

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	2 September 2009
Inspector	Susan Mullin
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	19 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

The service is a children's home that is registered to care for three young people from the age of eight to under 18-years-old on admission, who suffer with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The home offers the opportunities for the young people to develop socially acceptable skills and gain an understanding of independence.

The home is a modern three-storey detached house close to local amenities. To the rear of the building there is a small garden with a conservatory and there is parking space for two cars on the front driveway.

Summary

This was a key unannounced inspection of the service to assess compliance with the National Minimum Standards for Children's Homes. The home was assessed under the six headings of 'Every Child Matters' - Being Healthy, Staying Safe, Enjoying and Achieving, Positive Contribution, Economic Wellbeing and Organisation. Being Healthy, Staying Safe, and Enjoying and Achieving received a judgement of outstanding, whilst Positive Contribution, Organisation and Economic Wellbeing received a judgement of good. Overall the home was judged as good.

The care manager had completed pre-inspection documentation as had several members of staff and two young people. Information from these are included in the main body of the report. Staff morale is high and staff spoken to were very committed to providing the very best standards of care. Training programmes are projected for the future, taking into account each staff members' needs and their individual progress. One action was made which requires the home to ensure that 80% of the care staff complete the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People. Staff spoken to stated they really enjoyed working in the home with the young people, and that the staff team worked very well together. No staff could think of any negative comments about the home and the service it provided.

There were two young people living in the home on the day of the inspection, who took part in the inspection process. It was observed that the relationship between the staff and the young people was friendly and supportive. It was clear the staff had the young people's best interests at heart. The inspection identified that young people are happy living at the home and are well supported by the staff team. Staff work hard to support young people and work closely with other agencies, to ensure their identified needs are met. Care records are of a high standard and staff are skilled at working with young people with emotional and behavioural problems.

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 outstanding.

The food provided for the young people shows that the staff have a very good understanding of what makes up a good balanced diet. All staff have received food handling training. Young people are encouraged to treat meal times as enjoyable social occasions. Young people are actively encouraged to be involved in planning menus and help out with purchasing food and preparing some simple meals, in line with their age and abilities.

Young people's individual health needs are identified and assessed at an early stage. This is recorded in a clear, easily accessible plan for each young person detailing how their specific and general health issues are to be addressed. Particular health needs which may impact on future outcomes for the young person, are identified at the earliest opportunity and staff seek out the services needed to address these. Young people are actively involved in ways that are appropriate to their age and understanding, to take an interest in looking after their own health and promote healthy ways of living. Staff make sure that young people have access to and information about health and social issues and support them in using such advice. Health issues that relate to ethnicity, race, sexuality, faith and belief are fully assessed in respect of each young person and these issues are explicitly addressed in their care plans, with actions as to how these are to be addressed.

The home has an effective medication policy in place and staff confirmed that they understand their role and responsibilities when administering medication. Staff have received the required medication training and this is updated annually and their competence to administer medication assessed. Medication records were seen and were up to date and completed in line with requirements.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Young people's privacy and confidentiality is respected through staff training to ensure they are aware of, and understand, the home's policies, procedures and ethos. Some young people require more support with personal care than others and this is provided sensitively and with due regard to managing this with the minimum of disruption and embarrassment to the young person. Young people are given personal space, as far as the need for supervision to ensure their safety will allow. Staff demonstrated that they are aware of the need to respect confidential information and records are stored appropriately.

Young people know they can tell staff of any concerns they have and that they will be dealt with swiftly. Complaint records evidence that there have been no formal complaints since the last inspection. There is a complaints procedure, which includes information about independent advocacy and the need for this is identified through reviews and discussion with the placing authority. Young people feel safe in the home and this is promoted through the implementation of appropriate policies and procedures and staff training. The local safeguarding procedures are in the office, all staff have child protection training as part of their induction and this is updated on an annual basis. Staff demonstrated a good awareness of how to deal with any safeguarding issues which arise.

There is a clear policy on anti-bullying and young people spoken to said that they were not being bullied but would know who to talk to if they had any concerns. This ensures that young people receive appropriate protection from any form of bullying. There is a policy and procedure which addresses what to do if a young person goes missing to ensure a young person's absence is dealt with appropriately. There have been no such incidents since the last inspection.

Young people are assisted to develop socially acceptable behaviour through positive encouragement of good behaviour and a constructive response to inappropriate behaviour. There are clear guidelines for staff; all staff receive training in their induction, which is updated regularly, and any sanctions or restraints used are recorded appropriately. Young people said that staff are fair and they are aware of what the likely consequences would be if they broke the rules. Restraint is rarely used and records evidence that recording of such incidents are in line with requirements.

Young people live in a home which provides physical safety and security. There are risk assessments which address how to minimise any identified hazards, equipment is serviced at appropriate intervals and regular checks of the fire alarm take place. All fire drills are up to date. Careful vetting of staff ensures that young people are protected and kept safe. Prospective staff complete an application form, are interviewed, have enhanced Criminal Records Bureau checks and two references are taken up. All visitors are monitored and sign the visitors' book.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Young people are actively encouraged by staff to take part in leisure activities both inside the home and in their community. Young people have excellent relationships with staff and are kept active. The staff follow a comprehensive weekly activity programme. Activities include swimming, cinema, playing computer games and day trips. There is a small safe garden for the young people to play in, with a variety of outdoor facilities. Young people have access to a games console, music, television and a good supply of DVDs. The young people's own individual interests are supported. Staff share their own interests and enthusiasms with young people and encourage them to try out new activities and interests. Their actions and demeanour clearly shows that they enjoy these activities and that they appreciate the efforts made by staff.

Staff are very positive in their approach to education and its value for young people. Staff ensure that education is an integral part of life at the home and not just limited to school or college. Daily attendance at school is a well-established part of the pattern of daily life at the home. Staff give very active practical and emotional support to all young people in their care. Each young person's placement plan is very detailed in describing how a young person's educational needs will be met. Staff support young people with their homework and they have access to books to help them with their school work. Individual support is detailed in the young person's care plan.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Planning the care received by each young person living in the home, is particularly effective because each individual has a Placement Plan that identifies the purpose of the placement and how the placing authority's care plan for the young person will be progressed. Case files confirm that the young people's progress is reviewed within the statutory time periods. Staff attend regular in-house meetings to record and update each young person's general progress during the interim period. Monthly reports are completed by key workers and the home prepares chronological reports to keep placing authorities informed. Placement plans include summarised Health and Education Plan details.

Young people are appropriately supported to maintain contact with their families in line with arrangements detailed within their care plans. Young people are supported by staff wherever necessary during family visits. Placement Plans and supportive case file records make explicit the authorised arrangements for contact between each young person, their family, friends and social workers.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

The standard of the young people's clothing is good and allows them to feel good about their appearance, among their friends and others of the same age group as themselves. Young people are able to choose their own personal requisites and toiletries and they are involved in planning and spending the allowance allocated to their personal clothing and toiletries.

The accommodation is domestic in style, homely and nicely decorated. It is maintained and furnished to a high standard. Young people are proud of the quality of the accommodation, particularly with their own bedroom. There is a good sized conservatory for quiet times or visiting and a small rear garden which is safe and secure.

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 Registered Manager provides clear and effective leadership to the staff team regarding the aims and objectives of the service and as such, the home continues to maintain a staff team that supports good continuity of care. The home's Statement of Purpose includes all information, as required by Schedule 1 of the Children's Homes Regulations. The young person's guide is presented in a child-friendly way and gives a good summary of what young people can expect from the home.

There is good leadership and management support because the Registered Manager is qualified, skilled and experienced and provides strong and effective leadership to the staff team and young people. The Registered Manager is actively involved in the day-to-day operation of the home and has clear expectations that the staff team will achieve the best possible outcomes for all young people in their care.

Generally good emphasis is given to staff training and development which is focused on areas relating to young people's needs. However, currently no care staff hold the certificate in the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People, although four members of staff are undertaking it. Young people are provided with appropriate levels of supervision and support because staff manage their time effectively and are deployed in a way that meets their needs. The staff rotas are flexible to meet the changing needs and circumstances of young people. There are clear and accountable systems in place for staff to deputise in the absence of the manager. Good management systems are in place to share information between different shift teams. Young people are being nurtured and comprehensively supported because their needs are being met and risks are managed in a preventative way.

Good systems are in place to monitor the service and daily lives of young people currently living in the home. The organisation has established a pattern of management monitoring and reporting procedures, which is effectively implemented by the home's Registered Manager. The organisation conducts monthly review meetings to look at welfare issues within their homes. Findings are reported back to the company. Records seen demonstrate that the content of these reports reflect an accurate picture of life for young people resident here. These reports are available to staff.

Young people's care files are very well organised to include all of the information detailed in Schedule 3 of the Children's Homes Regulations 2001.

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
29	ensure that 80% of the care staff have completed the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People. Regulation 27 (4)(a)	18 December 2009

Recommendations

There are no recommendations.