

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	13 May 2009
Inspector	David Martin
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	27 January 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 accommodates up to seven young people aged from 12 to 17 years.

The building is detached and set in its own grounds. Accommodation is spread over four floors. The bedrooms and shared bathrooms are on the upper floors. On the ground floor, there is a staff office, kitchen, dining room and lounge. To the rear of the home there is an enclosed garden, which incorporates a five-a-side football pitch and a floodlit games area. The home is located within a short distance of a number of schools and other appropriate youth, health and leisure facilities.

Summary

This was an unannounced inspection carried out to assess the home's performance against all key standards and to check compliance with actions and recommendations made in the last inspection report.

The home is well-managed and supports young people to receive the health care they need and to achieve well educationally. There are sound measures in place to make sure that young people are safe and protected from harm. The standard of accommodation is good and provides a pleasant environment. The home is meeting all key standards and has taken a number of steps, set out below, to implement improvements since the last inspection. The home has strong quality monitoring processes and is able to identify areas for further development. No actions or recommendations are made as a result of this inspection.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last inspection the home has made good progress in complying with actions and recommendations made at the last inspection. It has improved the way in which medication is stored and administered and this now ensures that the medication system is safe. Supervision has been introduced at monthly intervals which allows staff greater opportunities to reflect on their practice. The home has improved access to all Looked After Children documentation, ensuring that care and support can be tailored to the individual needs of young people. All staff now have valid Criminal Records Bureau checks in place and this contributes to the process of ensuring that staff are safe to work with young people.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The home provides young people with well-balanced, nutritious food. The staff monitor what the young people eat and promote healthy eating. The young people have a direct input into the weekly menu and can also assist in food preparation and making snacks. The young people enjoy healthy meals.

The young people's primary health care needs are met. The home liaises with a range of health specialists, including the Looked After Children's nurse and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), to ensure that young people's individual health care needs are accurately

assessed and planned for. As the need arises, arrangements are made to ensure the young people receive guidance and support on such issues as drug and alcohol misuse and smoking cessation. Young people benefit from having their health needs reviewed on a monthly basis.

Medication is stored and administered safely. There are robust systems in place to account for all medication in the home. Records are up-to-date and accurate. To comply with an action in the last inspection report, the home has obtained a secure refrigerator to store certain medicines. This ensures that all medication can be accounted for and promotes safe practice.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Young people's privacy is respected. They have keys to their bedrooms, and bathrooms and toilets are lockable. They have access to a private telephone and can earn top-ups for their mobile 'phones. The staff have a good understanding of handling confidential information.

Complaints are managed appropriately and young people have been provided with comprehensive information about how they can raise their concerns. There are robust systems in place for managing safeguarding issues and the staff have completed safeguarding training. These measures help to keep young people safe.

Incidents of bullying are infrequent but when they do arise they are managed well. Anti-bullying is a regular feature of both staff and young people's meetings. Young people have been given detailed information about what they should do if they feel they are being bullied. Young people are protected by the steps that are in place.

The staff have a wide range of techniques and interventions to promote socially acceptable behaviour. They have regular input from CAMHS to assist in this process. Young people benefit from having positive relationships with staff. This is borne out by the low level of sanctions and absence of physical intervention to control situations.

There are appropriate checks in place to ensure that the environment is safe. Staff are appropriately vetted to ensure that they are suitable to work with young people. This contributes to the overall safety of young people.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

The case files for each young person are well maintained. Assessment and planning documents are of a high standard and demonstrate a commitment to ensuring that the individual needs of young people are met. The records are shared with young people which is very good practice and ensures that young people are kept informed about decision making processes.

The home values education highly and there is an expectation that young people are engaged with learning. The home is also committed to helping young people participate in a wide range of leisure activities. The home's approach to learning and leisure is very positive and contributes to the young people's sense of achievement.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

As noted above the young people are supported in a well planned and thoughtful way. Case reviews are held at the required intervals and the young people are assisted to make a direct contribution to the process. Contact arrangements are clearly set out in individual development plans and take into consideration young people's views.

Admissions to the home are made in a well planned manner and all placements are of a long-term nature. There are good arrangements in place to ensure that young people leaving care do so in a planned and supportive way.

Young people have good opportunities to contribute their ideas to the way in which the home is run and have input into menu planning and activities. House meetings are also used to engage the young people in discussions about such topics as bullying.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Young people are encouraged to learn independence skills, such as meal preparation and laundry. For young people moving to adulthood and independent living there are pathway plans in place and clear opportunities to acquire more complex skills, including managing a budget and developing and maintaining relationships.

The young people benefit from living in comfortable and homely accommodation. The home is generally in good order and communal rooms are spacious and pleasant. Bedrooms have been decorated and furnished to reflect the individual tastes and interests of young people.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The home is good at promoting equality and diversity.

The home has a well written statement of purpose which accurately reflects the arrangements in place to care for and support young people. There is a good young people's guide to the home which is given out on admission. Young people benefit from being given information about the home and know what they can expect.

The staff team is well trained and is provided with supervision at the required intervals. The latter reflects an improvement and compliance with an action in the last inspection report. Staffing levels are good and agency staff employed in the home are always recruited from preferred providers. This ensures that young people receive consistent support.

The home has good quality external and internal monitoring systems in place. Analysis of the information gathered is used to identify areas for improvement and development.

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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Recommendations

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