

Inspection report for Children's Home

Unique reference number	SC384018
Inspection date	24/09/2010
Inspector	Joanna Heller
Type of inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	26/01/2010
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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 outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for the service.

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 setting is a five bedroom modern detached house on a new housing estate. It is near to shops and other amenities, including a primary and secondary school, and has good transport links. The ground floor has a lounge with satellite television, a dining room, a kitchen and a utility area used as a laundry. There is a ground floor room, used as an office, with shelving and lockable storage.

Attached to the house is a room converted from a double garage space into a study/indoor play area. The garden is mainly laid to lawn and provides an adequate space for outdoor play and sports activities. There is parking for two cars in the drive and an additional two spaces in front of the home. All four young people were involved in the inspection and chatted to the inspector.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

This was a key unannounced inspection and all key standards in each of the outcome areas were reviewed. One strength of the home is in supporting and training staff ensuring continuity of care. Staff have excellent skills in consulting and supporting young people effectively ensuring care and support is individualised and child focused.

Improvements since the last inspection

Following the last inspection, the management team were asked to ensure that risk assessments are in place relating to the building, that all portable appliances are tested to ensure their safety, improve the recruitment process and that all incidents of restraint and sanctions applied are suitably recorded. Risk assessments are now in place relating to the building. However, improvements are still required in specific areas relating to the management of hazardous chemicals. The impact of this does not present a significant risk to young people due to their age and understanding. A current portable appliance safety certificate is now held on site. Young people are safeguarded from unsuitable people gaining employment in the home through robust vetting practices. Staff ensure that all incidents are recorded in a detailed manner and that young people have the opportunity to comment on any restraint or sanction applied. The need to provide separate storage for toothbrushes, an individual means of hand drying and a hygienic way of dispensing toilet paper, has now been addressed.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people benefit from a variety of nutritious home cooked foods which reflect young people's choices. Staff actively encourage young people to be involved in the planning of meals and household shopping. Young people are able to help themselves to healthy snacks and confirm that there is always plenty to eat. Staff encourage young people to develop cooking skills and prepare basic meals. Some young people have a real interest in baking and regularly bake with staff. Staff are trained in food hygiene and ensure the safe storage of food.

The home has good systems in place to promote healthy lifestyles. Staff and young people enjoy regular outside activities together such as playing football. Young people have access to appropriate health services such as doctors, dentists and opticians. Specialist health services such as physiotherapy, counselling and substance misuse advisors are sought where required. Staff have access to a suitably trained therapist with whom they can have case supervision discussions. Where young people have health conditions staff show good awareness of these and how best to support them. Training is scheduled for those staff who do not have a recognised first aid qualification.

Staff are trained in managing medication and this is stored securely. Clear processes are in place for the recording of medication coming into the home and medication given. However, the recording process is not always followed, for example, on one occasion the daily medication administration record was completed twice. No clear system is in place whereby any returns to the pharmacist can be recorded nor is an approved homely remedies list in place. This is not in line with the Royal Pharmaceutical Society guidelines for handling medication in social care.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Staff are trained in safeguarding young people and are aware what to do should an allegation of a child protection nature is made. Training is updated on a yearly basis ensuring staff keep up to date with current practice. Young people say they feel safe and well cared for in the home. Staff work with young people in key working sessions to explore particular areas of keeping safe which are relevant to them such as, absconding and maintaining personal space. Risk assessments are in place for young people which identify their vulnerability and any risks they may pose to others. Activity based risk assessments are also in place.

Staff enjoy positive relationships with young people based upon mutual respect. Staff focus on rewarding good behaviour and clear reward systems are in place. Young people are able to save up reward money to buy large purchases such as a television or games console. Young people report that staff are strict but fair and give them a chance to put their side of the story. Staff have had training in control

and restraint and are clear as to the circumstances in which it is appropriate to be used. Restraints have taken place on a number of occasions. All incidents are clearly recorded in a detailed manner and young people are given the opportunity to discuss their feelings following the incident. Anger management therapy is accessed to help young people explore alternative ways of communicating distress and powerlessness.

The home is able to demonstrate that complaints are effectively responded to, investigated and managed. Young people know how to complain and have confidence in the ability of staff to respond to any issues of concern which they may raise. Any issues of bullying are well managed and young people report that there are no concerns in this area. Young people who go missing are notified to the appropriate agencies in line with local guidelines.

Young people are safeguarded from unsuitable people gaining employment in the home through robust vetting practices. No staff are employed until checks on their suitability are completed. Management ensure that regular checks on the building take place to ensure a safe living and working environment. Chemicals are used on a daily basis by young people as part of daily chores in the home and are not always stored securely. Risk assessments at the home highlight the current group of residents are not at significant risk from this and the impact of this is therefore low. These assessments are, however, not sufficiently detailed to address effectively all the issues in detail. Fire precautionary arrangements in the home ensure young people and staff are safeguarded from fire in line with current good practice.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Following an assessment of need staff draw up a care plan which examines all areas of strength and need. Staff are aware of issues of equality and diversity issues and ways in which to support young people. Staff demonstrate a good awareness of young people's needs and the impact on their health and development. Care is child focused; for example, approaches to behaviour management are individualistic taking into account age and previous life experiences. Young people feel their needs are well met by staff who they have good relationships with. An effective key worker system is in place but young people emphasise that they can talk to any staff.

Staff demonstrate a solid commitment to education, all young people are enrolled in some form of educational or work setting. Reward systems are in place to encourage young people to attend and succeed at school and college. Key working sessions also focus on supporting young people in achieving their educational goals. Staff are aware of the educational progress of young people and attend key events such as parents evenings, in partnership with parents where appropriate. Young people talk positively about how staff help them to develop their own curriculum vitae and to seek appropriate college courses and work placements which will assist them in pursuing their chosen career paths.

Young people enjoy a variety of leisure opportunities both inside and outside the

home. Staff regularly play board games and sport with the young people. Young people enjoy attending the gym, swimming, bowling, ice skating and paintballing as well as trips out to tourist attractions. Young people say that staff are doing lots of things with them and they get time to spend interacting with staff. Young people enjoyed a camping holiday in the summer. An artist has been supporting young people to develop their art skills on large canvases and plans are underway to paint murals in the club room.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Management ensure that admissions to the home are well planned. Good systems are in place to identify young people's needs and whether the home is able to meet them. Management ensure that a copy of the central core assessment of need compiled by the placing authority is in place prior to a placement being accepted. This is supplemented by the home's referral and assessment process. A placement planning meeting is held where possible prior to, or at the point of placement. A care plan is developed from the assessment information. The care plan is kept under review through the statutory reviewing process. Key workers are responsible for updating the care plan on a monthly basis to identify progress and any changes in need. Placements at the home are stable and very few people have moved on.

Young people are able to maintain contact with their families according to their wishes and any restrictions set by a court. Family members and friends are welcome to visit and some parents maintain a very active presence in their child's life. Young people have built friendships in the local community and are able to entertain their friends in their home.

Young people say they find management and staff open and approachable and can talk to them about anything. From discussions with young people and observation it was apparent that staff and young people have developed genuine caring relationships with laughter regularly heard throughout the inspection. Staff consult young people on all aspects of their care through regular young people's meetings and key working discussions. Young people are also encouraged to attend their statutory reviews.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Young people enjoy a clean, spacious, well maintained and decorated home. The house is domestic and homely in style and young people are proud of the house in which they live. Each young person has their own lockable bedroom, which reflects their individual personalities and interests. Accommodation meets young people's needs; providing plenty of toilets, bathrooms and private and communal space.

Good systems are in place to help young people in their transition into adulthood.

Staff work with young people to develop independence and self-care skills from the time they move into the home. Young people are encouraged to cook, keep their rooms tidy and do their own laundry. As young people approach the age of 16, a life skills plan is drawn up to support any pathway plan the placing authority has developed. This plan covers key areas such as: household management, money and self-care. Young people feel they are well supported in moving through this process. Young people are encouraged to save money and older young people have their own bank account. Management save a set amount each week for each young person which they will receive when they leave. Training offered to staff such as first aid and child protection is also offered to the young people.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The care provided is individualised and child focused. Staff excel in listening to and consulting with young people. Issues of diversity and difference are explored in detail with young people.

Management arrangements of the home have very recently changed and an application for registration of the new manager has been requested. The Statement of Purpose and children's guide are useful documents, which, guide the reader as to the services the home is able to offer. Management are in the process of reviewing this to make it more accessible and also to update recent management changes.

Staffing levels are high, providing one to one support for some young people. Staff are able to enjoy spending time with young people. Management arrangements are clear and staff know to whom they are responsible. Consistency in staffing enables young people continue to enjoy positive relationships with staff who are familiar to them and know their needs.

Staff and management feel valued and well supported. Communication between staff is good, enabling them to work effectively as a team to secure good outcomes for young people. Where there are care management issues the staff team meet as a group to discuss professional feedback and agree a consistent approach. Staff say they get regular supervision and support and enjoy working at the home.

Those staff who have not have not started their National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People are enrolled on this course. Staff benefit from a wealth of training relevant to their role and feel that the organisation invests in training staff.

The home has good monitoring and quality assurance systems in place which ensure standards are maintained and young people needs are met.

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/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Std.	Action	Due date
26	ensure all parts of the home to which children have access are so far as practicable, free from hazards to their safety; in particular, that hazardous chemicals are securely stored in a locked cupboard in the absence of a suitably detailed risk assessment for each young person relating to their unsupervised use. (Regulation 23)	01/11/2010

Recommendations

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

- ensure young people are provided with only homely remedies approved by a pharmacist or doctor, that a record is maintained of any medication leaving the home and a copy of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society guidelines for handling medication in social care is obtained (NMS 13)
- ensure accurate records are maintained of each and every medication given. (NMS 13)