

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	24 August 2010
Inspector	Fiona Parker
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	1 March 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

This is a privately owned children's home. The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to eight children of either gender between the ages of 8 years and 14 years. The home aims to support children and young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

The home is in a residential area of a city, as such there is a wide range of community facilities close by. The home has single bedrooms and the choice of a bathroom and shower room. There is a communal kitchen, dining room, laundry, lounge, games room, computer room and meeting room. There is a garden to the front of the house and a yard to the rear with outdoor seating. At the back of the yard is a separate building which can be used as an additional educational resource.

There are currently two young people living in the home, one young person spoke with the inspector. Both young people spent time with the inspector and staff members at different times.

Summary

This is a key unannounced inspection to assess the home's compliance with the key standards under the five outcome areas of Every Child Matters and the outcome area of organisation.

The overall judgement for this home is good with the majority of the outcomes judged as good. Being healthy is judged as outstanding as a result of the excellent and thorough practice in relation to health needs, individual health plans and proactive and accountable practice. Young people receive good quality care from a committed and enthusiastic staff team. Young people benefit from good relationships with staff, they feel safe and well cared for. Good internal and external monitoring takes place to drive improvement and ensure practice is accountable. Diligent records are kept and file information is up to date.

As a result of this inspection there are three recommendations. These relate to obtaining parental consents for first aid and non-prescribed medications and clarifying the information in two risk assessments to reflect practice. These shortfalls do not impact directly upon young people.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

The previous inspection did not result in any actions or recommendations.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Young people's health needs are very well met, individual health plans thoroughly detail assessments, needs and health contacts. Health appointments are very well supported and staff proactively ensure young people receive the services they need. This includes access to specialist services. Health needs are very well monitored to identify any patterns and trends which may

require further intervention. Diligent records detail health needs and arrangements ensuring practice is accountable. Although consent for medical treatment is available this does not include parental consents. This does not impact on young people's health.

Robust arrangements are in place for administering, storing and recording medication. Excellent records detail the audit trail for controlled drugs and these arrangements meet the required guidance. Accurate records reflect the medication young people receive and detail this is as prescribed. Safe storage arrangements are in place and thorough management overview ensures safe arrangements for young people. Staff are well trained in first aid and medication practice with timely updates.

Young people are actively encouraged to shop and prepare foods; frequent opportunities are available for them to manage a food budget, cook and bake. Individual dietary needs are clearly understood and form part of robust plans. Meals are nutritious, varied and freshly prepared. Healthy snacks, such as fruit and yoghurts, are routinely available for supper times. Meals are sociable occasions with young people and staff enjoying eating together in the newly refurbished kitchen area.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Young people's welfare and safety are both prioritised and promoted in the home. Good policies and procedures are in place to guide staff on bullying, absences, complaints and safeguarding matters. Staff receive varied and appropriate training to inform them of their duties and responsibilities. Therefore staff feel well-equipped to care for the current young people. As a result young people feel safe, respected and do not report concerns regarding bullying.

Formal complaints in the home are minimal and no complaints recorded recently. Staff deal with concerns and issues as they arise and seek a solution with young people. Sanction and restraints are not regular occurrences, if they do happen these are thoroughly recorded and accountable. Positive rewards are promoted for achieving individual targets, these are age appropriate and successful motivators for young people.

Managing and supporting young people's needs, behaviours and emotions is structured within an ethos, philosophy and model of childcare practice. This provides staff with guidance and structure on their role and the care they offer. Young people have positive relationships with the staff team and this, in turn, supports their progress in key areas.

Comprehensive risk assessments are in place and cover a range of activities, holidays, individual needs and group dynamics. These robustly cover assessed needs and the potential areas of concern. However, some clarity is required in two risk assessments to clearly document the agreed strategies, in line with practice.

Physical safety checks, monitoring fire equipment and regular fire drills ensure a safe and well-maintained environment. Visitors are suitably vetted, recorded and have reason for visiting the home. Recruitment is centrally managed within the organisation and meets the requirements. Therefore only people deemed suitable, checked, and with relevant experience care for young people.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people receive high levels of individual support from a dedicated and committed staff team. A structured key work system is in place with the roles and responsibilities defined. It is clear to young people that all staff are available for them at any time ensuring a caring and consistent team approach. Young people quickly feel settled in the home which allows them to start to discuss and work through their needs, views and wishes. Young people are encouraged and supported to discuss important matters with their social workers. Good daily records outline the support young people receive. Additional support is available for young people from other agencies where in place for example, youth offending teams.

Education is a priority and all young people are expected to engage in learning. All young people have suitable education placements. A separate education building is available and currently in the registration process with the Department for Education. This will increase the level of support for young people for any periods mainstream local provision is not available or suitable. Staff act as 'good parents' attending parent evenings and sports days. Good liaison and communication takes place with schools, clear records show proactive practice to ensure young people receive all opportunities. Individual education plans are in place identifying targets, roles and responsibilities. Annual reviews take place to ensure progress and support. Staff are very aware of the daily learning young people can benefit from. As a result activities, outings and hobbies enhance learning and enjoyment. Young people are encouraged to be productive, creative and identify hidden talents.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Robust assessments and plans detail young people's needs. Structured strategies and targets are agreed with each young person on all aspects of their life. Regular reviews take place and monthly reports detail progress and development. There are good signs young people benefit from reducing some behaviours such as absconding. The staff team regularly consult with a psychologist to discuss progress and strategies. This ensures staff are guided and the focus remains on young people's needs.

Young people are encouraged to sustain positive relationships through agreed contact arrangements. Staff are flexible and sensitive to the emotional upsets living away from home presents. Staff supervise contact where agreed and help make the experiences positive. Good records of contact are kept which helps young people to have accurate information in the future. Young people are consulted daily on aspects of their care, activities, meals and taking responsibility. Staff are flexible and willing to negotiate.

As the home now cares for a different group of young people this is a period of development and change. Currently much thought is going into the compatible needs for young people in a group. Decisions on admissions are considered carefully with existing residents. Should the plan be for young people to move, good support is in place to help young people with visits to other places. As a result, young people feel listened to and helped to make choices. One young person said 'I want to stay here until I am 16'.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Young people are encouraged to take responsibility and increase their skills and independence in their daily lives. Part of the approach staff use is for young people to exercise choice and control in line with their age and ability. Staff act as good role models, reinforce positive choices and encourage self control. Young people are supported with practical skills such as budgeting and shopping weekly for foods, washing clothes and completing chores.

Young people live in a spacious accommodation in a pleasant residential area. Rooms are light, airy and decorated in fresh contemporary style. Homely touches, pictures and ornaments create a home. The games room is popular and offers choices of hobbies, activities and board games. There is a warm and friendly atmosphere in the home. Maintenance is kept up to date to ensure the standard and quality is maintained.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

This is a well-managed home with good monitoring processes to ensure children receive good levels of care. A regular updated development plan informs staff of the aims and objectives of the service. Staff are positive and feel well supported, regular training is offered and supervision sessions take place as required. A good Statement of Purpose informs relevant parties of what the home offers and the philosophy of interventions. A child-centred children's guide provides young people with good information, in language which encourages their interest.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Young people's individual needs are fully assessed and good individual plans guide staff. Each young person is unique, treated equally and fairly. Good links have been established with ethnic groups in the community and the staff team are culturally diverse. Inclusion and opportunities are fully promoted, as a result young people can pursue creative interests. This is supported by a visiting professional who said the young person 'can just be herself'. The staff receive training on anti discriminatory practice which is supported by policies.

Staffing levels meet the needs of the group of children and young people. Experienced additional workers meet any shortfalls and there are always experienced workers available. New workers recruited have relevant or transferrable experience and undertake the recognised induction package for caring for children. The home has almost met 80% of the staff team qualified to National Vocational at level 3 in caring for children and young people. Frequent team meetings ensure children's needs are regularly discussed and staff keep up to date with developments, policies and procedures.

Independent visits to the home are thorough and robust, clearly linking improvements to the standards. Clear actions are made as a result of visits and reports forwarded to Ofsted as required. Overall monitoring is open and transparent, as a result practice is accountable and driving improvement is a focus. This is particular evident as standards have been maintained and improved upon during a period of change.

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

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

- ensure files retain written permission from a person with parental responsibility for administration of first aid and appropriate non-prescription medication (NMS 13.4)
- ensure all forms of physical intervention are consistent with relevant government guidance. In particular this relates to the strategies for discouraging young children leaving the home unaccompanied (NMS 22.8)
- ensure individual risk assessments clearly identify the range of strategies to guide staff. In particular include the range of strategies to minimise young people's behaviour when this impacts on others. (NMS 26.2)