

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	12 October 2009
Inspector	Mark Kersh
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	7 November 2008
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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 run by a private organisation. The home is located in a diverse area of a city and takes into account the individual needs of young people. The home provides medium to long term accommodation to four young people of either sex, between the ages of 11 to 17 at any one time. The accommodation comprises of single bedrooms, a lounge, dining room, kitchen and a communal area. Local shops are easily accessible, as is the bus route into the city centre.

Four young people currently live in this home in which all were present during this inspection.

Summary

At this unannounced full key inspection, all key standards were inspected. This is an outstanding service in most respects, with strong emphasis being placed on seeking the views of those who use the service. The home provides excellent care to young people, with a staff team that is experienced and committed to achieving high standards. Positive relationships exist between staff and young people, and between young people and their peers. Young people are encouraged to eat healthily and take regular exercise. Staff maintain close professional relationships with a wide range of outside agencies in order to safeguard and protect young people. Individual care plans are comprehensive and provide staff and others with valid information to assist them meet the diverse needs of young people. Staff provide young people with excellent support and are supported well themselves by the manager.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Following the previous inspection the Registered Manager was asked to improve the records of any restraint which takes place. Restraint records now include the duration of any restraint and are detailed in content. These steps enable the manager to monitor young people's patterns of behaviour and discuss with staff the interventions used.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Young people are consulted in relation to their likes and dislikes of food and actively contribute to the weekly menu. Young people have choices at mealtimes and the opportunity to eat healthily. Meals are prepared using fresh local produce and menus show a balanced diet is provided. Detailed records are maintained of what young people actually eat. These records are monitored by staff and include any food allergies young people have. Young people confirm staff encourage them to choose healthy food as part of their training for independence. Young people and staff are trained in food hygiene and know how to prepare and cook food safely. Young people experience foods from other cultures and confirm food is provided with regard to their religious background and dietary needs.

Young people are registered with local health care services. Individual health care plans are clear, showing past and current health issues. Staff maintain these plans and update them following routine appointments attended by young people, such as, doctor, dentist and optician.

Young people receive health assessments from the looked after children's nurse and records show discussions in relation to personal hygiene, and immunisations given to date are recorded. Staff have a wealth of experience of working with outside professional agencies. Support and guidance is provided to young people on specific health issues, for example, sexual health and drug and alcohol misuse. These arrangements enhance all aspects of young people's individual health needs.

When young people are prescribed medication trained staff follow procedures which ensure all medication is safely stored, administered safely and accountable. There are currently no young people at the home receiving prescribed medication. Non-prescribed medication is purchased as required and returned to the pharmacy after use, in line with the medication policy. All staff are trained in first aid.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Young people's privacy is respected and all information in respect of them is stored securely for confidentiality reasons. Proactive measures are taken to share useful information with young people, by protecting people's identity, within records shown to them. For example, feedback forms completed by other people in relation to the services provided. Young people say staff are courteous when entering their bedroom and always knock first. Young people have a key to their bedroom and can secure their personal possessions. Young people have access to the home's telephone and calls are made and received in private. Staff demonstrate an excellent understanding in relation to confidentiality. Staff know how to deal with and share information which they are given in confidence for child protection purposes.

Young people are safeguarded from abuse as the home has clear policies and procedures in place and staff are trained and aware of their responsibilities. There is an excellent focus on safeguarding and protecting young people from sexual exploitation. Staff work exceedingly well with other professional agencies charged with protecting young people. Strategies agreed at core group meetings are monitored by staff for their effectiveness and are known by young people. There are highly effective systems in place to listen and respond to complaints. When young people abscond staff know what to do and follow agreed procedures. The home is effective in addressing issues around bullying. Appropriate authorities are notified of significant events. Records maintained of any such instances are all recorded in detail and monitored regularly.

Behaviour management plans consider the age, understanding and ability of individual young people. Effective responses to inappropriate behaviour ensure restraint is rarely used. Incentives and rewards feature far more than sanctions and assist young people to develop socially acceptable behaviour. Young people are encouraged to write or have their views recorded within behaviour management records. Staff demonstrate well how they continually attempt to reconstruct situations following incidents. This evaluative and reflective practice assist staff to continually improve strategies when dealing with challenging behaviour.

Young people, staff and visitors are safe from risk from fire as all the required fire safety checks are completed at regular intervals. Staff and young people are trained in fire awareness. All visitors to the home sign in and are briefed in relation to evacuation procedures and shown the fire assembly point. Written health and safety risk assessments are in place and routinely

assessed. Fire and electrical equipment is serviced as required by professionals trained to do so.

Ofsted has undertaken an audit of staff personnel files within the organisation, any shortfalls identified are being addressed by the provider. There are no issues within this home in respect of recruitment checks, with current staff. Young people's views are sought as part of the recruitment process. They meet new candidates, under supervision, and their observations are taken into account.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Young people receive excellent support that meets their individual identified needs. In discussion staff demonstrate they are fully aware of young people's needs. Records show staff work with young people to achieve outcomes identified in their placement plans. Individual young people receive effective personal, social and emotional support and guidance. Individual diverse needs and requirements are met by staff and they have maintained excellent working relationships with outside agencies, which provide additional support to young people. Young people's views are regularly sought in relation to the daily running of the home. Weekly group meetings and individual reviews with the manager enable young people to contribute their thoughts and feelings in relation to the care they receive.

Young people's education is fully supported and there is excellent communication with educational authorities and local colleges. Staff emotionally reinforce young people when they make a positive effort and do well, and celebrate their achievements. Work completed by young people is displayed throughout the home. This promotes young people's development of self esteem and belief in themselves. For young people who are in transition of schools, education is provided within the home by qualified teaching staff.

Young people's hobbies and individual interests are promoted and there is sufficient finances available for this. Young people's activity plans show a range of recreation and these interests have been identified by themselves. Young people meet with staff regularly as a group or individually to discuss interests and plan activities. Young people participate in activities which take account of their race, culture, language and religious interests. Young people are made aware of the celebrations and festivities of their own and other communities. For example, birthdays, name days, cultural and religious festivals.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Young people have their needs thoroughly assessed, planned for and reviewed effectively by staff. Written information, within plans, is current, informative and clear. Plans address any issues or support needed arising from disability, race, gender, faith or belief. The clear records maintained in respect of individual young people demonstrate young people receive excellent internal and external support. Statutory reviews, chaired by independent people, take place regularly and young people are encouraged by staff to contribute as fully as possible to this process and communicate their views. Outcomes of young people's reviews are recorded on the day so as any action recommended is implemented promptly.

Consultation arrangements is an exemplary strength of the home. In addition to regular discussion and key worker sessions, young people regularly complete feedback forms. This provides opportunity for them to consider their circumstances, relationships and interactions with staff and the care provided to them. Similarly feedback forms are received regular from parents, relatives and placing social workers. These arrangements provide management with information which enhances all aspects of the service and outcomes for young people.

Young people know their arrangements for contact with family and friends. They maintain valued relationships through independent or supervised contact arrangements. Contact is regularly reviewed and monitored. Feedback from families and relatives is positive in the way the staff work with them and keep them informed. Placing social workers are equally positive in the information staff provide them and the professional way in which they work.

Policies and procedures are in place for admissions to the home and discharges from the home. Detailed information on the services the home offers is provided to young people and their families. When young people move in they attend a welcome meeting with existing young people and staff. The arrangements for welcome meetings have been set up and devised by young people with the support of staff. When young people leave the home a request is made to them and their families to complete an end of placement feedback form. This is excellent practice and allows for any improvements identified by those who use the service. There is a record of all admissions and discharges as required.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Young people are being supported to develop some independent living skills appropriate to their age and understanding. Young people begin this by undertaking practical daily living tasks, such as, attending to their own laundry and keep their own bedrooms tidy. The planning of meals, preparing, the cooking of meals and develop budgeting skills, is being undertaken by young people.

The home is currently having renovation work carried out to extend the kitchen area. As a result of this most of the homes fixtures, ornaments and picture displays, have been taken down to prevent damage. The manager acknowledges this renovation work is having some impact on young people's daily living, such as unnecessary noise and dust. However, when the renovation work is completed this will enhance the home and further improve the environment and services for young people. Plans for new flooring, décor and furniture have been agreed on completion of the renovation work.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. The statement of purpose document makes clear the home's commitment to equality and diversity, which in practice is followed. Young people benefit from being cared for by a team that offers an equal balance of age, gender and ethnicity. Staff have completed equality and diversity training. Young people receive a service designed to meet their diverse needs, as is evidenced by the detailed level of care planning and response to individual need. Young people's awareness is raised as they produce posters and take interest in relation to the diverse world around them.

Young people benefit from the excellent leadership provided by the manager to a well established and stable staff team. Proactive measures ensure staff are well supported and supervised as required. Young people are provided with stability and security by a competent staff team. All staff have completed the necessary qualification for working with young people with some undertaking a higher qualification in this area of work. Staff receive excellent training opportunities and constantly evaluate their working practices with each other and maintain high standards of care for young people.

There is close monitoring of the systems within the home, by the manager, who places a strong emphasis on improvement and the overall care and welfare of young people and staff.

Young people's case files and other information written about them is of a high standard. This facilitates excellent communication with other professionals. Young people's case files provide them with information and history of their time spent in the home.

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.