas. Approximately 80% of the staff team have completed NVQ level 3 training, with the other staff either completing the course or completing their induction within the home. Some staff are reported to not have completed training due to clashes within the rota system. This has not effected the provision to young people however.

Monitoring systems are robust within the home, with a regular quality monitoring system, and regulation 34 monitoring completed by the management team showing that the management have a good awareness of ongoing issues within the home. The home is visited on a monthly basis by the regulation 33 visitor. These visits are basic but highlight areas of good practice and those in need of development.

The manager is currently awaiting a registration interview following an application to Ofsted.

The promotion of equality and diversity within the service is good. Staff show a good awareness of the specific needs of the young people and promote differing cultures. This is done through incorporating differing cultures into planning of activities and through discussions with young people.

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
2	ensure a placement plan is in place stating how on a day to day basis young people will be cared for (regulation 12.1)	11 September 2009
28	ensure all staff have up to date appraisals (regulation 27.4).	2 October 2009

Recommendations

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

- ensure all young people have a clear health plan as part of their placement plan (standard 12.2)
- ensure staff respond to the policy, procedures and guidance based on the recording of disciplinary measures (standard 22.1)
- ensure an independent person is in place for each young person within the home (standard 7.8).