

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	18 May 2010
Inspector	Seka Graovac
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	16 October 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 is registered to accommodate up to three young people of either sex between 11 and 17 years old with emotional or behavioural difficulties. The home's stated purpose is to play an active part in the partnership of care of children. The overall aim of the home is to provide a safe, nurturing, caring and homely environment for each child where issues and concerns affecting both their past and their future can be positively addressed. The home is situated in a residential area of a large city. It is within easy access to all local amenities including public transport.

At the time of this inspection, two young people lived in the home. The inspector only exchanged greetings with one young person. This person was on their way out when the inspector arrived. The other young person contributed fully to the inspection.

Summary

This was an unannounced full inspection. Ofsted assessed the quality of the service in line with the full range of the relevant key national minimum standards and legislation. The inspector looked at all outcomes for young people, as described in the Every Child Matters document. The main finding is that the home provides a service of outstanding quality to young people. Young people who live in this home have excellent opportunities to achieve positive outcomes.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable. This is the first inspection since registration.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

The home promotes young people's good health very well. Young people enjoy an extensive range of healthy, nutritious meals that they themselves have chosen. They have regular opportunities to plan, shop for and help with preparation of meals. They describe the food in the home as absolutely delicious. The house rules encourage young people to value meals as great social occasions, helping to develop good social skills.

Staff are aware of the young people's health needs including any food intolerances. They ensure that young people's health needs are consistently met. For example, the home keeps comprehensive records of what food the young people have had. These records contribute to good monitoring of the impact of particular foods on the young person's well-being. Staff members regularly talk with young people about their health and provide information on various health promotion services that are available in the area. In addition to having regular health checks, young people have access to various specialists, in accordance with their needs. The home works in a very effective partnership with health professionals and social workers to protect and promote young people's good health. For example, the manager has recently written to a social worker asking them to consider paying for the young person's orthodontic treatment that is not available on the national health.

The home's good procedure for dealing with medication is consistently and robustly implemented. This ensures that young people receive their medication as prescribed for them by their doctor. The very good arrangements for staff training in first aid, contribute to the effective protection of young people's welfare in emergency situations.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

The home's robust staff recruitment procedure ensures that only staff who have been stringently vetted are allowed to work with young people.

Staff receive regular training on topics related to safeguarding and promotion of young people's welfare. The good training opportunities and clear policies and procedures provide staff with the up-to-date knowledge in this field of work. The service demonstrates that staff consistently implement good safeguarding practices. The home's close partnership working with the other agencies and the excellent management contribute further to the very effective promotion of young people's welfare.

The young people report feeling very safe at the home. They report trusting the manager and staff fully. The young people get on well with each other and report no bullying or intimidation within the home. Their privacy is respected. The home makes young people well aware of their rights and responsibilities. They receive clear written information about this in a document called 'The resident's charter of rights'. Young people and staff know what is expected from them. Young people benefit from having clear boundaries and well-defined house rules. The home does not use physical interventions. It uses the behaviour management strategies that focus on building trusting, reliable and consistent relationships as the key for effectively supporting young people. The high quality of the support given by staff, has had a dramatic positive effect on some young people's behaviour. The home is working hard with the young people who regularly abscond to heighten their awareness of the risks involved and to enable them to keep themselves more safe. The home works very effectively with the police and the local authority children's services to increase the young people's protection.

Clear procedures are in place for raising and dealing with any complaints and concerns. There have been no formal complaints.

Regular health and safety checks ensure that the physical environment is safe at all times. Young people's involvement with fire drills provides good opportunities for them to learn about the fire safety.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Staff know and understand the young people in their care exceptionally well. Staff relate to young people with sensitivity and respect. Young people receive highly individualised support in line with their needs, backgrounds, abilities and aspirations. The home consistently emphasises the importance of young people engaging in learning and education. Staff work very closely with other professionals and schools to ensure that young people gain educational achievements. This successful collaboration and consistent support has had a strong positive impact on young people, who are achieving very well. The young people report feeling happy in the home. They have good opportunities to engage in a wide range of leisure activities of their choice.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Young people are given ample opportunities to express their views and to help shape the service they receive. In addition to monthly residents' meetings, young people individually meet with their key workers on a regularly basis. The young people feel listened to. They feel enabled to contribute to their care and to influence the running of the home. This has a very strong positive impact on their confidence and on what they achieve in their own environment and outside of the home. The home effectively empowers young people.

Through written questionnaires, the home effectively solicits contribution from the parents and other professionals involved in the young people's lives.

The home effectively supports young people to maintain and develop constructive relationships with their families and friends. The clear contact arrangements are agreed with the placing authority and included in the written placement plans. This is done within an effective risk assessment framework. The arrangements appropriately promote the young people's safety and their emotional well-being.

The home works in effective partnership with other professionals to ensure that the young people are appropriately placed to live in this home. The manager, in consultation with the staff team, makes balanced decisions on admissions. These decisions are carefully based on the comprehensive assessments of the young person's needs. They also take fully into account the needs of the young people who already live in this home and the overall group dynamics. While the young person lives in the home, the manager and staff take great care to ensure that they benefit from this experience. The home effectively monitors young people's progress. This ensures that the support young people receive remains flexible and continue to fit well their changing needs. The reviewing care process is effectively supported by the home's comprehensive monthly progress reports. Those reports focus on the outcomes for each young person. This is in addition to the home's proactive participation in the statutory reviews for each young person.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is outstanding.

The home supports young people's economic well-being very effectively. Young people live in a high quality environment. The premises have been fully refurbished recently. The work included new flooring and new comfortable leather furniture. The home is clean, tidy and tastefully decorated. The young people report feeling proud to live in a beautiful environment that they themselves helped to create and help maintaining.

The home gives young people good opportunities throughout their stay to gain independent living skills. This is done across different aspects of daily living and in line with young people's age and abilities. Young people receive an appropriate amount of money on a regular basis. Good record keeping that includes signatures of both staff members and young people who received the money is in place. The home effectively helps young people to learn to budget and save money. For example, a young person attended a workshop on successful budgeting organised by the school, on the day of the inspection. One young person described themselves to the inspector as a rich kid.

There are number of examples of the manager and staff going out of their way to provide effective support to a young person when they were moving out to live independently in difficult circumstances.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The provider who also manages the service is highly committed to achieving the best possible outcomes for young people. Under his excellent leadership, staff care practices effectively enshrine the home's ethos. The underlying values and principles of the service are clearly described in the Statement of Purpose and the guide for young people. Young people receive excellent support from qualified and highly competent staff. Staff themselves report receiving excellent support from the manager. This includes regular team meetings, individual supervision sessions, annual appraisals and good training opportunities. The staffing levels are continually kept under review and appropriately adjusted depending on the needs of young people.

The home has recently developed a written format for more structured monitoring of the service. This evidences that the manager and staff continue to reflect on the quality of the service and look for the ways to improve it. The home is committed to streamlining paperwork and consistently focusing on direct support work with young people. The required records are confidently kept. They accurately reflect young people's individuality. They form useful basis for the good communication within the home and the home's very effective working together with the relevant external parties.

The promotion of equality and diversity in the home is outstanding. It is consistently given a very prominent place within the service. This helps staff to maintain a very high level of awareness and successfully aids reflection on good practice. The young person's needs, the staff practice and its impact on the equality and diversity is regularly discussed at the team meetings, that are facilitated by the manager. He has a recognised expertise in this field, as he researched a related topic in his doctoral thesis. All staff have recently received training in the promotion of equality and diversity. Young people's records clearly demonstrate the excellent support they receive. Like in so many other aspects of this service, the excellent management and staff practice related to the promotion of diversity is consistently, thoughtfully and subtly interwoven in the high quality support available to young people. The home effectively helps young people to learn to value themselves and others. The young people judge the quality of the service they receive to be outstanding.

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

There are no recommendations.