

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	10 June 2010
Inspector	Andrew Hewston
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	10 August 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 accommodated have a range of behavioural and emotional difficulties.

Summary

This was a full unannounced inspection that concentrated on key national minimum standards. The inspection focused on areas related to health needs, keeping young people safe, education and how individual support is provided. The inspection also concentrated on how the home consulted with young people, planned for their care and how staffing and management arrangements supported the operation of the service.

The inspection found that the home provides a satisfactory standard of care and support that helps young people with their education, personal, social and emotional development. Staff are supported well by the manager who has a strong commitment and focus on improvement. Two actions and four recommendations have been made as a result of this visit.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

The last inspection highlighted necessary developments in the plans for young people. All young people currently have both health and placement plans although there is a discrepancy in the quality of these within the home. This is due to a recent admission where requested documentation has been slow and staff are dependant on looked-after-children (LAC) documentation.

Restraint records are now fully completed and this is done in a timely fashion. All young people now have access to an independent person or advocate as well as the ability to contact another Registered Manager if they wish to discuss issues outside of the home's staff team.

All staff now receive annual appraisals which examine their personal development plans.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Health is promoted through appropriate planning and staff ensuring that appointments are kept by young people. Health plans available vary significantly, with newly admitted young people's plans being those within the LAC documentation while older placement's plans are more thoroughly written by the home's staff.

Staff ensure that young people have access to a good range of health professionals, that are either within the organisation or external. Such professionals help to meet the health needs of the young people. All young people are registered with the local GP, opticians and dentist.

Arrangements for the administration of medication are appropriate in the majority of cases. There is a need for greater clarity regarding some PRN medication to ensure that all staff are clear about when such medication is to be administered. Recordings and audits of medications are completed on a regular basis to ensure the safety of the young people. All medication is stored appropriately. Approximately half of the staff team have completed training in medication administration showing a need for additional training in this area.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Young people are kept safe within the home through personalised procedures and staffs good awareness of the differing needs of the young people.

Young people's privacy is supported by the staff team. All young people have their own rooms and there are systems in place to record if rooms have been searched. Electronic monitoring may be utilised through a door alarm system, although permissions regarding this are sought from the placing social worker.

The home has a robust complaints systems and this is known by young people and staff. Information is available for young people within young peoples handbooks and additional forms within the home. All complaints are investigated, however not all outcomes have been thoroughly recorded. The home's computer has a direct link to the local safeguarding board to support staff with the reporting of welfare concerns. No safeguarding concerns have been raised since the home's last inspection. All staff are trained in the receiving and reporting of young people's concerns, either within complaints or safeguarding procedures.

Staff respond swiftly to disagreements between young people and bullying is therefore minimised. Bullying behaviour is discussed within young people's meetings, however, young people state that they get on with each other most of the time. Arrangements are in place to respond when young people absent themselves from the home. This includes full recordings of the incidents and discussions with young people on their return to the home. Protocols are in place with the local police regarding the reporting of missing young people.

Staff promote young people's good behaviour through differing systems linked to individualised behaviour plans. Systems relating to the use of sanctions or positive rewards are in place and are known by the young people. Problematic behaviours are seen to be responded to through discussion within groups and on an individual basis. All incidents of restraint are well recorded and show the antecedence, restraint and an assessed outcomes from these episodes. All staff involved with restraints have completed training. All behaviour management recordings are monitored by the Registered Manager and also reported on within regulation 34 reports.

Staff ensure the ongoing safety of young people through regular and rigorous health and safety checks. Information regarding the majority of checks is available within the home apart from the home's electrical survey. Fire safety checks and drills are completed appropriately although an apparent seven month gap between two drills needs reviewing. Risk assessments relating to young people and the activities that they are involved in are completed.

The organisation's staff recruitment checks were inspected on the 10 May 2010 and show that there are robust procedures in place that ensure the safety of the young people. All checks as required under the regulations are appropriately carried out. Where issues have arisen these are discussed within the recruitment process, responded to and recorded. Checks against the 'disqualification for caring for children regulations' are also completed as part of recruitment procedures.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people receive a good range of individualised support through both the staff team and external professionals. All young people have access to an independent visitor and there is a link manager for young people who would rather talk to a manager from a different home. All young people's needs are individually identified and supported through the placement planning system.

All young people attend educational placements and staff are aware of how they are able to best support differing educational needs. Young people's files contain necessary education information including personal education plans and statements where appropriate. The home and school staff link effectively to provide reports for educational and looked after reviews.

Staff provide a good range of activities for the young people to enjoy. Activities are completed both within the home and externally and young people are able to discuss different trips that they have been on. Young people enjoy regular activity sessions such as dance lessons. Young people are involved in the planning of activities and there are also plans in development to go away during the summer holidays.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All young people have a placement plan. Plans vary significantly, with newly admitted young people's plans being those within the LAC documentation while older placement's plans are more thoroughly written by the home's staff. A new placement plan format has been developed and this signposts the reader towards additional information relating to young people's care as well as highlighting how specific individual needs are to be met.

Reviews of placement plans are held on a regular basis and include the views of young people. Advocates also have an input into the review process to support the views of the young people. Copies of reviews are available within young people's files.

Young people are able to maintain valued relationships with family through contact arrangements defined in their care plans. Young people benefit from a service that places high importance on the promotion of appropriate family contact.

Consultation with the young people takes place on a daily basis regarding ongoing issues within the home. More formalised meetings are fully recorded such as key worker meetings and weekly young people's meetings. Records show that a range of differing topics are discussed during these meetings including the promotion of diversity.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is outstanding.

No young people at the home are currently of an age to require a pathway plan. There are however a number of different ways that the staff team attempt to develop the independence skills of the young people. Evidence from previous placements show how the staff promote skills that young people will need when they move away from the home.

The home is a very pleasant environment that is taken care of by both staff and young people. Communal areas provide a homely atmosphere and furnishings are comfortable to meet the needs of the young people. Bedrooms are individually decorated in line with the requests and also well personalised with posters and photos. The outside of the house has a pleasant garden and young people are also able to use a trampoline and will be making the most of a new inflatable pool. There is a rota for the cleaning of the home and all repairs are responded to quickly by the organisations maintenance team.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Young people have information about what they can expect from the home, how they will be cared for and who they are likely to share with. Parents and placing social workers have a clear statement on how the home operates. Consequently, all parties are well informed about the running of the home. The home has sufficient staff although the Statement of Purpose does not include a staffing policy in line with the standard.

Staff are well supported and receive supervision on a monthly basis in the vast majority of cases. They are also involved with annual appraisals, and personal development plans are written to examine learning needs. The home has a clear training matrix that is updated on a regular basis. Staff are involved in a good range of training courses in addition to the National Vocational Qualification level 3 course in Caring for Children and Young People. 90% of the staff team have completed this.

Young people's progress is effectively monitored and continually reviewed through established systems of communication. They are supported by a dedicated staff team who maintain a flexible approach to providing care. Staff sickness and annual leave are identified on the rota and there is sufficient numbers of staff on duty. This makes sure that the young people's differing needs are met at all times. The manager is an active presence in the home and is supported by staff that are well skilled. The manager conducts effective weekly and monthly monitoring of the operation of the home under schedule 6.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Staff promote positive views regarding diversity and there are good examples of racism being effectively challenged. The promotion of equality is discussed within young people's meetings and the home has a clear policy addressing this.

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 all young people have a detailed placement plan in place stating how, on a day-to-day basis, young people will be cared for (Regulation 12)	28 June 2010
12	ensure all young people have a clear health plan as part of their placement plan. (Regulation 12)	28 June 2010

Recommendations

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

- ensure there are clear instructions in place with regard to how and when medication is to be administered (NMS 13.8)
- ensure all staff involved in the administration of medication have completed training to assess them as competent (NMS 13.1)
- ensure the outcome of all complaints is recorded (NMS 16.3)
- ensure evidence of an electrical survey is available for inspection. (NMS 26.1)