

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Elaine Cray
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	29 January 2010
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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 17 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, a 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 well-being and organisation are all assessed and are all judged as good.

The overall quality rating is good. The service provides a nurturing and structured environment for young people, who are encouraged to express their individuality and improve their behaviour. Young people enjoy positive relationships with staff which positively impact on the progress they are making at the home. Children are provided with varied opportunities to develop both educationally and emotionally. Young people are protected by clear procedures and looked after by well trained staff.

Two actions and two recommendations 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

Staffing levels are increased to address and improve the original lone staff working arrangements in the home. The home's rota now includes the manager's hours. The home was also asked to provide a record of medication administered to young people, in addition to the young people's own individual records. There is now a central record for all medication received, administered and disposed of in the home.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people's health and medical needs are well managed by the staff and the quality of health care provided at the home is good. Staff make consistent efforts to encourage young people to take more responsibility for and have a greater awareness of their own health care arrangements. Records show young people's medical and health care appointments are arranged and they are encouraged to attend. Positive outcomes for the young people's health include eating more healthily, taking up more exercise, better management of medical conditions, giving up smoking and improved dental care.

Plans to meet to the health care needs of young people are detailed in the being healthy section of their placement care plans. The plans are effectively implemented by staff. They have a clear

commitment to and understanding of the health issues relating to young people, including sexual health, safer drug use and leading healthier lifestyles. Staff have relevant training, including first aid, and liaise with medical agencies, health resources and support groups that respond to and engage young people with their physical and emotional health needs.

Young people's medical conditions are effectively managed and their welfare promoted with safe and generally well-managed medication procedures. The home has a medication policy. Procedures for medication prescribed for young people and administered by staff are organised and well recorded. While young people are able to manage their own medication pending a written risk assessment process, the records do not include how self-administration may impact on other young people in the home. Also a lockable facility that can be used for medication is not available in all the young people's bedrooms.

Healthy eating is promoted and discussed with young people. Menus are varied, multicultural and include choice. Young people are able to take responsibility for shopping and cooking their own meals and are encouraged to develop an understanding of healthy eating and independence life skills.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Young people's safety and welfare is promoted and protected by staff who are trained and knowledgeable about the home's procedures and practices for safeguarding children. There is a thorough and robust staff recruitment and selection process and all staff are trained in safeguarding children procedures, which are enhanced with effective inter-agency liaison.

Young people are protected by staff who understand the clear risk assessment and management strategies documented for each young person and the general running of the house. Risks relating to bullying are also documented in risk assessments. There is an anti-bullying policy and 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 respecting the privacy of young people and listening to and ensuring their concerns are taken seriously. Young people enjoy their own private space.

There is a written behaviour management policy and procedures and staff receive training in conflict resolution, behaviour management and physical intervention. There are significant improvements in young people's behaviour. Incidents involving physical restraint are significantly decreased as young people find alternative ways to express themselves. Staff place a great emphasis on relationship building with young people and rewarding them for improved attitudes and their achievements. Young people present complex behaviours and risks and they benefit from clear boundaries set down by staff. Records for when things do not go so well for young people are detailed. Sanctions are recorded and young people's comments are made clear in the records, but names of all the people present at the time of the incident and sanction are not consistently recorded. Staff are fully aware of the procedures regarding young people going missing and who to notify about serious incidents in the home.

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.

Each young person's needs are assessed and appropriate individual support afforded to each young person. Staff are sensitive and able to respond to a complexity of need, including racial identity, language and culture. Staff provide individual support to young people in one-to-one key working sessions and are also good at liaising with and engaging young people with appropriate agencies in terms of more specialised needs.

Young people are supported to develop their education with a variety of plans and use of resources. While not all young people have a personal education plan prepared by their placing social worker, they do have weekly programmes provided by the home. Documentation relating to special education statements are also lacking for some young people. Education programmes are individually developed and staff are proactive in looking at ways to best engage young people in a structured day. Young people are meaningfully engaged in activities that enable them to develop language, achieve new learning and work towards an education placement. Staff are very good at seeking out resources and liaising with the local education authority for services for children looked after at the home.

Young people develop good self-esteem as they are supported to enjoy and achieve in both education, leisure activities and overall personal development by enthusiastic and committed staff. Young people are given opportunities to develop confidence in their personal identities, social relationships and achievements.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Young people are supported when they move into the home. There is a young people's guide and a staff check list which is ticked off as different parts of the young people's guide is explained to and understood by the young person.

Young people are looked after by staff who understand their needs and are able to implement practical day-to-day care strategies which are set out in placement care plans. Young people are encouraged to read, discuss and sign their care plans and attend meetings about their placements. There are regular statutory reviews and young people are actively encouraged by the staff to contribute. Arrangements for young people to maintain contact with families and friends are recorded and supported by the manager and staff at the home.

Young people are involved and consulted. They are encouraged to talk about what has happened to them, discuss their current placement and what they may want for the future with regular key working sessions and encouragement to attend meetings. There are also weekly young people's meeting to discuss the running of the home.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

The manager and staff show a good awareness of how to help young people develop life skills and prepare for more independent living. There are no young people currently involved in any specific independence preparation programmes or pathway plans due to their age. Young people are encouraged to engage with education, a variety of activities and develop relationships

to enable them to develop confidence and skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being. Young people's placement care plans include responsibility for self-care, domestic tasks, helping with shopping, budgeting and saving pocket money.

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

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Young people are looked after in a home that is well managed. Staffing arrangements are improved with more staff on duty to meet the needs of the young people living at the home. Young people are looked after by a group of staff who have good levels of experience and training. Staff development is organised in conjunction with head office. New staff are inducted and all staff receive supervision and training including core training and national vocational qualifications in child care. There are regular annual refresher courses for staff. The rota makes sure that new workers are supported by more experienced staff. Handover meetings are held daily, team meetings are regular, each shift has a designated shift leader and there is an on-call manager system.

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. Discriminatory behaviour and bullying are challenged and addressed.

Each child has a permanent and private file. Information is generally well organised but some young people have not been provided with a personal education plan or a copy of their statement of education needs by their placing social worker. Records in the home clearly show each young person's progress.

The home's Statement of Purpose and young people's guide provides good information about the home. Young people's care and the running of the home are monitored regularly. A monthly check is carried out by a company representative, who does not work at the home, and reports are submitted to Ofsted and the manager of the home. The manager also carries out monthly checks and these are regularly documented. Reports show that the organisation of the home is accordingly adjusted and the care of young people improved as a result of these monitoring processes.

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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22	ensure the names of any other person present during an incident and sanction are recorded in the sanctions book (Regulation 17.4(e))	30 June 2010
14	ensure a copy the young person's statement of special educational needs is maintained on their file and available in the home. (Schedule 3.12)	30 June 2010

Recommendations

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

- ensure young people keeping and administering their own medication are assessed by staff as sufficiently responsible to do so and are able to lock their medication somewhere not readily accessible to other children (National Minimum Standard 13.9)
- ensure each child's file contains a copy of their personal education plan. (National Minimum Standard 14.2)