

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	21 September 2009
Inspector	Elaine Cray
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	13 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

The home is registered to provide care for three young people of either sex between the ages of 10 and 18 years with emotional and behavioural difficulties. It provides medium to long-term residential care and is owned by a private company. The home is located in a residential area that has easy access to local facilities and public transport. The house consists of a lounge, small lounge, large kitchen-diner and bathroom on the ground floor. There are three young people's bedrooms, bathroom and staff office on the first floor. There is parking to the front and a garden to rear of the house.

Summary

This inspection is an unannounced full key inspection visit, looking at all the key National Minimum Standards. The outcome groups relating to Being Healthy, Staying Safe, Enjoying and Achieving, Positive Contribution, Economic Wellbeing and Organisation are assessed and all are individually judged as good.

The overall quality rating is good. Young people receive well planned and regularly reviewed care that supports their needs, improves behaviour and prepares them for their transition into adulthood. Young people are consulted about their placements and running of the home and benefit from positive and meaningful relations with staff working at the home.

Two actions and one recommendation are set as a result of this inspection visit.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, the setting was asked to clarify the control of electrical power to bedrooms at night and this has been improved by updating in the home's behaviour management policy.

The home was also asked to carry out unannounced fire drills and records show the setting carries out all fire safety checks and include unannounced fire drills.

An additional investigation visit was carried out at the home 4th June 2009. This visit was in relation to a complaint received by Ofsted. There were several actions relating to physical intervention. There have been no instances of physical intervention since the visit to the home. The manager has improved processes by updating young people's risk assessments, she has arranged refresher training in physical intervention and reiterated safeguarding procedures in staff team meetings.

The manager has also reviewed the home's rota to provide an adequate balance of staff on duty and updated risk assessments in relation to lone working in the home.

The setting was also required to provide more clarity regarding the forms of physical intervention used at the home and a recommendation asked for clarity regarding accreditation of the home's physical intervention methods. The provider's response to this action and recommendation is to confirm that the home's behaviour management policy has been verified as satisfactory by audits undertaken by Ofsted's National Provider Scheme.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people's health and medical needs are well-organised. Staff have a clear commitment to and good understanding of medical matters and health issues relating to young people, including sexual health, safer drug use and leading healthier lifestyles, encouraging young people to give up smoking and enjoy physical activities. There is good liaison with relevant health agencies.

Health care plans are well-recorded and show that young people's medical and health needs are placed in high priority. All young people, including those admitted on an emergency basis, have necessary appointments arranged, their health closely monitored and are given encouragement and opportunities to have their health and medical needs met. Staff are trained in first aid and medication. Although administering medication is generally well managed, a central record, in addition to the existing individual records, for recording medication given to young people is not maintained.

Healthy eating is promoted and discussed with young people. Menus are varied, balanced and include young people's choices. Young people say they like the food and are able to take responsibility for shopping and cooking their own meals and are encouraged to develop an understanding of healthy eating which promotes their independence and life skills.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The safety and welfare of young people is placed in high priority and young people are safeguarded by clear and well managed procedures and practices for promoting their welfare and safety. Young people are looked after by staff who are trained in safeguarding children procedures and understand the clear risk assessment and management strategies documented for each young person and about the general running of the home. Staff are fully aware of the procedures regarding young people absconding and who to notify about serious incidents in the home.

The home has clear policies and procedures regarding the recruitment of staff which are in line with the Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and National Minimum Standards. Although an audit undertaken by Ofsted in May 2009 identified some shortfalls in practice, the files for the most recently recruited staff at this home demonstrate a satisfactory recruitment, selection and vetting process.

The privacy of young people is respected and young people enjoy their own private space. There is an anti-bullying policy and strategies are documented in risk assessments and placement care plans. Young people are protected by a clear written complaints procedure with information included in the young people's guide. The manager and staff show a good level of commitment to listening to and ensuring young people's concerns are taken seriously.

There is a written behaviour management policy and procedures and staff receive training in conflict resolution behaviour management and physical intervention. Staff maintain positive and interactive relationships with young people, with a strong emphasis on promoting incentives for and rewarding positive and improved behaviour and there have been no incidents involving physical restraint since the last visit to the home in June 2009. Young people say their behaviour

is improved because staff are strict but fair and always reward and praise positive behaviour. Records are well maintained, but the current format for recording in the sanctions book only requires the name of the staff issuing a sanction and does not include a section for the names of other staff, young people or others present when sanctions are given.

The physical environment is well maintained and monitored in terms of health and safety, with comprehensive and detailed documentation. Fire safety procedures are checked and monitored.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

There is a commitment from staff to support, encourage and engage young people, from a variety of backgrounds and experiences, to enjoy and achieve in both educational and leisure activities.

Young people's needs are assessed on an individual basis and appropriate support is afforded to each young person. Staff have a good awareness about diversity and the needs of young people. Key workers show a good level of commitment and coordinate support for young people, provide individual key working sessions and liaise with appropriate agencies in terms of more specialised individual needs.

The staff provide a clear and enthusiastic commitment to supporting and encouraging young people to enjoy and achieve in both education, leisure activities and overall personal development. Education facilities, including a school and home tutoring service, are available within the company who owns the home. There are also connections with local mainstream schools.

Young people are supported with individual education plans, tailored to their needs, abilities and age and staff provide a clear commitment and flexible approach to exploring ways to best motivate young people. Staff are keen to encourage young people to engage in opportunities that will enable them to progress in their achievements, develop skills, build confidence and facilitate a meaningful transition into young adulthood.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Young people are looked after by staff who show a good awareness of the young people's needs and these are recorded alongside practical day-to-day care strategies in comprehensive placement care plans. Young people experience significant improvement in their welfare, behaviour and safety.

Young people are supported when they move into the home, receiving a young person's guide which is explained with their key worker and there is an admissions check list for staff. Young people settle well, are enabled and supported to understand the reason for their placements and to feel part of the running of the home. Young people are excellently supported with clear and practical plans to help them with their transition to young adulthood, independent living and leaving the home.

Young people are involved and consulted about their placements and their plans for the future. They are encouraged to read and sign their placement care plans, discuss their needs, views

and wishes with key workers and are given the opportunity to attend meetings, including statutory reviews with their social worker. They are also encouraged to contribute to the running of the home and their placements with regular young people's meetings, detailed key working sessions and quality time from staff. Staff place great value on the views and opinions of the young people. Relationships are respectful and relaxed and staff encourage young people to approach staff and express their wishes.

Arrangements for young people to maintain contact with families and friends are well-recorded and supported by the manager and staff at the home.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Plans to help young people develop life skills and prepare for more independent living are well supported by the staff. Independence programmes are in place and young people say they are well supported by staff both with practical independence plans in the home and support as they move onto independent living in the community. Young people say they are encouraged to develop confidence and skills that will contribute to their future economic wellbeing.

Young people live in a well-maintained and comfortable home. The lounges, large kitchen-diner and bedrooms are well furnished, well decorated and present a homely environment for young people.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The home's Statement of Purpose and young people's guide provides good information about the home. Young people are well looked after in a home that is well managed. There are clear lines of accountability with a clear focus on providing and further developing good quality care to young people. Staff understand their roles and responsibilities and feel well managed and supported by the registered manager at the home. The manager completes monthly Regulation 34 checks and the Responsible Individual delegates Regulation 33 visits to managers and assistant managers from other homes within the company and these are carried out on a monthly basis.

Young people are cared for by a developing staff team. There are some recently recruited staff, but despite these changes, the organisation and management of the service continues to provide good outcomes and clearly promotes the needs, safety and welfare of the young people. There are instances of lone working at night and these arrangements are risk assessed according to the needs of the young people living at the home on a daily basis. The rota shows a balance between experienced and new staff and there is allotted time for daily handover meetings and regular team meetings. The registered manager works between two homes and although a weekly manager's diary is recorded, the hours worked by the manager in the home are not recorded on the staff rota.

Staff training is well organised, with an induction package, an annual training plan, with core training such as child protection, first aid and behaviour management and there is regular staff supervision. The manager also provides a variety of relevant reading material for staff which may be placed in their files for personal use, discussed in supervision or used as an agenda item

at the staff meetings. The staff have either completed or are in the process of completing NVQ Level 3.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The staff team present an openness and firm commitment to assessing and understanding the individual needs of all young people and exploring ways in which these needs can be addressed. The staff team is mixed gender, meeting the current needs of the young people. Discriminatory behaviour and bullying are challenged and addressed. Each child has a permanent and private file, which is comprehensive, well-organised and shows a clear record of each young person’s progress.

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
13	provide a central record for the receipt, disposal and administration of any medicines to any child living at the home (Regulation 29 - Schedule 6.14).	23 October 2009
29	include the manager's hours on the staff rota for persons working at the home (Regulation 29.1 - Schedule 4.11).	23 October 2009

Recommendations

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

- ensure the names of staff members, young people and any other persons present when giving a sanction are recorded the sanctions book - in addition to the member of staff issuing the sanction (NMS 22.10).