

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Susan Mullin
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Date of last inspection	10 March 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 service is a children's home for boys and girls aged from 11 to 18 years and offers medium to long-term care for young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. It is situated close to leisure facilities and shops. There are regular bus and train services to nearby towns.

Each young person has their own bedroom situated on the first floor and there are two bathrooms and a games room. On the ground floor there is a lounge, dining room, kitchen, the education room and two offices. There is a good size garden area to the side and back of the house and car parking at the front.

Summary

This was a key unannounced inspection of the service, undertaken over a two day period to assess compliance with the National Minimum Standards for Children's Homes. The home was assessed under the headings of 'Every Child Matters' - Being Healthy, Staying Safe, Enjoying and Achieving, Positive Contribution, Economic Wellbeing and Organisation. The care manager had completed pre inspection documentation. The home has received one action and one recommendation to support further improvements in the service with an overall rating of good. One action was made in relation to refurbishing some of the young people's bedrooms. Progress on this will be checked on the next inspection. One recommendation was made to ensure all staff received refresher training in regard to medication administration.

There were six young people in residence and four young people participated in the inspection process.

The inspection identified that young people are well supported by the staff team. Staff work closely with other agencies, to ensure young people's identified needs are met. Care records are of a high standard and staff are well trained and skilled at working with young people with emotional and behavioural disorders.

Staff are working well towards ensuring that 80% of the work force are qualified to National Vocational Qualification Level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People. All new staff will undertake a full induction training programme in line with the Children's Workforce Development Council.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

There were no actions or recommendations made at the last inspection.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people enjoy healthy, nutritious meals that meet their dietary and health needs. They are encouraged to be involved in planning, shopping and cooking according to their age and abilities and as preparation for independent living. All staff have received training in basic food hygiene. The home has a very pleasant dining room where staff and young people eat together

as a social occasion. The home has a plentiful supply of fresh fruit and vegetables and good quality foodstuffs. The kitchen is kept very clean and tidy and safe for young people to work in.

The health and care needs of young people are identified at the earliest opportunity and a comprehensive care plan is in place for each young person. Details of how their identified needs will be met are clearly outlined. All young people are registered with the required health professionals and records of their visits are made. Staff, in partnership with the person with parental responsibility, actively seek out further services where required. Young people receive care that benefits their wellbeing.

Medication administration is undertaken in line with robust policies and procedures. However, some staff have not received any medication training in excess of three years. All staff have undertaken a first aid qualification.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Staff understand the need to respect young people's privacy and confidentiality and they are careful in practice, to ensure their rights to privacy are met. There are robust systems in place to deal with complaints and concerns. Young people know how to complain and confirm that they are listened to and taken seriously. Only senior staff deal with complaints in the home, seeking early resolution. The home has a comprehensive range of operational policies and procedures in place, that enhance the safety and welfare of young people. The home has effective leadership where safeguarding practices are given high priority. Young people are protected as staff are fully aware of their responsibilities in relation to child protection issues and know what course of action to take if they have any concerns.

Young people are protected from bullying as staff are vigilant in observing any bullying behaviour and are quick to intervene should any episode be noticed. Staff and young people know that unwanted behaviour of any kind is not tolerated and will be challenged. There are clear systems for reporting any incident where a young person is absent from the home without permission. Staff regularly talk to young people about the dangers and risks of being away from the home unsupervised.

The home provides clear expectations about behaviour and conduct in a way that has a positive affect on young people. Staff focus on positive aspects of behaviour and young people clearly understand how to gain rewards and privileges for behaving well. Where sanctions are given for poor behaviour, these are age appropriate, administered quickly and fully recorded. The home promotes a safe environment by ensuring all required health and safety checks are completed. Fire drills and evacuations are practised regularly and fire equipment is serviced at appropriate intervals.

Recruitment procedures are robust and in line with requirements. All visitors are required to provide evidence of their identity and to sign a visitor's book. This minimises the risks to young people and provides a safe environment.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people receive individual support when they need it. This is set out clearly in their placement plan. Young people engage in one to one sessions with their key worker and these sessions are recorded. Young people are supported to take controlled risks, which are evaluated regularly. Young people are encouraged and supported to make decisions about their lives and to influence the way the home is run.

Young people's education is actively promoted and is seen as part of their preparation for adulthood. The home has a school on site where young people receive education in line with age, aspirations and capabilities. Young people have access to a computer and are expected to engage in outdoor activities when not in the classroom during education hours. They are also encouraged and supported to make constructive use of leisure time.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Young people's care is planned by the home so that staff are clear what support young people require for their needs to be met. Young people are encouraged and supported to be involved in this planning process.

Young people's needs are assessed and recorded in individual placement plans to ensure that requirements and support are identified and addressed. Key workers are responsible for ensuring that young people's plans are adhered to and that identified requirements are met. The home regularly reviews young people's placement plan plans in addition to attending young people's statutory reviews. Staff prepare reports for young people's statutory reviews, identifying progress made and any issues that remain outstanding. Young people are encouraged to be involved in the preparation of these reports and are supported to attend and contribute fully to their reviews. This enables young people to influence plans for their future. However, not all young people choose to attend. Parents and other relevant individuals are also consulted regarding plans for the young people.

Young people are supported to maintain contact with their family, friends and other significant people, where there are no restrictions. Arrangements for contact are clearly recorded at the time of admission to the home and staff record the impact of contact for the young people. Young people can have their families and friends to visit them at the home. Where necessary staff provide transport for young people to maintain contact with their families.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is satisfactory.

Young people receive care and active support that helps them to prepare for adulthood. There is a good constructive practical support for independence. Young people are supported to manage their finances appropriately.

The house is fit for its purpose as a home for seven young people who have emotional and behavioural disorders. Young people have homely accommodation, the communal areas are decorated, furnished and maintained to a reasonable standard, providing adequate facilities for their use. However, the bathroom and shower room require refurbishment and the care manager reports that plans are in hand for these to be upgraded in the near future. Also the young people's bedrooms need to be refurbished as well. Some of the furniture is broken and stained, the walls need painting and carpets that are stained and worn.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Young people's individual needs are fully assessed and staff work hard to enable all young people to achieve their potential, having regard for their diverse needs, wishes and circumstances.

The home has a detailed Statement of Purpose, which reflects the home's ethos and practices. Young people are provided with a Children's Guide, which provides useful information as to what to expect when living in the home. These documents ensure that young people, parents and social workers understand the aims and objectives of the home.

Staff confirm that they are well supported in their role and morale in the home is high. There is evidence of good effective communication to all levels of staff, which enhances the overall care given to the young people. Continuity of care is important to the staff in the home. Care staff receive supervision in line with requirements and this identifies any issues that can be resolved and improve practice in the home. Regular team meetings take place, which ensures that the staff team are fully aware of up-to-date matters so that a consistent approach is maintained.

The home has sufficient staff to provide appropriate care for the young people placed at the home. Staff are experienced in respect of their work and four members of staff have completed their National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People. Five other members of staff are working towards it. The manager undertakes regular monitoring of the running of the home and the care provided to young people.

The individual records for the young people in the home are comprehensive, well organised and contain all the required information. All records are stored safe and securely either in the care managers office or the care staff office.

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
23	ensure that each young person is provided with sleeping accommodation which is equipped with furniture and furnishing including floor coverings, suitable for their needs. Regulation 31 (8) (b)	13 January 2010

Recommendations

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

- ensure that all care staff receive annual updates in relation to medication administration