

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	13 May 2010
Inspector	Joanna Heller
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	11 November 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 is a registered care home for five young people of either sex aged between 12 years and 18 years old. The home provides 24 hour care for young people with emotional or behavioural difficulties. The home is part of a small private organisation which provides residential childcare, leaving care services, fostering services, family outreach and a residential family centre.

The home is situated on the outskirts of a residential area. The house is indistinguishable from other houses as a children's home. The home has easy access to local amenities including stations. The home consists of five young people's bedrooms, two staff sleeping rooms/offices, two reception rooms, a kitchen/dining room, one separate toilet, one toilet/bathroom and a separate shower room. Externally there is an 80 foot garden and a front garden area.

Summary

This was an unannounced inspection carried out as part of the annual inspection programme. It was an interim inspection, which, covered all standards in staying safe as well as a selection of standards in other outcome areas. A key strength of the home is management's ability to effectively quality assure the service to ensure that continuing development and improvement takes place. Another key strength is the quality of relationships staff are able to develop with young people. Most importantly however, staff and management provide an environment which enables young people feel safe, secure and well cared for.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

The home continues to strive to provide best quality childcare and the one recommendation made at the previous inspection has been met. This recommendation was to evidence that staff complete their probationary period.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Young people enjoy good healthcare and a healthy lifestyle. Young people are registered with medical practitioners, encouraged to attend the local gym, and eat a well balanced diet. Young people benefit from a variety of nutritious home cooked foods which reflect peoples choices and cultural heritage. young people are able to help themselves to healthy snacks. Young people say they enjoy cooking and writing the shopping list. Cultural foods such as joliffe rice, chicken curry and goat curry are some of the young people's favourites.

Staff have training in key areas such as the management of self harm. Young people have confidence that staff manage their medication and healthcare well. Where young people require specific support or medical procedures staff 'hold their hand' and are supportive throughout.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Young people grade the home as 'brilliant'. Young people say that this home is a wonderful place to live where they feel safe, well cared for and nurtured. Young people say this is 'the best place they have ever been, I love it and want to stay'. Privacy is maintained and young people feel able to talk to staff about things which worry them, knowing that staff will use this information only to ensure they are okay. If young people do raise any concerns this is addressed effectively. Staff are effective advocates for young people when they feel disempowered. For example, helping young people effectively and appropriately, express their views in review meetings, making sure their voice is heard.

All staff are trained in child protection and regular training updates are provided. Staff foster an environment where bullying is not tolerated and cohesive group living is promoted. Young people enjoy excellent relationships with staff and each other. Young people say 'we get along really well. We swap shoes, go swimming together, chat and do girly things like make up and nails'. 'The staff are funny'.

Young people who go missing are notified to the appropriate agencies in line with local guidelines. The home has successfully and significantly reduced the incidents of going missing for some young people. The young person and their social worker spoke of how this was a sign of good quality care, as they were now choosing to stay at this home rather than abscond. The manager ensures that all significant events are notified to the appropriate agencies.

The building is well maintained and staff ensure that any maintenance issues are quickly resolved. Fire precautionary arrangements in the home ensure young people and staff are safeguarded from fire in line with current good practice. Young people are safeguarded from unsuitable people gaining employment in the home through robust vetting practices. No staff begin employment until all checks required in the regulations are completed.

Positive behaviour is encouraged in the home through the use of clear reward systems. Any negative behaviour is talked through with the young people and where appropriate sanctions are applied. Young people say they feel the rules are fair and the sanctions imposed are appropriate to the behaviour. Sanctions in most instances relate to the loss of an activity or the computer. Restraint is used rarely and only to safeguard the young person or others. Staff have received training in managing challenging behaviour and restraint. This is regularly updated. Detailed records are maintained of any incident which has occurred. Young people refer to staff maintaining clear and consistent boundaries which they think are good for them. Young people say that 'staff act like a caring parent and make you feel that they are there for you even when enforcing rules'. One young person said staff made sure they had everything they need and did not just throw money at them. They felt this was the right thing to do and was a caring approach to protect young people as they might just go off and buy drugs with it. Staff also talk a lot to young people about keeping safe which makes them feel cared for.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is not judged.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is not judged.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Young people enjoy a home which is well decorated, maintained and furnished. Each young person has their own lockable bedroom which they are able to personalise. Communal areas include the lounge, kitchen/diner and games rooms. One bathroom, a separate toilet, and a shower room are provided. The organisation invests in improving and upgrading the building on a regular basis. A basement area has been converted into an activity room where young people can do art, life story work or have private meetings. The garage is in the process of being converted into a gym which young people are excited about.

Young people are encouraged to develop self-care and independence skills on a daily basis. The organisation operates a semi-independence unit and all young people say they want to stay at the home until they are able to move on to that facility.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The home is well resourced and managed. Good systems are in place to evaluate the quality of service and areas for improvement are constantly being sought.

Staffing levels are set to meet the needs of young people. Staff turnover is low ensuring continuity of care. Staffing arrangements allow for young people and staff to spend time enjoying each others company and to develop the positive relationships so important to the young people.

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
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Recommendations

There are no recommendations.