

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Mark Ryder
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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 home is a family house located within an established residential community. It is within easy distance of recreational, educational and health facilities. The communal areas of the home include a lounge/diner, kitchen, bathroom and a garden. Each young person has their own bedroom. There is a staff sleeping-in room which is also the staff office. The home offers services and care for up to two young people from 10 to 17 years of age with emotional or behavioural difficulties. It is part of a large organisation operating a number of children's homes. One young person currently lives in the home and was present during the inspection.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

This was an unannounced full inspection in which all key standards were assessed. This is a good home with some satisfactory and outstanding features. The home does well in promoting young people's education and development and this is a particular strength of this service. Staff are competent and skilled in caring for young people in residential care. They provide consistency of care to young people who have rarely experienced this level of nurturing in their lives. Young people are valued and respected. The accommodation is furnished to a good standard of decoration and provides young people with a relaxing and homely environment.

Areas for improvement include a review of the inaccurate information written within the Statement of Purpose that does not clearly reflect the ethos of this home. Health care planning is limited due to the lack of information contained in young people's files. Privacy of young people is considered by staff although young people do not always feel that their personal space is respected. Staff entering young people's bedrooms do not always make it clear as to why they are doing so.

Improvements since the last inspection

There was one action and one recommendation made at the last inspection.

The testing of fire equipment is regularly completed, recorded and monitored. Therefore, young people, staff and visitors are kept safe. Placement plans are shared with young people who understand and agree with their contents. Young people sign these plans to confirm this. This means that young people are fully involved in the planning, assessment and review of their placement.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff promote the health care of each child although the lack of health care planning undermines the good work within this home. The care of young people's dietary and health needs are satisfactory met. Young people enjoy a balanced diet that comprises of personal choice and healthy, nutritious foods. A young person said 'I like the food here and enjoy cooking'. Staff encourage young people to be fully involved with the preparation of menus, food shopping and cooking. Staff and young people are able to sit and eat together which further promotes positive relationships.

Staff support young people in attending medical appointments such as with the dentist, General Practitioner (GP) and optician. Records provide clear information as to when young people attend such appointments. Young people are able to choose if they wish to see a male or female GP. This ensures that young people feel comfortable when going to the doctors. Medical consent by parents for young people is obtained and retained on file thus ensuring awareness of the legal status of each child when requiring treatment or medication. However, there is limited information on the medical history of young people as no health care planning has been completed. Likewise there is some confusion as to the outcome of a previous health assessment for a young person. This means that staff are not fully aware of all previous medical or health related issues. Medication is stored appropriately and staff receive specific training in safe administration. Staff also have regular training in first aid. This means that young people are looked after by staff who can administer minor first aid when required.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

There are systems in place which aim to prevent abuse of children and suspicions or allegations of abuse are properly responded to. These are known and understood by all staff. Young people are protected from bullying by the support of a responsive staff team. Bullying concerns are raised in children's meetings and there are contact details for support services if young people require to speak in confidence. A young person said that if they were being bullied they would be able to talk to the staff. All significant events relating to the protection of children are notified by the designated person to the appropriate authorities. Staff are fully aware of the missing from home procedures and exercise their duty of care appropriately.

Young people feel that while staff respect their privacy there are inconsistencies of practice of staff entering a young person's bedroom without their consent. Therefore, young people do not feel that privacy is always considered by staff. However, confidential information is sensitively managed. For example, records are kept securely.

Young people are assisted to develop appropriate behaviour through the

encouragement of acceptable behaviour and constructive staff responses to inappropriate behaviour. Sanctions are proportionate and young people respond positively towards them. A young person said that staff treat them fairly. Staff also highlight good behaviour to identify the positive attitude of young people. Staff receive suitable training on the safe use of physical restraint. However, there is a very low incident rate of staff having to use restraint at this home.

Complaints are rare at this home. The young people both know about the procedures and how to make a complaint. Records are regularly monitored and young people spoken to about the complaints procedures. A young person said they are fully aware of the complaints procedures and knows what to do if they are not happy with any aspect of their care.

Maintenance of fire safety equipment, electrical installations and portable appliances are checked at suitable intervals. Staff and young people are fully aware of evacuation procedures. Visitors are informed of fire safety as part of the signing in process. Therefore, physical safety and security of young people, staff and visitors to the home are appropriately managed. This is an improvement from the last inspection.

There is careful selection and vetting of all staff and monitoring of visitors to the home to reduce the potential of contact with inappropriate adults. This is a stable staff team with no new employees since the last inspection.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

There is a positive and highly motivating culture within the home that both supports and develops young people's educational aspirations. Young people regularly attend school and achieve well in doing so. There is provision for young people to complete homework and private study. Educational plans are clearly recorded and include comments and views from young people. This means that young people play an active role in their own education. Staff liaise with schools and attend meetings as required. A young person was very pleased with their education provision.

Individual support is very well evidenced within this home. The staff are proactive in encouraging young people to talk about their feelings in a supportive and nurturing environment. External counselling, such as group therapy, is actively encouraged. Young people say they benefit from attending such sessions. Keyworking meetings are an integral part of each young person's placement. These meetings, including resident meetings, are recorded and reflect a diverse range of issues that relate to the welfare of young people.

Development of a file with information about many religious and cultural celebrations has been undertaken by a young person at this home. The young person said they enjoyed doing this and clearly has learnt a great deal about the wider world. This

progressive example of promoting cultural differences helps develop young people's sense of their own and others identity.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

There is good planning, assessment and review of young people's placements. Young people contribute to their placement plans with regular discussions with keyworkers. Staff ensure that young people know and understand such plans and amend if required. Young people sign to confirm this. This is an improvement from the last inspection. Files include all relevant and essential information such as health, education and contact arrangements. Plans refer to the identity of young people that include race, religion and culture. Staff are aware of meeting the individual needs of young people from diverse backgrounds. Review of the care arrangements are held within appropriate timescales. Young people attend their review meetings and fully contribute to the discussion and planning of their placements. A young person was positive about their involvement in such meetings.

Young people maintain constructive contact with their families and friends. Staff encourage and facilitate contact when required. Young people say they are able to have regular contact with their parents when they wish to.

Consultation of young people about all aspects of their placements is a central part of the running of this home. There are regular keyworker sessions and resident meetings that provide opportunities for young people to express their views and receive information. For example, complaints and bullying are regular agenda items that are discussed during resident meetings. Young people are valued and listened too.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Young people live in well designed and pleasant accommodation that meets their needs. The home is furnished and decorated to a good standard. A young person said they liked living at this home. Young people's bedrooms are decorated to personal taste .

Preparation for young people to develop the skills to live independently is an on-going process at this home. Staff assist young people to do as much as they are able. For example, young people are able to cook, shop and budget for themselves. Pathway planning for moving out of the home is discussed during review meetings. Young people contribute to this process and benefit from it.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

There are effective monitoring systems in place to ensure the home is able to meet the needs of young people. Monthly visits by a senior member of staff from the organisation support this as do the internal checks completed by the Registered Manager. Therefore young people are safeguarded through a robust monitoring process.

The Statement of Purpose includes some information that does not accurately describe the operation and function of this home. However, the overall content of this statement is reflective of practice. The young person's guide is written in a style suitable to be understood and is provided to all new residents. A young person confirmed that they had been provided with a copy on admission.

Young people are looked after by a staff team who are trained and competent to meet their needs. Staff receive regular supervision and feel supported and valued at this home. Team meetings address the needs of the young people and how to continue to improve the service. All staff have gained the National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in caring for children and young people. Therefore young people accommodated at this home receive a good standard of care.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Staff are sensitive to the needs and aspirations of young people and treat them with respect and understanding. Care plans reflect and assess different needs taking into account the culture, race and class of young people. Young people benefit from a team of staff who are experienced in working within children's homes and understand the potential stigma of being in care. Social inclusion is strongly promoted.

Young people's files contain all necessary information to help staff care for them well. Young people are able to read their daily records. Access to their files is supported with the consent of the placing authority.

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
1	ensure the overall aims and objectives, as recorded in the Statement of Purpose, accurately reflect the ethos and function	07/01/2011

	of the home (Regulation 4.1)	
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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 each child has a clear written health plan (NMS 12.2)
- ensure the home and staff respect a child's wish for privacy with regard to entry without permission of a child's bedroom (NMS 9.1)